

Portland Estates Elementary

Mrs. L. Henman-Poirier, Principal
Ms. J. Broussard, Vice Principal
Ms. C. Myers, Admin Assistant

December 2025

December Newsletter

As we enter the final month of the calendar year, our school is buzzing with the warmth and joy of the holiday season. December is a time for reflection, gratitude, and celebration. We can expect colder weather as the winter approaches. This means extra mittens and socks are also needed in your child(ren)'s backpack, please! Outdoor learning and recess will continue at Portland Estates unless the temperature is extreme. Students must dress appropriately for the cold.

This month, our students are wrapping up an incredible first term of learning and growth. It is inspiring to see how much they've accomplished since the start of the school year! Please sign up for parent-teacher interviews which will be held on December 4. We want the lines of communication open between home and school as we work as a team to help support all students. Remember that you can reach out to your child's teacher any time if you have a question or concern. As well, we wanted to extend a huge thank you to all the families that attended, volunteered and donated to *Cookies with Santa* and to all our volunteers who helped make this event a success. We will continue collecting items for Woodlawn High families in need until the holiday break as well as non-perishable food items for local families.

On behalf of the entire Portland Estates staff, we wish you and your family a very restful holiday break and a Happy New Year! Students and staff have worked hard, and everyone is ready for a break! Take time to enjoy one another at this special time of year. We truly appreciate the dedication of staff and the support of families as we continue focusing on literacy and numeracy skills and wellness for our students. Portland Estates students make strong efforts in classrooms and show commitment to being the best learners they can be.

Finally, I would like to extend my warmest wishes for a safe, relaxing, and rejuvenating holiday season to all of you. **See you January 5th, 2026!**

Louise Henman-Poirier

Principal, Portland Estates Elementary School

Book Fair Update The Book Fair will run this week from **December 2 to December 4**. Thank you to all volunteers who have offered to help make this a success!

Lost and Found Families... Please be sure to check the lost and found if you are picking up your child. We have several unclaimed items in bins in the front foyer! We will be donating the leftover clothing during the holiday.

Be sure your child brings a water bottle to school every day!

Important Dates to Remember:

December 2- Progress Reports sent home through Edupost

December 3- International Day for Persons with Disabilities

December 4- Parent-Teacher/Professional Development Day – No School for Students

December 5- Wear Purple

December 9- Wear Red

December 10 – International Human Rights Day

December 11- Empathy Day - Wear Silly Footwear

December 16- Winter Concerts- Tickets required for concerts

December 17- Winter Concerts- Tickets required for concerts

December 18- Wear Yellow for Hope

December 19 – Last Day of school before the Winter break – Wear pajamas today

January 5, 2026 – First day of the new year.



Bus Loop safety- Drivers are not allowed to pass a school bus that is unloading or loading students. Please do not pass the bus when it is in our bus loop. Thank you!



SchoolsPlus is here to support you



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SchoolsPlus
NOVA SCOTIA / NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

SchoolsPlus is a confidential, free service available in every school in Nova Scotia. Our goal is to build positive relationships between families, schools, and communities. We can help families navigate complicated situations when they are involved with many different services.

Phone: 902-464-2041
Email: schoolsplus@hrce.ca

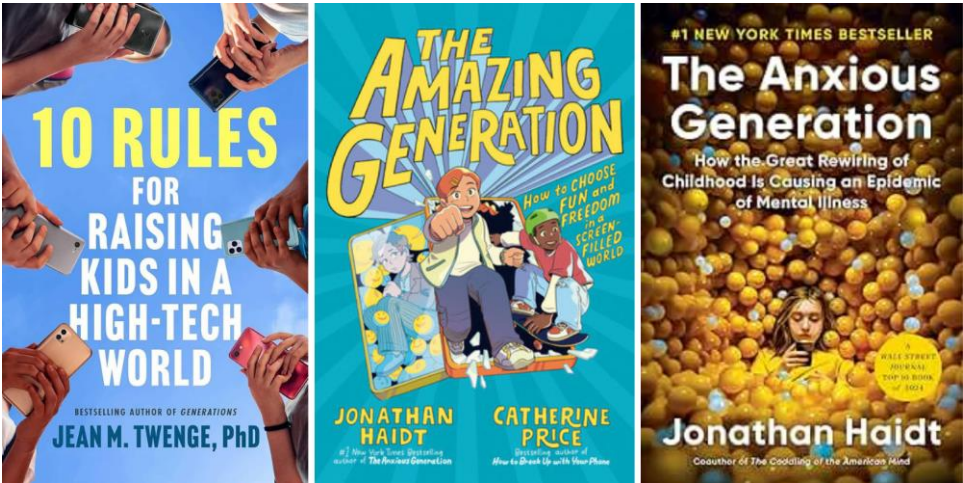
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Parents, guardians and students (12+) can self-refer to SchoolsPlus 12 months a year! Just contact the SchoolsPlus Facilitator at your school.

Call 902-464-2000, ext. 2331 or email schoolsplus@hrce.ca.

Learn more about SchoolsPlus [here](#).

Resources for Parents from Unplugged Canada



If you're concerned about your kids' screen time, smartphone use, or social media pressure, there are some wonderful resources below to help parents and caregivers navigate the challenges of raising kids in a digital world.

For parents: The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt highlights the research and evidence behind how early smartphone and social media exposure have shaped a generation over the last 10–15 years. **Ten Rules for Raising Kids in a High-Tech World by Jean Twenge** offers practical,

actionable guidance to help parents set healthy boundaries and support their kids' digital wellbeing.

For kids: The Amazing Generation, written for pre-teens and teens and co-authored by Jonathan Haidt, will be released on December 30. It explains the impact of today's digital environment in an engaging, age-appropriate way.

All of these books are available at your local library or bookstore.

Unplugged Canada is a parent-led, national movement advocating for healthier childhoods by delaying smartphones and social media until kids are more developmentally ready. Join thousands of Canadian families choosing to delay by taking the Unplugged Canada Pledge at unpluggedcanada.com/sign-pledge.

New educational technology resource for families

We're excited to share a new online resource designed to help families understand how technology supports student learning in HRCE. This page provides an overview of how tools like Chromebooks and Google for Education are used in classrooms, what provincially approved online platforms students may access, and how student privacy is protected. You'll also find information about Nova Scotia's guidance on the provincial cell phone expectations, tips for supporting online safety and digital citizenship at home, and an introduction to how students are learning about artificial intelligence in a thoughtful and responsible way. It also includes answers to common questions about screen time, passwords, communication during the school day, and more.

You can find the webpage [here](#).

Planning for Inclement Weather



Did you know? HRCE takes great care when making the decision to alter the regular operations of schools and school buses 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:**

- Bussed students will be picked up two hours earlier than their regular dismissal time; and
- Walking 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 the HRCE website](#)
- [On Instagram](#)

It's important to always have a plan in place for childcare in the event of any cancellation. Please remember: As a parent or guardian you always have the choice of whether or not to send your child to school.

For more information on how HRCE manages during inclement weather, visit hrce.ca/families/cancellations.

We're ALWAYS hiring!



Did you know that HRCE has more than 10,000 employees serving more than 60,000 students?

Our job postings are updated every Wednesday at noon and feature a wide variety of career opportunities!

As HRCE grows, so does our staff. Check out new opportunities weekly at www.myhrce.ca/jobs.

Upcoming important HRCE dates Reminder of some important upcoming dates in the HRCE calendar.

The 2025 Holiday Break will begin on **December 19**. The first day of school in the new year will be **January 5**.





SchoolMessenger app

Did you know you can report your child's absence through the SchoolMessenger app?

SchoolMessenger’s SafeArrival is an absence-management system that improves student safety and makes it easy for you to let the school know about your child’s absence.

- Download the SchoolMessenger app for Android and iOS devices
- Sign up using your PowerSchool username (full email address) that the school has on record for you
- Click on Attendance
- Follow the prompts

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Winter Concerts:

Concert Tickets will be going home soon. Strings will only be performing on December 17 in both the morning and the afternoon. Front row raffle tickets can be for any of the four performances – afternoon concerts and morning performances.

Tuesday, December 16 @ 10:45 am/Wednesday, December 11 at 1:30 pm

Primary Page-White

1Casavechia

2 Dagnall/Urquhart

2/3 Johnson

3 Riley

4 Clarke

5 Davidson

Strings 4 C, 5D, grade 5’s from 4/5BM (Wednesday only)

Wednesday, December 17 @ 10:45 am/Tuesday, December 10 @ 1:30 pm

Primary MacDonald

Primary/One Wadden

1 Farrell

2 Mesheau

3 Smith

4 Jennings

4/5 Banks/Moser

5 Mason-MacDonald

Strings- 4/5 Banks/Moser, 5 Mason-MacDonald (Wednesday only)