



February 2025 Newsletter Smokey Drive Elementary School

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Website: <https://smr.hrce.ca>

Safe Arrival: 1-833-582-6940

Principal: K. Longard

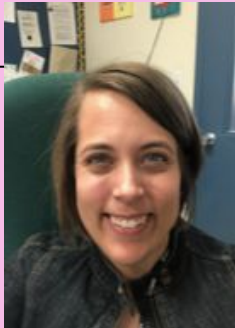
Vice Principal: C. Garrett

Admin Assistant: L. MacNeil

Principal's Message

February is here, which means we are already half way through this school year! So many great things have been happening here at Smokey Drive. Students are engaged in their learning and it's wonderful to see and celebrate all of their accomplishments. This month, we will be recognizing African Heritage Month as well as preparing for September by ensuring that new Pre Primary and Primary students are properly registered to attend school in the fall. Thank you for your continued support!

Mrs. Longard



African Heritage Month

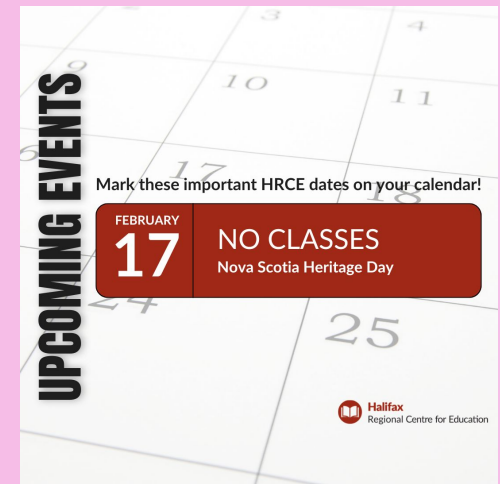
We continue to appreciate February as an opportunity to celebrate African Heritage in Nova Scotia. Smokey Drive Elementary is committed to ensuring that all students are reflected in our building, classrooms and resources. This year's theme embraces the provincial theme, "**Legacy in Action: Celebrating Black Brilliance.**" The theme celebrates the enduring legacy of Black Nova Scotians, paying tribute to the community's resilience, achievements, and impact throughout history. It reflects the brilliance within the community: the stories we share, the lessons passed down by our elders, the rhythms that drive progress, and the powerful ability to honor the past while shaping the future. The theme also aligns with the culmination of the second United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent (2025–2034). Over the past decade, this global initiative has emphasized empowerment, leadership, and increased awareness of the contributions of people of African descent worldwide. The decade's focus on justice, recognition, and development mirrors the progress and presence of African Nova Scotians in all facets of society.

Nova Scotia is home to 52 historic African Nova Scotian communities, with a rich and complex history that spans more than 200 years. African Heritage Month is a time to honor this heritage and celebrate the culture, achievements, and contributions of Black Nova Scotians—both past and present. It is a moment to recognize the strength of our shared legacy and the brilliance that continues to inspire future generations.



Upcoming Dates

- Feb 10-14th: Lockdown Drill
- Feb 11th: African Heritage Month Presentation (for students/staff only)
- Feb 13: PTA Bingo Event
- Feb 17th - Heritage Day - No Classes for Students
- Feb 20th - SAC @ 6:00 pm/PTA @ 7:00 pm
- Mar 7th - Assessment & Evaluation Day - No Classes for Students
- Mar 10-14th - March Break - No Classes for Students
- Mar 28th - Report Cards sent home
- Apr 3rd - Progress Conferences



Safe Arrival

If your child is going to be late or absent, please remember to call our Safe Arrival program, instead of calling the main office. Excuse them for the day and if they arrive during the day, the system will be updated upon their arrival.

1-833-582-6940 (Toll Free)

Playground Safety and Supervision

Students are not to be arriving at school before 8:15 am. There is no supervision for students arriving early to play before school. Any students coming early or staying after school to play must be with an adult.

PTA Bingo Night

As was communicated in an earlier email, the Smokey Drive PTA will be hosting a Bingo Night on **Thursday, February 13th from 6:30-7:30 pm** in our school gym. Doors open at 6:10 pm and the games will start at 6:30 pm. **Please note that this event is limited to current Smokey Drive students and their immediate families. Children must be accompanied by an adult.**

Prizes include loonie and toonie jars as well as a variety of themed baskets. Please see below for grade level donation requests. These items can be sent into the school at anytime.

Limited seats will be sold due to Fire Code Regulations. Tickets will be sold on a first come basis. Please fill out and return the form that was previously sent home, with correct change, between now and February 10th (or until sold out) to reserve your bingo books. Books are \$5.00 each.

Pre-Primary - Chocolate Lovers Basket

Grade 4 - Outdoor Fun Basket

Primary - Loonies for the Loonie Jar

Grade 5 - Game Lovers Basket

Grade 1 - Toonies for the Toonie Jar

Grade 2 - Valentine/Spa Basket

Grade 3 - Movie Night at Home Basket



February Is Registration Month

Do you have a child who will be starting pre-primary or primary this fall? It's time to register!

Registration for the 2025-26 school year begins on February 3. 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 (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 or a mortgage contract)

Visit the [HRCE website](https://hrce.ca) 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.



Valentines

As we did in October for Halloween, teachers will be sending home paper bags for families to fill with treats and return for Valentines Day on February 14th. Please note that this is meant to be a small snack in addition to the other food that might be sent in for recess and/or lunch on that day. To respect those with allergies, we are asking that you only send in food for your child and not for them to share with others. Thank you for your support with this.

Classroom teachers will be communicating about other activities that might be taking place in their rooms on that day.

Reminders

- Do not send nut or peanut products to school
- Please do not send food to share, due to allergies
- No pets on school property between 8:15 am-2:45 pm.
- Respect “No Parking” and “No Stopping” signs when dropping off and picking up your students.
- **Please do not enter the school driveway after 8:00 am and/or before 3:00 pm.**

Heritage Day 2025

Observing Nova Scotia Heritage Day on the third Monday of February is an annual occasion to reflect on our province's rich history. It's a chance to recognize the remarkable people, places, and events that have shaped our unique heritage.

This year, Heritage Day is on Monday, February 17th and there will be no school for staff and students.

Please take time to learn about **Nora Bernard**, the **2025 honoree**, by clicking on the link below.

<https://heritageday.novascotia.ca/content/2025-honouree-nora-bernard>



Arriving at school on time

Punctuality is an essential habit that helps students start their day with focus and readiness. Arriving on time ensures that students don't miss out on important instructions, activities, or the chance to fully engage with their classmates. It also sets a positive example of responsibility and respect for others. Together, we can help our students develop skills that will benefit them both in school and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support in getting your students to school on time. If there is anything the school can do to support, please reach out.



Safe Dismissal

Please send teachers a note if there is a change to your child's dismissal procedure (ie, someone different is picking your child up that is not on your contact list, they are going home with a friend, etc.) This allows us to ensure that children are getting safely to their after school place.



Toys from Home

A reminder that special toys from home should not be coming to school, unless pre-arranged by the classroom teacher for an activity such as Show & Tell or PJ/Stuffie Day. Please ensure that your child does not come to school with these items, unless they are specifically asked for.

Slow down in school zones

To ensure our students' safety, here are a few reminders for drivers navigating any school zone.

- Follow school zone speed limits
- Be prepared to stop for a school bus at any time
- Remember to stop whenever you approach a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing, regardless of the direction of travel
- Give yourself extra time during your morning and after school commutes
- Always watch for pedestrians
- Always obey crossing guards
- Avoid distractions while driving

Also, please do not drive into our parking lot after 8:00 am. We have had a number of safety issues regarding this in recent weeks and greatly appreciate your continued cooperation in this matter. If someone other than you is dropping off or picking students up, I would appreciate it if you could pass this message along.

Lockdown Drill

In the fall, we practiced what we call a Lockdown Drill. We will be having another one of those drills the week of **Feb 10-14**.

During a lockdown drill, classroom doors are secured and the students remain in a safe spot inside the room until instructed by the teacher to resume their activities. All exterior doors are locked and no one is permitted to enter or leave the building. Students are kept inside the school and classrooms when circumstances make it safer to stay in the classroom rather than evacuate.

Please be assured that staff at our school will spend time discussing the importance of this procedure with students prior to running a drill. We will also take time after the drill to remind them that it was only a practice and there was no danger.

Winter Weather

We love to get outside and plan to spend as many recesses and lunches playing outside as we can throughout the winter. We love the snow! We take the temperature and wind chill into consideration when deciding to send students outside but we are able to get out most days. Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. When students are sent outside, we do not have supervision for students to stay inside. We require students to wear a jacket, boots and snow pants if they are to play in the snow. This helps avoid students having to sit around in wet clothes after coming in. Hats and mittens/gloves are important too; we do not have a vast supply of them here. Students can easily get wet playing in the snow so it's a good idea to tuck a dry set of clothes in the backpack in case your child needs to get changed during the day.



Inclement Weather and School Cancellations

In the event of school cancellation due to inclement weather and other exceptional circumstances, the decision to cancel school is made as close to 6:00 am as possible. Here are some ways you can find out:

- HRCE Website at www.hrce.ca
- Call the information line at 902-464-4636
- Listen to the radio (all local radio stations)
- Sign up to receive text messages from the HRCE

At times schools may be cancelled by “Family of Schools”. **We are in the Sackville High family of schools.** In the event school is cancelled during the school day, the decision is usually made by 11:00 am. The school will contact all families to confirm procedures to release your children. Please ensure your child knows what to do in case of early closure and ensure that your phone numbers and email addresses are up-to-date so we can contact you. Students are not released until we have made contact with a parent/guardian or designate as you identified when you updated information on PowerSchool in September.

If school is cancelled during the day, we will dismiss students as per their parent/guardian instruction at 12:05 pm. If you can avoid it, do not come to pick your child up early as this will result in congestion in the office area. Parents, guardians and caregivers are requested to wait outside their regular dismissal door at 12:05 pm for their children.

On days when 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. In this situation, students at Smokey Drive cannot arrive before 10:15 am and classes will begin at 10:25 am. Lunch and dismissal times will not be affected in this case.