



# Portland Estates Elementary School

January Newsletter 2025

Happy New Year!

Dear Portland Estates Families,

We hope everyone had a healthy, safe and relaxing holiday season! We are feeling rested, rejuvenated and ready for an exciting 2025! We are ready to start the New Year fresh and with a focus on learning and well-being.

It was amazing to see so many families at our Cookies with Santa event as well as at the Winter Concerts. Thank you to all of you for supporting Schools Plus and our local Food Bank with your donations. A big thank you to our teachers, Ms. Rhonda Corrigan and Ms. Megan Chandler for volunteering their time to organize the concerts and our PTO members for organizing the Cookies with Santa event and the Raffle baskets. We appreciate all the volunteer hours that they put in to make such successful and festive events.

A reminder that we do spend time outside for learning and recess each day., even when it may seem cold. The HRCE has a wind chill protocol that we follow. We keep an eye on temperature, sunshine, and wind, and if we can get out, we go out. Please remember to send your child(ren) with warm layers, winter boots, extra gloves and extra socks (these can get quite wet).

The month of January brings an opportunity for us to re-set, to look at our goals and re-evaluate our plans of action. As we know learning takes place everywhere and we thank our parents for all that you do at home to support learning and making learning part of your day, from talking about the weather and nature to reading a book at night with your child. As we step into the new year, let us collectively commit to fostering an environment that promotes curiosity, kindness, and a love of learning. Together, we will continue to provide our students with a well-rounded education that prepares them for the success in an ever-changing world.

We wish Ms. Downey, Pre-Primary Lead, the best of luck in her new career move working with EIBI. We are sure to see her working with some of our families in the future. We welcome Laura Gomez Garcia who is joining us as a new lead in Pre-primary. As well, we welcome Ms. Fung who is the new EAL teacher from January to June while Ms. McNamara is out on leave and Danielle Ryan who is a student teacher in Primary Page-white.

Open communication is vital for the success of our school community. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to us. We value your input and are committed to working together to ensure the success and well-being of every PEES student. Reminder as well that Angie Aucoin is the Pre-Primary lead for our school. Pre-primary leads and supervisors are not housed at our site but can be easily contacted if you have an issue that a pre-primary staff member can not resolve for you. The HRCE/DEECD is slowly making the transition of the pre-primary program over to the Primary-Five program where the school administration will be responsible for more than just attendance and registration in Pre-primary.

Thank you to all our families who updated their Demographics in Powerschool in the Fall. This is very important to have all the information correct in the system. Reminder that February is registration month.

May the new year bring each of you new learning and joy as we continue to work together to make PEES a great place to grow and work. Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous new year!

*Louise Henman-Poirier*

**Principal**

**Milk Orders-** You can order milk from the school cafeteria by using their Nutrislice ordering system. A small white milk is on .40 cents.

## **Dates to Remember:**

**January 9, 2025** – PTO meeting – 7 pm in the library – We hope to see you there!

**January 10- 15, 2025** – Order lunch from NSLunch

**January 17, 2025** – **Backwards Day**

**January 20, 2025** – Martin Luther King Jr Day

**January 24-28, 2025** – Order lunch from NSLunch

**Monday, January 27** – **Family Literacy Day**

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

**Wednesday, January 29** – Chinese New Year

**January 31- February 2-** Downtown Dartmouth Ice Festival

**February 10- 14** – Coins for Books Campaign

**February 1- 28-** Registration Month

**February 17-** Family/Heritage Day – **Nora Bernard day** – **No School**

**Picking Up Students-** A reminder that if parents are picking child(ren) up from school early please notify the classroom teacher and the school office ahead of time. When you arrive at the school, please call the office at 902-433-7100 and we will send students out to meet families.

## **Attendance Matters!**

Please ensure your child gets to school each day and on time (prior to 8:50 am) unless they are feeling unwell.

## **Volunteers!**

We are always looking for more volunteers to help us with **reading** with students, Breakfast program and chaperoning on field trips. Volunteers must have a Criminal records check (with vulnerable sector check) and a Child Abuse Registry check completed and on file at the school.

## **Lunch Monitors**

We continue to need more lunch monitors – if you can work one or more lunch hours per week. Please reach out to Ms. Broussard at [JBroussard@hrce.ca](mailto:JBroussard@hrce.ca).

## **Important weather reminders**

Did you know? HRCE takes great care when making the decision to alter the regular operations of schools and school busses in the event of severe or inclement weather.

It is HRCE's goal to communicate any changes to the regular operations of schools and/or buses as close to 6:00 a.m. as possible. **A 6:00 a.m. announcement could be:**

- All schools are delayed in opening by two hours and bus pickups are delayed by two hours; or
- All schools are open, but some or all busses are not operating for the day; or
- Some schools (either individually or by family) are closed for the day; or
- All schools are closed for the day.

If weather deteriorates, or is forecasted to worsen throughout the morning, **an 11:00 a.m. announcement could be:**

- Bused students will be picked up two hours earlier than their regular dismissal time; and
- Non-bused students will be dismissed at their regularly scheduled lunch hour.

## **How will I find out?**

- By email to the addresses in PowerSchool

- By text message, **if you have opted-in**. If you aren't sure if you have opted-in, text Y to the following number: **978338**
- On [our website](#)
- On [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#)
- On [Instagram](#)

It's important to always have a plan in place for childcare in the event of any cancellation.

For more information on how HRCE manages during inclement weather, visit [www.hrce.ca/families/cancellations](http://www.hrce.ca/families/cancellations).



### International Holocaust Remembrance Day

International Holocaust Remembrance Day, observed on January 27, serves as a crucial reminder of the Holocaust.

Through survivor stories, students learn empathy, compassion, and the importance of standing against antisemitism and prejudice. By observing this day, we ensure future generations uphold human rights and dignity, fostering a culture of respect and inclusion.



## January 27 is Family Literacy Day

Did you know? January 27 is Family Literacy Day! This special day is meant to raise awareness about the importance of reading and engaging in other literacy-related activities as a family.

This year's theme is "Learn to be Green, Together!" Make a pledge as a family to learn ways to be greener. Use less electricity, commute together, and reuse items. Being green together is a fun way to learn as a family while being kind to the environment.

## Lunar New Year

Lunar New Year, also known as Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, will be celebrated on January 29.

It marks the beginning of the Year of the Snake, an animal sign that symbolizes wisdom, intuition, and renewal. It's a time for families to come together, honour their ancestors, and welcome the new year with hopes of prosperity and happiness.



## **New year, new job? HRCE is hiring!**

Did you know that there are multiple teaching and non-teaching roles across HRCE - all of which are vital to our students' success? Looking for a new opportunity? Know someone who would be a great fit?

We're currently in immediate need of substitutes to replace teachers, Pre-Primary staff, EPAs (Educational Program Assistants), custodians and administrative assistants. If you're interested, please contact [careers@hrce.ca](mailto:careers@hrce.ca).

Visit [myhrce.ca/jobs](http://myhrce.ca/jobs) to view current job openings and sign up to apply today. Postings are updated every Wednesday at noon.

### **Outdoor Physical Education Fun!**

Throughout the school year, students have been enjoying outdoor physical education classes, as well as walking the local trails and exploring our environment with their homeroom teachers this year. We are so fortunate to have such beautiful surroundings.

### **Winter Weather & Clothing**

Please remember to send your child(ren) to school with appropriate clothing, as the weather is getting colder. Boots, hats, warm mittens and snow pants are a must. Please ensure that your child has a pair of indoor shoes as well. A change of clothes is always a good idea at the lower grades.

**February is Registration Month-** Registration will be online this year. More details will be released from the HRCE and DEECE in the upcoming weeks. If your child will be five before December 31, 2025, they will be able to attend Primary next September. If your child will be four before December 31, 2025, they will be eligible to attend Pre-primary next September.

### **Transition Planning:**

While it may still feel like it is early in the school year to think about transitioning to the next school year, many plans are well underway to ensure that students have a successful transition from Grade to Grade and from school to school. For students who are changing schools, we will start planning visits at this time of the year. If you are moving out of the area and your child requires an individual transition meeting with their new school, please reach out as soon as possible.

### **PTO News**

Thank you to our wonderful PTO and to all the PEES families who donated to our Theme baskets prior to the break. This was a very successful fundraiser for the PTO. The next PTO meeting will be **Thursday, January 9<sup>h</sup> at 7 pm** in the school library. We hope to see you there!

**Literacy at PEES:** We continue to think differently about the teaching of reading in our school. As part of our Student Success Plan (SSP), we have strategies that see our teachers implementing word study blocks in their instruction every day. In the lower elementary, teachers are using a phonological awareness and phonics instruction resources to help students with the decoding of words. In the Upper elementary, teachers use a combination of phonics and word study to build vocabulary and understand the word origins and English language rules. We have the support of the Elementary Literacy Support Specialist, Mrs. Dafoe as well as Resource teachers, Mrs. Burn and Mrs. Connors, who support strong Tier 1 instruction in the classrooms.

### **"FIX-UP-STRATEGIES for HARD WORDS"**

As we kick off a new year, here are some simple reading tips when trying to decode a new or unfamiliar word:

#### Fix-up Strategies

- Look at every letter in the word
- Sound it out
- Look for parts you know
- Move on, then reread
- Make a good guess.

After a guess, ask...

- Does it look right?
- Does it sound right?
- Does it make sense?

Whenever reading with your child, instead of correcting them right away when he/she makes a mistake, always address the problem in the form of a question:

“How did you think that sounded?”

“What was the tricky part?”

“Where was the problem you found?”

This method will help your child match what he/she found difficult to your upcoming solution. What you're looking for is for your child to take on the task of future decoding by linking what was noticed to be a problem first and then your solution.