



## MARINE DRIVE ACADEMY NEWS

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**Principal:** Mr. A. Verge

**Vice Principal:** Mrs. A. Smith

**V6 Issue 3** January/February 2026

*Thank  
You*

A big thank you to the following groups and organizations for their generous donations towards our Christmas Dinner:

Sheet Harbour Lions Club, Moser River Community Hall Assoc., Anglican Parish of Port Dufferin, Sheet Harbour Legion, Millbrook First Nation Band and Foodland.

A special thank you to all the volunteers & staff who helped prepare and serve the delicious meal and to Mr. Cumminger for organizing this event for students and staff. Your efforts and generous donation of time are greatly appreciated.

### MDA EXAM SCHEDULE - January 28 and 29, 2026

	January 28th, 2026	January 29th, 2026
AM 8:30-11:30	<b>MKS 11</b> - Room 306 <b>Chemistry 11</b> - Room 317 <b>PreCal 12</b> - Room 320 <b>Math 12</b> - Room 320 <b>MTW/MTHE 12</b> - Room 325	<b>Physics 11</b> - Room 306 <b>ENG 12</b> - Room 326
PM 12:30-2:30	<b>Math 10</b> - Room 326 <b>Math 11</b> - Room 317 <b>GSS 12</b> - Room 306	<b>Science 10 O2</b> - Room 317 <b>Science 10</b> - Room 306

**\*\* Please note: All Nova Scotia Virtual School summative assessments will be written on January 22, 2026.\*\***

#### Notes:

- Students in grades 10-12 who are remaining in the building must go to the cafeteria.
- In the event of a school closure, the exam schedule is adjusted by advancing it one day for each missed exam day

## **Universal Screening for Grades P, 1 and 2**

Throughout the year, classroom teachers spend time getting to know their students and who they are as learners. In January, our school will be using Universal Screening in Reading for Grade Primary, 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.

## **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](#).

## Learn about the Influenza vaccine

### FAST FACTS ABOUT THE FLU VACCINE

- Influenza (the flu) is a 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

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



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

### 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](#).

*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](http://unpluggedcanada.com/sign-pledge).

# APPS EVERY PARENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF

unplugged  
Canada



## SNAPCHAT

- Disappearing messages
- Snap Map location sharing
- Addictive features (streaks)
- Sexting & adult contact



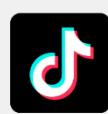
## INSTAGRAM

- Body-image pressure
- Hidden DM requests
- Teens use secret "Finstas"
- Exposure to adult content



## ROBLOX

- Inappropriate games
- Unmoderated private servers
- Chat with strangers
- Pressure to buy Robux



## TIKTOK

- Highly addictive feed
- Harmful viral trends
- Attention fragmentation
- Frequent adult content



## DISCORD

- High grooming risk
- Adult/NSFW content
- Harassment & cyberbullying
- Unmoderated servers



## YOUTUBE

- Inappropriate content
- High risk of grooming
- Addictive short form content
- Attention fragmentation



## CHARACTER AI

- Sexualized roleplay bots
- High grooming-style risk
- Fake "AI relationships" with kids
- Encourages secrecy from parents



## TELEGRAM

- Encrypted hidden content
- Large, risky group chats
- Minimal moderation
- Hard for parents to monitor



## REDDIT

- Unfiltered communities
- Adult/disturbing content
- Harmful topics easily found
- Anonymous users & predators



## CHATGPT

- Kids may overshare personal info
- Mature themes can appear
- Emotional dependence on AI
- Hard for parents to monitor use

**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.**



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

**Registration for the 2026-27 school year begins on February 2.** To ensure we have the right staff and support 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](#) 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.

## **Reminders:**

### **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

### **Main Office**

The Administrative Assistant, Mrs. Levy, is away from her desk from 11:00am to 12:00pm. If you call the school and leave a message during this time, please be aware, it will not be retrieved until after 12:00pm.

**School Yard Safety:** Vehicles **are not** permitted to drive up over the hill during school hours. This route is reserved for buses dropping off and picking up elementary students & emergency vehicles.

**Morning Drop-Off Time:** There is no supervision at the school until **8:10am** therefore, students cannot be dropped off at school before the staff are available. Please do not drop students off prior to **8:10am** as it poses a safety risk for students. Please take the first driveway to your left and park in the student pick up/drop off loop.

**Students Being Picked Up:** Students in Gr. P-12 being picked up must be signed out at the office. If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up a student, the office requires a **note or phone call** from the parent/guardian giving the individual permission to take the student. Pre-Primary students being picked up by a parent/guardian or someone other than the parent/guardian must contact the Pre-Primary teacher(s) at 902-885-2777 ext:1591221.

### **After School Activities**

To ensure the safety and security of our elementary students, we require a **written note** signed by parent(s) or guardian(s) if a child is going to an activity after school. For example, an after-school program with Parks and Recreation requires a written note

**Notes must be written on a separate piece of paper, as they are filed at the office.**

**Reporting an Absence** for PP-12 Students: For students' safety, it is very important that you contact the school if your student will be absent or late for any reason. Please call 902-885-2777 and extension 1 to report an absence. **Leave your name, the student's name (first & last) and the reason for the absence.** Leaving a message will avoid the school calling home. The absence line is available 24/7.

**Students Arriving Late:** We, at times, have students arriving late. Research shows that there is a correlation to academic success and student attendance. We are seeking parent/guardian support in having this improve. Classes begin at 8:30 AM. When students arrive late it is very disruptive to the learning in the classroom as it requires the teacher to stop instruction to record attendance, while the other students are waiting to re-engage in the lesson. We look forward to this situation improving, with your support.

If a student does arrive late due to an appointment or unforeseen circumstances, they must report to the main office to sign in.



**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 children are dressed appropriately for the weather and prepared to stay outside for approximately 30 minutes at lunchtime. **Please ensure that all outerwear is labeled with a 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.

# Guidelines for school and/or bus cancellations due to weather

It is HRCE's goal to communicate any changes to the regular operations of schools and/or school 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 buses 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:

- Bused 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.



If there are any changes to our regular operations, we will communicate in the following ways:

- 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 our website [www.hrce.ca](http://www.hrce.ca)
- On X (formerly Twitter) at [twitter.com/hrce\\_ns](https://twitter.com/hrce_ns)
- On Instagram at [instagram.com/hrce\\_ns](https://instagram.com/hrce_ns)



## How does Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) decide on school and/or bus cancellations?

- By 4:30 a.m., HRCE staff begin to gather information from:
  - A contracted weather service that provides radar and satellite imagery, real-time road conditions and weather warnings;
  - A meteorologist who provides forecast details, level and type of precipitation and impact on road conditions;
  - HRCE's transportation service providers, who provide updates on road conditions in their area;
  - Municipal and provincial transportation staff; and
  - Other local weather services, including Environment Canada and The Weather Network. By 5:30 a.m., HRCE staff make recommendations to the Regional Executive Director (or designate), who then makes the final decision. This decision is communicated as close to 6:00 a.m. as possible.

**Remember: Parents/guardians always have the right to keep their child home from school if they believe that the travelling conditions are unsuitable.**

## 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
<p><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></p> <p><a href="https://www.hrce.ca/families/cancellations"><u>(https://www.hrce.ca/families/cancellations)</u></a></p> <p><b>A Marine Drive Academy staff member will call the people whose names and telephone numbers are provided by parents and guardians in the <b>CONTACTS</b> section of the Registration/Demographic Form until someone is reached for dismissal instructions.</b></p>	<p><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></p> <p><a href="https://www.hrce.ca/families/cancellations"><u>(https://www.hrce.ca/families/cancellations)</u></a></p> <p><b>There will be no phone call home.</b></p>

Dates to Remember			
<b>January</b> 	<b>February</b> 	<b>March</b> 	<b>April</b> 
Jan 5 <sup>th</sup> – First Day Back after Christmas break	Feb 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Registration for the 2026-27 School Year Semester 2 Begins	March 13 <sup>th</sup> – Assess Day – No Classes for PP-12 students	April 2 <sup>nd</sup> – PD Day – No Classes for PP-12 students
Jan 22nd - NS Virtual School Summative Assessments	Feb 4 <sup>th</sup> – Sr. High Curriculum Night 6:30-7:30	March 16 <sup>th</sup> -20 – MARCH BREAK	April 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Good Friday – No Classes
January 27 <sup>th</sup> - International Holocaust Remembrance Day & Family Literacy Day	Feb 12 <sup>th</sup> – Gr. 9 Transition Meeting @ 6:30 in room 317		April 6 – Easter Monday – No Classes
Jan 28-29 <sup>th</sup> - Exams	Feb 16 <sup>th</sup> – Heritage Day – No Classes		April 7 <sup>th</sup> – Gr. 7 Immunization
			April 29 – AM PD Day PM Parent-Teacher 12:30-2:30 6:00-8:00pm