

# September 2025 Newsletter



## St. Stephen's Elementary School

3669 Highland Ave., Halifax, NS B3K 4J9

**PRINCIPAL:** David Madgett **VICE PRINCIPAL:** Nicole Gerrard

**ADMIN. ASSISTANT:** Heather Cosgrove-Smith

### Principal's Message

Dear SSES Families,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 school year! It is a joy to see our students return with bright smiles, eager minds, and ready hearts. September is always a special month as it sets the tone for the year ahead, and together we begin building strong routines, lasting friendships, and a love for learning.

At St. Stephen's, our vision will guide us throughout the year:

"St. Stephen's Elementary School is a safe, inclusive, and caring school where every child is valued, diversity is celebrated, and all students are supported to achieve academic excellence while growing with confidence, curiosity, and a strong sense of belonging."

This year, we are committed to living this vision each day by creating classrooms that nurture curiosity, celebrating the strengths each child brings, and working together as a community where every student feels seen, supported, and inspired to achieve their best.

We encourage families to stay engaged whether by attending activities such as our Curriculum Night/PTA BBQ, joining the PTA or SAC, or simply talking with your child about their school day. Your partnership plays a vital role in helping us fulfill our vision and make this a memorable year.

We appreciate the trust you place in us each day. We look forward to a year filled with learning, laughter, and the delightful little surprises that make each school day unique here at St. Stephen's Elementary School.

Yours in Learning,

Dave Madgett, Principal and Nicole Gerrard, Vice-Principal

### Upcoming Events

Sept 1 (Mon)

- Labour Day (No School)

Sept 2 (Tue)

- Organizational Day for Teachers (No Classes)

Sept 3 (Wed)

- Professional Learning Day (No Classes)

Sept 4 (Thu)

- First Day of Classes for Students
- PTA Morning Coffee House

Sept 8–12 (Mon–Fri)

- Fire Drill #1 (conducted throughout the week)

Sept 9 (Tue) –

- SAC Meeting (5:15 PM)
- PTA Meeting (6:30 PM)

Sept 11 (Thu)

- Pink Shirt Day – Stand Up Against Bullying

Sept 15–19 (Mon–Fri)

- Lockdown Drill #1 (conducted throughout the week)

Sept 22–25 (Mon–Thu)

- Hold and Secure Drill (conducted throughout the week)

Sept 25 (Thu)

- Curriculum Night (6:15 PM); PTA BBQ (4:45 PM)



# What's New

## We Need Lunch Monitors

Interested in becoming a lunch monitor? Lunch Monitors provide support and assistance to students during lunchtime activities under the direction of the school principal. The Lunch Monitor will oversee students in a variety of settings including the classroom, lunch area, and outside play areas. For more information, please contact our Admin Assistant, Mrs. Cosgrove-Smith at [hcosgrove-smith@hrce.ca](mailto:hcosgrove-smith@hrce.ca).

## When Visiting the School

Visitors are welcome! Please be aware of the following few protocols listed below to ensure the safety of our students:



- For the safety of students and staff, all visitors must enter through the front (main office) doors at all times. Please press the buzzer and wait to be greeted by Ms. Cosgrove-Smith.
- Check in with our secretary, Ms. Cosgrove-Smith, at the office.
- All visitors must sign-in (sign-in book is in main office foyer) and always wear a visitor or volunteer tag in the building.
- If you are meeting with your child's teacher, administration, or another staff member, please make sure an appointment time has already been established before coming to the school.

## New Provincial Code of Conduct

The Nova Scotia Department of Education has introduced an updated Provincial School Code of Conduct to ensure safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environments. For more information please visit: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/school-safety>

## First Day - Free Coffee and Tea Meet-up



Are you new to the school or reconnecting with school families after summer break? Bring your schoolyard conversations over to the younger end alcove for a **free** coffee, tea, juice, or snack during drop-off on the first day from 8:25 a.m. until 9:10 a.m. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) will be set up outside or at the kitchen window. Come say hello! We are also happy to answer any questions about activities we organize for students and the school community.

## School Advisory Council (SAC) Meetings

Have you ever wanted to know more about how our school and regional centre operate? Consider joining our School advisory council (SAC). The SAC is an advisory body to individual school principals, as well as the regional centres for education (RCEs). They provide recommendations on variety of issues related to their local school and the overall school system. Our SAC Executive has a few openings for those who are interested. Please contact the Principal, Dave Madgett, at [dmadgett@hrce.ca](mailto:dmadgett@hrce.ca).

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 5:15pm in the kitchen from September–June (no meetings in December or March).

## Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Meetings

Our Parent Teacher Association is a small but very active group of Parents/Guardians/Staff who strive to achieve these common goals:

1. To promote collaboration between parents/guardians and all school staff
2. To support programs promoting the well-being and **safety of students in the school**
3. To promote an interest in, and a better understanding of, the educational curriculum at the school
4. To provide financial support to the school community to **enhance the learning environment**
5. To promote participation in school related activities by staff/parents/guardians and build community spirit.

Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:15pm in the Library from September–June to talk about fundraising and planning for upcoming events – ALL ARE WELCOME!

## A Friendly Reminder About Dogs on School Grounds

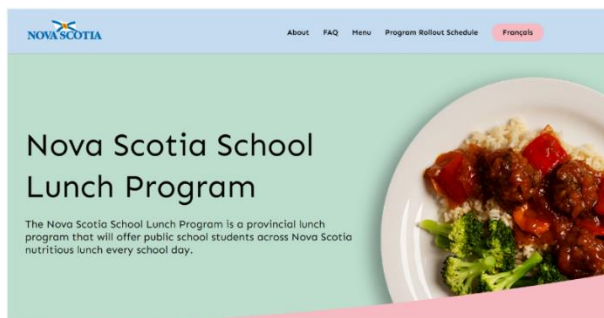


We kindly remind everyone that dogs are not permitted on school grounds at any time. If you have your dog with you, please remain off school property and avoid crowding entrances or exits. Thank you for helping keep our school safe and welcoming for all!

## Curriculum Night/PTA Family BBQ

Curriculum Night take place at the school this year on Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup> from 6:15pm-7:15pm. Our PTA will be hosting a family BBQ on this same night from 4:45pm-6:15pm! More details will follow on how this will happen in the coming weeks.

## Nova Scotia School Lunch Program



The full Nova Scotia School Lunch Program menu is available on [www.NSLunch.ca](http://www.NSLunch.ca). This year's menu has new and improved kid-approved options like chicken fingers, pizza, and mac and cheese. The Nova Scotia School Lunch Program is pay-what-you-can, letting you to decide the amount you want to pay for lunches. The amount you choose to pay through the online ordering system is confidential. Schools and food service providers will only know that a meal has been ordered.

For more Information and ordering help please visit [www.NSLunch.ca](http://www.NSLunch.ca) to explore the menu and get answers to frequently asked questions. If you experience any issues when ordering, please contact your region's School Food Lead by creating a Support Request in the ordering system.

## October is Mi'kmaq Heritage Month



This year's History Month poster theme: A'tukwemk aq A'tukowinu'k – Storytelling and Storytellers. This year's theme honours the distinctive and descriptive stories of Mi'kmaw people—stories shaped by the land and waters, rooted in Mi'kma'kik, and passed down through generations. They are not only ways of remembering, but of connecting—to each other, to our ancestors,

and to Mi'kmaw knowledge systems that continue to grow and guide us. For more info follow the link:  
<https://mikmaqhistorymonth.ca/>

### Life Threatening Allergies and Scent Sensitive School



We have several students who have life threatening allergies to peanuts and nut products. Please respect their health and well-being by sending your child with snacks and lunches that do not contain nuts. Additionally, some of our students have medical conditions that are be worsened by scented products.

### Label, Label, Label



# FUNDRAISING

We would like to avoid an accumulation of clothing and gear over the coming months in our lost and found. Please label your child's items, such as clothing, boots, shoes, lunch bag, school bag, hats and gloves. To help families ensure that misplaced clothes are returned to their rightful owners, our PTA has an ongoing fundraiser with Mabel's Labels. Mabel's Labels are laundry, dishwasher, and microwave safe, and easy to

apply. Visit Mabel's Labels at <https://mabelslabels.ca/en-CA> , click "Support a Fundraiser" and type "St. Stephens Elementary School PTA (Halifax)". They have a 15% back-to-school sale on. Use code: BTS15 at checkout.