

Portland Estates Elementary School

45 Portland Hills Drive

Dartmouth, NS

Mrs. L. Henman-Poirier, Principal/Directrice
Mrs. J. Broussard, Vice Principal /Directrice Adjointe
Ms. C. Myers, Secretary/Secrétaire

February 2026

February Newsletter 2026

African Heritage Month 2026 –

This year's theme, Strength in Unity-Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power and Progress.

February is Registration month – please go to the HRCE website to register your children for school for the 2026-2027 school year.

February is African Heritage month. We are excited to be celebrating African Nova Scotian culture and history with our students. Throughout this month, teachers will be working with students to recognize and celebrate the contributions and achievements of people of African descent. We are thrilled to have the Africa Centre for Arts & Culture Society here on February 13 with the group Djeli Sira and Keonte Beals presenting on February 27. As well, we will be hosting many fun Olympic themed activities during the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan. We will hold our opening ceremony on February 6. There will be Olympic themed activities during Physical Education classes as well as Science, Math and Reading challenges.

At Portland Estates Elementary, we continue to strive to improve student learning and enable our students to achieve their full potential. Home and School are education partners; please remember to read often with your children and stay involved with their learning. Invite them to talk to you about what they are learning and encourage them to discuss their day. Our newsletters and school website have information and links which you may find useful in supporting your child's learning.

As the year has progressed, there have been an increasing number of students arriving late to school. This causes a disruption to classes for the student who is late as well as for those who are here on time. That said, your help in ensuring that your child arrives at school on time would be greatly appreciated. Students should be at school by 8:50 am so they can hear the announcements and prepare for instruction which starts at 9:00am.

Our teachers continue to work on implementing strategies that promote achievement of our school improvement goals. As always, I encourage you to communicate regularly with your child's classroom teacher to address any questions or concerns.

Students are asked to bring a water bottle to school each day which can be filled up at one of the filling stations in the halls. Please be reminded that we ask that no scented products be brought to school (hand cream, hand sanitizer, etc.). If your child must have such products at school, please ensure that they are scent free.

Well winter is in full swing! We have really been experiencing the cold and snowy weather of winter! The winter months will continue to provide inconsistent weather conditions. Please help us to ensure students are prepared for the outdoors by having them come to school with appropriate gear for outside. We will always monitor the weather and ensure that decisions about sending students outside are made with their safety in mind. Students do go outside for recess and lunch each day (unless it is raining heavily or exceptionally cold), so please make sure your little ones have hats, scarves, mittens/gloves and warm outerwear.

We wish Ms. Chase congratulations on the birth of her new baby girl - and welcome Ms. Renshaw into the Learning Centre to replace her for the remainder of the school year. Also, we welcome Ms. Urquhart to our Grade Two team who is in for Mrs. Dagnall while she goes off on her deferred leave. Mr. Morrison will be filling in for Ms. Corrigan who is off for the month of February. We welcome Ms. Saadat as a new EPA in the learning centre for the remainder of the school year.

Mrs. Henman-Poirier

Important Dates to Remember:

Friday, February 6 – Olympic Opening

Monday, February 9 to Friday February 13- Olympic Reading week

Monday, February 9 -Nifty Nickel Monday - Our kick off! Bring in as many nickels (or any other loose change) as you can.

Tuesday, February 10- Toonie Tuesday - If as an entire school we collect 200 toonies or \$400 worth of coins the students will be awarded a double recess. We invite students and staff to dress up as their **favourite Storybook Character today.**

Wednesday, February 11- “Whatcha” Find in the Couch Wednesday - Search all those places coins like to hide... between couch cushions, under car seats, in the pockets of those pants you haven't worn for a while!

Thursday, February 10- “Lotsa” Loonies Thursday - “I’d Wished I had stayed in Bed with a Good Book” Day – **Wear your PJs** to school and bring your favourite book to read.

PTO meeting -7pm in the school library

Early French Immersion meeting – Shannon Park

Friday, February 13- Fun Money Friday – **Bring in a silly amount of money** Africa Centre for Arts performance (pm)/ **Wear Red Day**

Monday, February 16- Heritage Day – No School for students – Joseph William Comeau Day

Wednesday, February 18, 2026- Stadacona Band Trip

Monday, February 23- ADHD & Learning Disabilities presentation – Free Parent Information session- Woodlawn High Auditorium

February 27 – Keonte Beals presentation **1:30pm**

February is Registration Month

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February is Registration Month!

Visit www.hrce.ca to register today!

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Home / For Families / Student Registration & Updates

Student Registration & Updates

All registrations and updates for school are completed through the online portal, *PowerSchool Enrollment*. Children are guaranteed a space in their designated school based on their address. Schools will be in touch with families closer to the start of the new school year with relevant details.

Children born in 2020 are eligible for Pre-Primary or Primary and children born in 2021 are eligible for Pre-Primary in September 2025. To register, you will need to create an account using a valid email address after choosing one of the available forms.

What You Need to Register

Make sure you have the following documents in electronic form (image, PDF or Word document):

- Proof of Identity/Age (one of: birth certificate, passport, immigration papers, or legal adoption papers) if you are new to HRCE
- Proof of home address (a recently dated official government or utility document with your current address that includes your name and date, such as a water bill, power bill, internet bill, home fuel bill, a tax receipt, property assessment, residential lease agreement or a mortgage contract).

Please note: If your child is a new resident, immigrant or refugee, further documentation related to your status must also be provided during this process.

Need Assistance? Don't have access to a computer?

We're here to help! If you need support, please contact our **Family Navigators** at 902-464-2000.

There are two forms available for registration purposes:

The 2025-26 HRCE New Student Registration Form

This is the form required if:

- your child is new to school and registering for the first time in Pre-Primary or Primary or

Do you have or know a child who will be starting Pre Primary or Primary this fall? It's time to register!

Registration for the 2026-27 school year begins on Monday, February 2. To ensure we have the right staff and supports in place for September, it's important that we gather enrolment numbers now.

Tip: Before you begin, make sure you have the following documents in electronic form (image, PDF or Word document):

- Proof of identity/age with one of the following: birth certificate, passport, immigration papers, or legal adoption papers if you are new to the HRCE

- Proof of home address with one of the following: a recently dated official government or utility document with your current address that includes your name and date, such as water bill, power bill, internet bill, home fuel bill, a tax receipt, property assessment, a mortgage contract or a residential lease agreement

Visit the [HRCE website](#) for more information and to enrol your child today through PowerSchool Enrollment!

Don't have a child to register? Maybe you know someone who does! Please help us spread the word and pass this information on to friends, neighbours or relatives who will be looking to register for the fall.

February is African Heritage Month



African Heritage Month in Nova Scotia is a time to recognize and celebrate the rich history, vibrant culture, and lasting contributions of people of African descent in our province. This year's theme, **"Strength in Unity – Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power and Progress,"** reminds us of the importance of coming together as a community, learning from one another, and moving forward with shared purpose.

In our schools, African Heritage Month provides meaningful opportunities for students to explore African Nova Scotian histories and experiences, deepen their understanding of our shared past, and reflect on the values of respect, inclusion, and belonging. Through classroom learning, discussions, and activities connected to this year's theme, students are encouraged to appreciate diversity, build empathy, and recognize the strength that comes

from unity. These experiences help foster welcoming school communities and inspire students to contribute positively to a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

Open your home to an international student!





BECOME A HOST FAMILY

OPEN YOUR HOME AND HEART TO AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

\$875 /month	PER STUDENT (Tax Free)	\$975 /month	If you can accommodate a vegetarian or lactose free diet	\$1075 /month	If you can accommodate a vegan or celiac diet
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* Effective in September 2025.

RECEIVE \$100 FOR EVERY SUCCESSFUL REFERRAL OF NEW HOST FAMILY
Share the name and contact details of an interested host. Once they are approved and actively hosting, you'll receive \$100.



Halifax
Regional Centre for Education

Learn More:
nsisp.ca/host

Email hostastudent@hrce.ca
or call 902-464-2000 ext. 2548



Have you considered opening your home to an international student?

HRCE's International Services welcomes students from all over the world who would like to attend schools in our region. Hosting a student in your home can be an enriching and rewarding experience. We're looking for warm and caring families like yours to provide them with a home away from home.

Hosting an international student is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that gives your family the opportunity to bring the world home. For students, it's a way to learn about the Canadian way of life.

As a host, your family would be matched with a student who will attend your neighbourhood school and participate in your daily routines.

What you can expect:

- Host families receive a tax-free monthly stipend to help cover hosting expenses (\$825 current, \$875 effective September)
- Students stay for periods of three to 10 months
- Ongoing support is provided by an experienced Homestay Coordinator
- You will learn about and communicate with your student before their arrival

Learn more [here](#) or contact:

HRCE International Services

(902) 464-2000 ext. 2548

hostastudent@hrce.ca

Please share this message with anyone who may be interested.

Thank you! Gracias. Merci. Xie-Xie. Danke. Arigato. Grazie. Obrigado. Kamsa-Hamnida. Kawp-Kun-Ka. Shukran. Teşekkür ederim.

HRCE International Services

February 16 is Heritage Day

Nova Scotia Heritage Day is celebrated on Monday, February 16, and provides an opportunity for students and families to learn more about the people, stories, and events that have shaped our province. Each year, Heritage Day honours a notable Nova Scotian, and in 2026 we recognize Joseph William Comeau, an important Acadian poet, writer, and cultural leader.

Joseph William Comeau is remembered for his contributions to Acadian literature and for helping to preserve and promote Acadian language, identity, and culture in Nova Scotia. His work reflected the everyday lives, resilience, and traditions of Acadian communities, and his legacy continues to influence Acadian culture today.

Heritage Day provides us with an opportunity to explore Nova Scotia's diverse history and to better understand how individuals from different backgrounds have contributed to our shared story. Learning about Joseph William Comeau helps students appreciate the richness of Acadian heritage and the importance of preserving culture, language, and community.

Thriving Offline: How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish

Thriving Offline: How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish, a free community event hosted by Unplugged Canada at St. Margaret's Bay Elementary, is available both in person and virtually.

Designed for caregivers and educators, this session will explore how early smartphone and social media use impacts children's development and the latest research, practical strategies, safer alternatives, and age-appropriate boundaries to support healthy childhoods.

Join us! Thriving Offline: How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish

- Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.
- St. Margaret's Bay Elementary - 24 Ridgewood Dr, Head of St Margaret's Bay, NS
- Please register for in-person or virtual [here](#).

Two Truths & AI

Two Truths & AI is a free, interactive activity from Common Sense Education that helps students learn how to tell the difference between real and AI-generated content. Through guided examples, students practice asking good questions and thinking critically about what they see online. This resource can

also be a helpful way for parents and caregivers to build their own understanding of AI and media literacy alongside their children. Learn more [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.

Power Outage Information for Families

As we move into the winter months, we want to share how decisions are made when a school experiences a power outage.

Our priority is always to keep schools open safely when possible. A power outage does **not** automatically mean classes are cancelled – even if it happens during the school day. The decision depends on when power is expected to be restored.

Here's what happens:

- When a school loses power, HRCE's Operations Team contacts Nova Scotia Power to gather available details on the cause and an estimated restoration time.
- Once we have this information, we consider:
- **Before school starts:** Have buses begun their routes? If so, we wait until students arrive before making a decision. If classes are cancelled, elementary families will be contacted before dismissal.
- **During the school day:** How close is dismissal? What is the temperature in the building? Does the school rely on power for water or septic systems? These factors, among others, help us decide whether to stay open or close. Often, power returns faster than we could safely send students home.

If classes are cancelled:

- HRCE will notify families by email and text.
- Families of elementary students will also receive a phone call before dismissal.

Deciding to close schools during a power outage is never simple, but safety is always our top priority. We understand that cancellations can be inconvenient, and our goal is to keep students learning in class whenever possible.

More information about school cancellations for any reason can be found [here](#).

