

# GBES NEWSLETTER

January 2026

## Welcome to 2026!

We hope you all had a lovely holiday break. We're excited to welcome everyone back to school. Teachers will be working hard in their classrooms to re-establish routines and expectations. The new year is a great time for a fresh start and to refocus on growth and learning.

## Reminders

With the cold winter weather upon us, it is extremely important that students come dressed for the weather. Please make sure your child has a hat, mittens/gloves, snow pants, etc. Also, all students in grades PP - 6 should have a change of clothes in their backpacks at all times.

## A Message from the GBES Home & School



We started December with a raffle for front Row Seats for our Holiday Concert. 3 Families won the opportunity to sit up front and center to watch the children! Next was our annual Gift Mart which is one of the students' favorite events. Thanks to our families donating and volunteering their time, our students were all able to "shop" for up to 4 family members at no charge. They had a great morning so Thank You!

On our last day of classes, we held our Gift Card Tree Raffle! Many thanks to our volunteers who canvassed for gift cards from the local community. The grandmother of one of our students was the lucky winner of over \$1000 worth of gift cards! Thank you to all who sold tickets, donated or purchased tickets. A special shout-out to our Grade 4 student Liam who sold more tickets than anyone else in the school!

We hope you all have had a wonderful start to 2026! Our next event is a Chocolate Bar Bingo on February 12th! Hope to see you there!

## Primary - Grade 2 Reading Screening

During the month of January, students in Primary to Grade 2 will participate in early literacy screenings as part of our ongoing regional centre-wide assessment practices.

These brief, one-to-one screenings provide information about students' developing reading skills. The results help teachers and the school literacy team monitor progress, plan for instruction, and provide timely support to meet individual learning.

If you have any questions, please contact our Early Literacy Support teacher , Ms. McMullin at [kmcmullin@hrce.ca](mailto:kmcmullin@hrce.ca).

## Lates & Absences

As a reminder, classes **begin at 8:20**. Students are allowed to enter the building at 8:10. We continue to have students who regularly arrive late to school and who are absent. As we work together to provide the best educational experience for your child, we want to emphasize the importance of attending school regularly and arriving on time each day.

Consistent attendance ensures your child doesn't miss out on critical lessons, activities, and opportunities to build strong relationships with teachers and peers. Arriving on time helps set the tone for the day, promotes good habits, and allows your child to fully participate in the learning process from the start.

We understand that occasional absences or delays may happen, but we encourage you to prioritize punctuality and consistent attendance whenever possible. Together, we can help your child thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

## School Security

Our school uses a video surveillance system as part of our continued efforts to support a safe, positive, and effective learning environment. We recognize that the images recorded by this video surveillance system are personal information and, as with all other personal information, we take steps to balance privacy rights with safety and security concerns. The school has the legal authority to collect this personal information under Section 24 of Nova Scotia's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Only designated staff has access to our video surveillance equipment, and such access is restricted as required by law. The system is used to enhance school safety and to deter or act in response to unlawful behaviors. If you have any questions about video surveillance at our school, please contact Administration at 902-464-5184

## News & Information from the HRCE

### 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](#).

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Scan to book



#### 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



#### 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



## 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](#).



### **What happens when a school loses power?**

Learn more at [hrce.ca/families/cancellations](http://hrce.ca/families/cancellations) under *Power Outage Information for Families*

 Halifax  
Regional Centre for Education

## 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](https://unpluggedcanada.com/sign-pledge).

### APPS EVERY PARENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF



 <b>SNAPCHAT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Disappearing messages</li><li>Snap Map location sharing</li><li>Addictive features (streaks)</li><li>Sexting &amp; adult contact</li></ul>	 <b>INSTAGRAM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Body-image pressure</li><li>Hidden DM requests</li><li>Teens use secret "Finstas"</li><li>Exposure to adult content</li></ul>
 <b>ROBLOX</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Inappropriate games</li><li>Unmoderated private servers</li><li>Chat with strangers</li><li>Pressure to buy Robux</li></ul>	 <b>TIKTOK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Highly addictive feed</li><li>Harmful viral trends</li><li>Attention fragmentation</li><li>Frequent adult content</li></ul>
 <b>DISCORD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>High grooming risk</li><li>Adult/NSFW content</li><li>Harassment &amp; cyberbullying</li><li>Unmoderated servers</li></ul>	 <b>YOUTUBE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Inappropriate content</li><li>High risk of grooming</li><li>Addictive short form content</li><li>Attention fragmentation</li></ul>
 <b>CHARACTER AI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sexualized roleplay bots</li><li>High grooming-style risk</li><li>Fake "AI relationships" with kids</li><li>Encourages secrecy from parents</li></ul>	 <b>TELEGRAM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Encrypted hidden content</li><li>Large, risky group chats</li><li>Minimal moderation</li><li>Hard for parents to monitor</li></ul>
 <b>REDDIT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Unfiltered communities</li><li>Adult/disturbing content</li><li>Harmful topics easily found</li><li>Anonymous users &amp; predators</li></ul>	 <b>CHATGPT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kids may overshare personal info</li><li>Mature themes can appear</li><li>Emotional dependence on AI</li><li>Hard for parents to monitor use</li></ul>

**Before you let your child use a platform, create an account using their age and explore it yourself to see the content and interactions they'll be exposed to.**

## Head Lice Reminders

We encourage parents to make checking their child's head for the presence of nits and/or lice a regular part of their routine. Please notify the school if your child has head lice and provide the recommended treatment before returning to school. Call 8-1-1 at any time to speak with a Registered Nurse for more information and guidance if head lice are still present after the second treatment. For information on the prevention and treatment of head lice, refer to the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness pamphlet, [How to Prevent, Find and Treat Head Lice](#) on the Nova Scotia Public Health Website.

## 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](http://hrce.ca/families/cancellations).

