
December 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

As we wrap up November, I want to acknowledge just how full and meaningful this past month has been. From our Remembrance Day observance and PTA Toy Bingo to report cards and the close of Term 1, it has been a time of reflection, celebration, and hard work. With the cooler weather settling in, there's also a shared feeling that the holiday season is quickly approaching.

As December begins, our school is already filled with excitement, laughter and kindness. It's a month that offers us many chances to come together, celebrate our students, and appreciate how far we've come in a few short months. We start the month with Parent/Teacher Conferences, followed by our festive evening—SSES Celebrates the Holidays—on December 11th from 6–8 p.m. These moments truly highlight the strong and caring partnership we share with families in supporting every child's learning and well-being. And of course, we can look forward to spirit days, holiday activities, and perhaps even our first snowfall.

December is also a wonderful time to pause and recognize the people who make our school such a special place. Our staff's commitment, our students' energy and curiosity, and the unwavering support of our families and community all contribute to the warm, welcoming environment we are so proud of.

As we move toward the holiday break, I hope everyone has the chance to rest, recharge, and enjoy time with loved ones. Thank you for your ongoing support, it truly makes a difference. A gentle reminder that the last day of school for students before the break is Friday, December 19th, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday, January 5th, 2025.

Yours in Learning,

Dave Madgett, Principal and Nicole Gerrard, Vice-Principal



Upcoming Events

Thursday, December 4th

- PD Day-AM
- Parent-Teacher Interviews-1-3 & 5-7 PM
(no classes all day)

Friday, December 5th

- **Wear your Holiday Colours**

Thursday, December 11th

- 6pm-8pm SSES Celebrates the Holidays

Friday, December 12th

- **Fun Hair/Fun Hat Day**

Sunday, December 14th

- Hanukkah Begins

Friday, December 19th

- **Comfy Cozy Day**
- Last day before break

Monday, December 22nd

- Last day before break
- Hanukkah Ends

Thursday, December 25th

- Christmas Day

Friday, December 26th

- Kwanzaa Begins
- Boxing Day

Thursday, January 1st

- New Year's Day (No School)
- Kwanzaa Ends

Thursday, January 5th

- First Day Back...Happy New Year!



What's New

December Spirit Days

Through the month of December we are closing out the calendar year with 3 Days of School Spirit. Please see below for the list of tentative events.

Date	Event
Fri. December 5 th	Wear your Holiday Colours
Fri. December 12 th	Fun Hair/Fun Hat Day
Fri. December 19 th	Comfy Cozy Day

December 4th PD-Day & Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Interviews will be conducted in person from 1-3pm and 5-7pm on Thursday, December 4th. As always, if you are not able to meet during this time, please reach out to your child's teacher(s) to arrange a phone call, or another meeting time that is mutually convenient. Teaching Specialists will be available by dropping in. Our percentage specialists will be available on a drop-in basis at the following times:

Percentage Specialist Availability December 4 th	
Joanne Coxon School Counsellor	1-3pm
Brenda Haughian Music	5-7pm
Susannah McKinnon (English as an Additional Language)	5-7pm

SSES Celebrates the Holidays

There is a little over a week before our SSES Celebrates the Holidays evening. This event will take place on Thursday, December 11th from 6-8pm. Students and families are welcome to drop in for an interactive

- Holiday music playing
- Hot chocolate, maybe popcorn, canteen
- Santa will be here and will have scheduled readings a couple of times throughout the evening
- Grade 3&4 carolers will be singing
- Ornament making/colouring
- Spread the joy of the holidays and create a greeting card for a resident at Northwood Manor
- Photo Wall where families can take holiday pictures.
- ...and more to come!!!

Holiday Concert Gift Basket:

During our SSES Celebrates the Holidays evening on December 11th, we will be selling tickets for a Spa Gift Basket. The draw will take place at the end of the evening. If the winner is not in attendance at that time, they will be notified by the school. Please consider bringing cash to purchase tickets: 1 for \$2, 3 for \$5. Thank-you! The funds raised will be used for the Star Fund, a school administered fund to assist some of our St. Stephen's families, especially during this holiday time. Thank you for your support.

Dressing for Colder Weather



It is important for students to get daily fresh air and have an opportunity to play outside. It is very windy most days but with proper clothing we will be able to stay comfortable outdoors! Rain/Snow pants, gloves/mittens and a tuque (as well as a change of clothes) are always a safe bet to keep in the backpack as well. Ensuring your child(ren) come to school dressed for the weather is essential to a great day at school. Please let us know if we can help in obtaining any of the above items by contacting the office.

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](#).

Winter is Coming: 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.

Head Lice



Head lice and/or nits do commonly occur in children of this age. It is our practice to keep parents informed when cases of head lice are reported. Please check your children's hair periodically for any signs regarding this issue. Reducing the frequency of head lice incidents is best accomplished through cooperative efforts between home and school. For more information:

<https://www.nshealth.ca/sites/default/files/documents/pamphlets/07135.pdf>

Mabel's Labels PTA Fundraising Campaign



Winter coats, snow pants, hats, mitts and boots can be a nightmare to keep track of for any family. Mabel's Labels' personalized labels and stamps can help you keep track of your child's things! The labels are laundry, dishwasher and microwave safe, and easy to apply. Visit Mabel's Labels at www.mabelslabels.com, click "Support a Fundraiser" and type "St. Stephens Elementary School PTA (Halifax)" into the search bar. Place your order, and it will be shipped directly to your home

Happy Holidays

