

Portland Estates Elementary

Mrs. L. Henman-Poirier, Principal
Ms. D Haase MacLeod, Vice Principal
Mrs. D. Ryan, Secretary

December 2020

December Newsletter

November was a busy month at PEES. We continue to be diligent in following Public Health protocols to keep our students safe during these unprecedented times. We are very grateful to parents and community members for supporting these efforts. Together we will continue excellence in curriculum delivery in a safe and welcoming environment.

This year staff are engaging in professional development around the theme of Anti-Black Racism: its origins, negative impacts and strategies for change as well as the implementation of the new Inclusive Education policy. We will continue engaging in follow-up discussions and action planning during our staff meetings and PD days throughout the school year.

As we enter into the Holiday season, it is a great time to reflect on relationships with family and friends, and what we can do to make the spirit of the season last throughout the year. The staff and students will be involved in activities called the **Fifteen Days of December**. An outline of themes and special days was sent home. We encourage families to take a few minutes and participate in the activities outlined for each day. The activities take very little time but the reward of families spending quality time together is invaluable.

May all the Portland Estates Elementary school families and friends have a very peaceful and relaxing Holiday break!

Things to do this month:

- Participate in 15 Days of December
- Picture Retakes December 7
- Wear Red to show support for Volunteers – Dec 8
- Join us for Pizza night at Anapolie Pizza – Dec 10
- Wear silly Footwear – December 11
- Wear yellow to symbolize Hope on December 21
- Wear your pajamas on December 22
- Purchase a Posh Pearl gift card from the office
- Ensure your child has a second mask in their backpack



Important Dates to Remember:

December 22 – Last day of school before Holiday Break

January 4 – First Day of Classes after the Break

PEES School Spirit Wear – Looking for a great gift idea? Take a look at school clothing! Shop online at <https://portlandstates.entripyshops.com>.

Learning from Home: In the past few weeks we have seen a few short term school closures in the HRCE. We continue to be very hopeful that Portland Estates Elementary School will be able to stay open to staff and students every day. We love seeing our students and teaching them in person. But it is always good to have a backup plan, so teachers have been making sure that all students have their user names and passwords to their Google classrooms and Seesaw accounts.

Staff have been compiling a list of students who have limited or no access to high speed internet or technology at home. At Portland Estates Elementary School, we have a limited number of Chromebooks that we will be able to lend out so we will be doing our best to get them to those most in need if we pivot to Scenario C – At Home Learning.

It would be beneficial for students to have some supplies like pencils, crayons, scissors, etc ready at home as well.

Dressing for the Weather: The cold weather is upon us. Please make sure that your child/ren are dressed for the weather each day. It is important that children have snow pants/splash pants to play outside as we go outside for two recess periods per day, as well as lunch and physical education

classes to give our children mask breaks even if it is light rain. As always, it is a good idea to have additional clothing in your child's backpack. This will keep us from having to contact you in the middle of the school day. Putting names on all clothing items is also a great idea, this will allow us to get items back to their rightful owners.

Guidelines for School and/or Bus Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather

Student safety is the first priority of the *Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE)* when making school cancellation decisions. HRCE staff begins to gather information from various sources beginning at 4:30 am. Staff consults with Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) staff on road conditions, local weather services, and Transportation companies. By 5:30 am, staff makes a recommendation to the Regional Executive Director based on the information gathered. If it is safe to have students on the roads and sidewalks, then schools will be open. If not, all or some schools may be closed depending on the weather and road conditions in different areas of the board.

Parents/ guardians; winter is coming; do you have a childcare plan in place in the event of a school closure? Do you know what *Family of Schools* your child's school belongs to? Parents/ guardians always have the right to keep their child home from school if they believe that the travelling conditions are unsuitable.

For **full day closures** of all or some schools, the decision will be announced as close to 6:00 am as possible. Announcements will be:

- Posted on the HRCE's website (www.hrce.ca);
- Posted on the HRCE's Twitter account (HRCE_Official);
- Recorded on the HRCE's School Cancellation Information Line 464-INFO (4636);
- Shared with subscribers to the regional centre's email and text notification system; and
- Communicated to local media outlets.

If conditions deteriorate throughout the day, the Regional Executive Director may **close schools early** when weather or road conditions are considered to be a threat to the safety of students. In the event of an **early school closure**, the announcement will be made by 11 am. School busses will be dispatched to schools **two hours** earlier than their normal regularly scheduled pick-up for the afternoon dismissal, **walking students** will be dismissed at the start of their regular lunch time.

On school days when weather conditions exist that it is not safe to open schools at the regularly scheduled time, but it is predicted that conditions will improve, a **2 hour delayed opening** may be considered. Delayed openings would be considered when a severe weather event has concluded but snow clearing or other operations require additional time. Delayed opening may also be considered when the physical plant is experiencing an issue (power, water) and additional time is required to prepare the facility for opening.

In the event of a delayed opening the following will apply:

- School opening will be delayed 2 hours
- School bus pick up times will be delayed 2 hours
- Excel child care will be cancelled for the morning only
- Pre-Primary opening will be delayed 2 hours
- Each school will alter morning schedules to best address their timetables.
- Lunch times will not change
- Afternoon class schedules will not change
- Dismissal time will not change.

Portland Estates belongs to the Prince Andrew High School Family of Schools.

The Portland Estates Staff wishes all our families and friends a very Happy and relaxing Holiday Break!

