



January 2026 Newsletter Smokey Drive Elementary School

Phone: 902-864-6838
Website: <https://sde.hrce.ca>

Safe Arrival: 1-833-582-6940

Principal: K. Longard
Vice Principal: C. Garrett
Admin Assistant: L. MacNeil

Principal's Message

Welcome to January! We have had a great start to 2026 here at school. Students and staff were excited to see each other after the break. We quickly got back into the swing of things and are looking forward to what the rest of the school year has to bring.

Mrs. Longard

Communication between Home and School

Report cards and Parent-Teacher conferences are not the only way that we communicate student learning and progress through the year, and they are not the only times you can speak with your child's teacher. If you have any questions or concerns about how your child is doing at school, please reach out to their classroom teacher(s). Communication and collaboration between school and home are essential to student success and are very important to the team here at Smokey Drive.

Upcoming Drills

We will be having our next Lockdown Drill during the week of February 9-13. More information will be sent home just prior to. Our monthly Fire Drill practices will resume in April.

Lost and Found Items

Please take some time to have a look at our school's lost and found table, located just outside of our library. Classes will have multiple opportunities to look throughout the month, however we are encouraging families to have a look as well. Any items remaining by January 31st will be donated. Please check in with the office upon arrival.

Chaperones Needed

A number of our classes are considering possible field trips over the remainder of the school year. To make these trips happen, we need chaperones to accompany us. If you have flexibility in your schedule and would be interested in helping us out in this way, please contact the office to obtain the Child Abuse Register Form and Criminal Records Check with Vulnerable Sector letter.

There is a small cost to this but don't let that hold you back. Just let us know if this is a concern and we can help with that. Thank you in advance for your consideration!

SAC (School Advisory Council) and PTA (Parent/Guardian Teacher Association)

Our SAC and PTA groups meet most months, and all school community members are welcome to attend those meetings.

We are always seeking additional parent/guardian and community members to broaden the voice and perspectives of our school community.

Our next SAC and PTA meetings will be held on January 21st, 2026. The SAC meets from 6:00-7:00 pm and the PTA from 7:00-8:00 pm. All meetings are held in the Library here at the school.

December Concert

It was wonderful to see so many of you here at school last month for our December concert. The students did such an amazing job. A big thank you to Ms. Britton for sharing her love of music with all of us here at Smokey Drive!



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.



Parking Lot/Driveway

We are continuing to have some issues with safety in our driveway and parking lot with vehicles. Please note that families are not permitted to drive onto the property at arrival or dismissal to pick up your child. Please make time to find parking on the street and walk onto the property. Families are also not permitted to park anywhere in the school lot when children are preparing to enter or exit the building. Your assistance with keeping everyone safe is appreciated.



Weather Appropriate Clothing

Students should come to school each day dressed for the weather conditions. Students go outside multiple times each day and it is important for them to be dressed warmly as the weather gets colder. We will go out in all but extreme conditions. It's also a great idea to keep a change of clothes in your child's backpack in case they need them.

Lice

Please remember to check your student's head periodically for lice. Students who have lice may return to school after they have been treated and there are no live lice on their heads. If you need support through this process, let us know and we can send home some information.

Water Bottles, Snacks/Lunches and Cutlery

It is very important that students bring a water bottle with them each day to school. Please remember to pack one in their bags. Also, please ensure that your child comes to school each day with their lunch and enough snacks for the day, including any cutlery they might need.

Lunches that are not fully eaten will be sent home so that families can be aware and make any necessary changes.

Upcoming Dates

- Feb 16th - Heritage Day - No Classes
- Mar 13th - Assessment & Evaluation Day - No Classes
- Mar 16-20th - March Break
- Mar 31st - Report Cards sent home
- April 2nd - AM Professional Practice Day and PM Parent/Guardian Conferences - No Classes
- April 3rd & April 6th - No School due to the Easter Holiday

Safe Arrival

If your child is going to be late or absent, please remember to call our Safe Arrival program.

1-833-582-6940 (Toll Free)



Reminders

- Do not send nut or peanut products to school
- No pets on school property between 8:15 am-2:50 pm.
- Respect “No Parking” and “No Stopping” signs when dropping off and picking up your students.

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.

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 staying after school to play must be with an adult.

February Is Registration Month

In the HRCE, February is traditionally registration month. Registering new students in February allows the system to ensure that staffing, done in the spring for the next school year, is accurate at each school. Families are required to register online.

All students who are currently attending Smokey Drive Elementary, do not need to re-register. If you know anyone with a child who will be 4 or 5 by Dec. 31, 2026, please let them know that we will be accepting registrations for pre-primary and primary. They can follow the Student Registration Process link provided here: <https://www.hrce.ca/families/student-registration-updates>

What's Pre-Primary all about?

Check out our [Welcome to Pre-Primary](#) site.

What does Grade Primary look like?

Visit our [Welcome to Primary](#) site.

Primary French Immersion Registration

For those families who are interested in their child attending the French Immersion program at Cavalier Drive Elementary, please contact that school at 902-864-7524 for more information.



Power Outage Information for Families

As we move further 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.

Power Outage Information for Families continued

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](#).



What happens when a school loses power?

Learn more at hrce.ca/families/cancellations under *Power Outage Information for Families*



Halifax
Regional Centre for Education

Learn About the Influenza Vaccine

Fast Facts about the Flu Vaccine

- Influenza (the flu) is virus that peaks in transmission in the fall and winter months
- Most people are mildly ill when they contract the flu but sometimes the flu can be serious and require admission to the hospital
- Children under 6 years are at the highest risk of serious complications from the flu
- The flu and RSV can occur at the same time making children more at risk of needing hospitalization
- The flu vaccine is recommended yearly for children 6 months and older to protect against serious complications of the flu

For more information, [click here](#).

Learn about the Influenza vaccine

FLU VACCINE SAFETY

- The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu
- Serious side effects are rare, affecting less than 1 in 1000 people
- Common side effects include pain and swelling at the insertion site



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Scan to book



HOW TO BOOK YOUR VACCINE

- In Nova Scotia, flu vaccines can be booked online and are free of cost
- You can also call to book at 1-833-797-7772. If you or your child does not have a health card, please call rather than booking online



Online Platform Risks From Unplugged Canada

Sharing on behalf of Unplugged Canada

Many digital platforms today, including social media, online gaming and AI chat tools, are designed to keep kids scrolling and engaged, often exposing them to addictive features, adult content, and interactions they may not be developmentally ready to handle.

Below is a resource that outlines some of the most common social media, gaming, and AI chat platforms, helping families better understand the risks, start meaningful conversations at home, and consider delaying smartphones and access to these apps until kids are more developmentally ready.

You can access the full resource [here](#).

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.

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 am as possible. Here are some ways you can find out:

- HRCE Website at www.hrce.ca
- Follow HRCE on Twitter at [Twitter.com/HRCE_NS](https://twitter.com/HRCE_NS)
- 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 12:00 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 12:00 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/recess and dismissal times will not be affected in this case.