

MARINE DRIVE ACADEMY NEWS

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V6 Issue 2 November/December 2025

Universal Screening in Reading

In September, classroom teachers spend time getting to know their students and who they are as learners. Schools will be using *Universal Screening in Reading* for Grade 1 and 2 students. This is one of the many ways teachers will assess learning.

What is Universal Screening in Reading?

It's a short (1–5 minute) activity that helps us see how your child is developing key reading skills. Think of it as a quick check-in on their reading journey, like looking at a map to see where they are and what might help them move forward.

Why do we do it?

The screening helps teachers understand children's strengths and where they may need extra support. This allows us to plan instruction, so students get what they need to succeed in reading.

Important to know:

This is *not* a test. There's no "pass" or "fail." It's a way for teachers to ensure students are supported in their learning.

P-12 Parent Teacher Information:

Parent-Teacher Interviews will be held on **Thursday, December 4th** from 12:30-2:30 and 6:00-8:00.

Please have a list of teachers you would like to see before **calling** to book your appointment.

Appointments will be booked from November 19th -December 3rd 10:00AM-3:00PM.

Interviews will be a maximum of 10 minutes, if you require more time, please, contact the subject or classroom teacher and book a time other than Parent-Teacher Day.

Christmas Dinner

The students and staff will be treated to a Christmas Dinner on **Thursday, December 11th**. Please send a lunch with your student(s) if they are not participating in the Christmas Dinner.

Grad Reminders

- Please keep Ms. Walsh in the loop about:
 - where you have applied (school and program name)
 - where you have been accepted (school and program name)
 - plans for next year
 - if you need help with applications
 - any scholarship, bursary or award that you want included in the grad program
- Check [Ms. Walsh's website](#) and the MDA Grad Google Classroom regularly for scholarship and bursary applications.
- Even though you can't apply for student loans until May, there are things you can do now to make sure there are no delays processing your applications:
 - get a bank account in your name
 - get your Social Insurance Number (SIN)
 - complete income tax returns on time (student, parent/guardian, stepparent)
 - gather custody/separation/divorce agreements (if applicable)
 - gather disability documentation from doctor or psychologist (if applicable)
 - visit <https://novascotia.ca/studentassistance/Apply/New/GettingReady.asp> for more information

SchoolCash Online

Our school will post items for purchase (ex: yearbook) relevant to your child. You can make all purchases and payments from your phone, tablet or computer. This is the preferred method for payment.

To get started, we ask all families to register for SchoolCash Online as soon as possible. It's free and takes less than two minutes. You will receive an email once items are posted for purchase. (To receive email notifications please click "My Account – Manage email notifications")

Visit <https://hrce.schoolcashonline.com/> and click *Register* to get started.

Need support? Connect with the SchoolCash Online help desk at schoolcashonline.com/Home/Support

We hope that *SchoolCash Online* makes paying school-related fees more convenient!

Donations

- A general donation link can now be found on the homepage of your school's website. If your school is doing a fundraiser for a specific initiative, they will share a unique link where you can donate.
- All donations submitted online are subject to a transaction fee of 4.6% of the donation amount, plus an additional \$0.12 which will be paid by the school. This means that when you donate \$20, the school will receive \$19.01. For more information on how the fee is calculated, [click here](#).
- An electronic tax receipt will automatically be emailed to you.
- You still have the option of donating to school initiatives directly using cash or cheque.

If you need support logging into your SchoolCash Online account or have questions about making a donation, please reach out to [the SchoolCash Online help desk](#).

Students walking after school: For the safety of all our students, we ask **ALL** students who are walking after school to please wait in the cafeteria until buses leave.

Water Bottles

Students are reminded to bring a water bottle to fill up at the water station.



MDA Spirit Wear – order school clothing online at <https://pmgsw.com/products/Marine-Drive-Academy-c156592252>

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE



Marine Drive Academy 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 have 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 take action in response to unlawful behaviour.

Parent Navigators

Do you have questions about supports available for your child? Are you wondering where to turn? HRCE's Parent Navigators can guide you!

We know that navigating the many supports available to you and your family during the school years can be overwhelming. The role of the Parent Navigator is to help parents and guardians of HRCE students find and access services available in education, justice, health, community services and more.

HRCE's Parent Navigators have built strong relationships with community agencies throughout the region and have developed a deep understanding of the tools and resources out there for families.

They can help you find the support that you or your child may need to achieve success, inside and outside of school. They will help guide and connect you with the most appropriate services and resources. Reach out! Contact Information:

[Charlene Sparks](#)

902-464-2000 x4362

[Amelia Downey](#)

902-464-2000 x4361



Cold Weather Reminders: As the weather continues to get colder, we remind you that our P-6 students will be going outside for fresh air and exercise during recess and lunch. Please ensure that your children are dressed appropriately for the weather and prepared to stay outside for approximately 30 minutes at lunch time. **Please ensure that all outerwear is labeled with child's name or initials, so it can be returned to the owner if found.** Please put extra pants, socks, and mittens in your child's backpack for wet/snow days! Once the snow comes, students who wish to play in the snow will require snow pants.

Cancellation of School

By 5:30 a.m., staff will make recommendations to the Regional Executive Director of Education (or a designate), based on the information gathered and assessments of each area. The Regional Executive Director of Education makes the final decision based on this information. If it is safe to have students and staff on the roads and sidewalks, then schools will be open. If not, classes will be cancelled.

It is our goal to make the decision 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.

School cancellation announcements will be made as early as possible on local radio stations, the Halifax Regional Centre for Education's school cancellation line (464-4636), via Twitter at http://twitter.com/HRCE_NS and/or the HRCE website (www.hrce.ca). Also, you may sign up for e-mail or text message notifications at <https://www.hrce.ca/families/cancellations/subscribe-notifications>.

Occasionally, during bad weather, there are times when the buses will not be travelling on some roads in our school catchment area. If this should occur, please leave a message on the absence line so that your child(ren)'s attendance will be recorded accurately in PowerSchool.

Unexpected Early Closure Arrangements

- In the event of an early school closure, Marine Drive Academy will follow the Halifax Regional Centre for Education Cancellations Policy:

Students in Grades PP-6	Students in Grades 7-12
<i>In the event of an early dismissal, students in grades pre-primary to six will not be released from school unless parents/guardians or designates have been notified by the school.</i> https://www.hrce.ca/families/cancellations A Marine Drive Academy staff member will call the people whose names and telephone numbers are provided by parents and guardians in the <i>CONTACTS</i> section of the Registration/Demographic Form until someone is reached for dismissal instructions.	<i>If you have a child in junior high or high school, you should prepare and discuss a plan for what to do if schools close early.</i> https://www.hrce.ca/families/cancellations There will be no phone call home.

Dates to Remember

November



December



January



November 10th – Remembrance Day
Observance at 10:50am.

December 4th – AM P.D. Day
PM – Parent-Teacher Interviews
12:30-2:30 & 6:00-8:00PM
**NO CLASSES FOR PP-12
STUDENTS**

Jan 5th – First Day Back
After Break

November 11th – Remembrance Day
– **NO CLASSES**

December 9th –Holiday Concert at
6:30pm

Jan 28-29 – Exams

November 21st - P-12 Assess &
Evaluation Day – **NO CLASSES FOR
PP-12 STUDENTS**

December 11th – Christmas Dinner
for students and staff

School Activity (more info to follow)

Term 1 Ends – P-9

December 16th – Snow date for
Holiday Concert - 6:30pm

Dec 19th – Last Day for students
before Holiday Break

Dec 22nd – P.D. Day – **NO CLASS
FOR PP-12 STUDENTS**

February 2nd – Semester 2 Begins – High School