



AJ Smeltzer January Newsletter

Good Morning AJ Families,

Hope that you had a great weekend. Please take a moment to review the information below:

Nova Scotia School Lunch Program:

AJ Smeltzer is a part of the Nova Scotia School Lunch Program! Please see the menu and order at nslunch.ca. Lunch is affordable for every family because the Program is pay-what-you-can. After choosing lunches, the system gives families three payment options: pay the \$6.50 cost of the lunch, pay a part of the cost, or pay nothing. The Nova Scotia school lunch program has been very popular with students.

SchoolsPlus Is Here to Support You:

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. 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](#).

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](#).

Homework Hub, Mathematics:

The Homework Hub is open for mathematics tutoring for grade 4-6 and grades 7-12. Tutoring is available online during the following times:

- Grades 4-6: Monday-Wednesday 5:30-7:30 pm
- Grades 7-12: Sunday-Thursday 5:30-9:30 pm

Online Platform Risks From 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](#).

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](#).

Student Attendance and Engagement:

The Student Attendance and Engagement Policy guides our approach to attendance and is in place to support all students. The policy states that regular, punctual attendance supports academic success, responsibility, and preparation for the future.

Ensuring regular attendance is a joint effort between students, families and schools. As a parent / guardian, you play an important role by monitoring attendance, communicating with the school when your child is absent, and supporting your child's regular attendance. For more information regarding the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy please [click 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 About Inclement Weather?

- 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.

Upcoming Dates: 2025 / 2026

January 1st: New Year's Day

January 5th: First day back after the holiday break

January 27th: International Holocaust Remembrance Day

January 27th: Family Literacy Day

January 28th - 29th: High School Summative Assessments

Best,

Dean Lee

AJ Smeltzer Principal