

September 2026 Newsletter



St. Stephen's Elementary School

3669 Highland Ave., Halifax, NS B3K 4J9

PRINCIPAL: Cindy Astephen **VICE PRINCIPAL:** Nicole Gerrard

ADMIN. ASSISTANT: Heather Cosgrove-Smith

Principal's & Vice Principal's Message

Dear St. Stephen's Elementary Families,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 School Year at St. Stephen's Elementary!

Whether your family is returning or joining our community for the first time, we are thrilled to welcome you to the St. Stephen's family.

As we embark on this year together, our commitment to your children's learning remains at the heart of everything we do. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions at any time please reach out.

St. Stephen's Elementary 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.

Our dedicated team of teachers, specialists, and support staff have been hard at work preparing an inspiring, safe, and engaging environment for our learners. We firmly believe that educating a child is a collaborative effort between the school, families, and the broader community.

Important School Highlights & Schedules:

8:20 am - 8:35 am: Yard Duty (Supervision of students begins)

8:35 am: Entry Bell Classes Begin

10:10 am - 10:25 am: Recess

11:40 am - 12:40 pm: Lunch

2:40 pm: Dismissal

We encourage families to stay engaged whether by attending activities such as our Curriculum Night/PTA Ice-cream Social, joining the PTA or SAC, or simply talking with your child about their school day.

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 7 - Labour Day (No School)
- Sept 10- Pink Shirt Day- Stand up Against Bullying Day
- Sept 24 - Curriculum Night & PTA Ice Cream Social
- Fire Drill #1 (practice throughout the week)
- Sept. 25: Professional Development Day - no classes, all schools
- Sept. 29- Observe Orange Shirt Day
- Sept. 30: National Day for Truth & Reconciliation - no classes, all schools

[List of yearlong dates](#) for your reference is linked.



Your partnership plays a vital role in helping us fulfill our school vision and making this a memorable year.

We appreciate the trust you place in us each day. We look forward to an incredible year of learning, growth, and community!

Warmly,

Cindy Astephen Principal and Nicole Gerrard, Vice-Principal

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 hcogrove-smith@hrce.ca.

When Visiting our 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.

Provincial Code of Conduct

The Nova Scotia Department of Education has introduced an updated Provincial School Code of Conduct in 2025/26 to ensure safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environments. For more information please visit:

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/school-safety>

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, Cindy Astephen, at castephen@hrce.ca.

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 5:15pm in the library 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



Curriculum Night takes place at the school this year on Thursday, September 24th from 6:15pm-7:15pm. Our PTA will be hosting a family ice cream social on this same night from 5:15pm-6:15pm! More details will follow on how this will happen in the coming weeks.

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 worsened by scented products.

Nova Scotia School Lunch Program



We're looking forward to the 2026-27 launch of the Nova Scotia School Lunch Program! Beginning this school year, the program will be available in all public schools across the province.

Start date

Lunches at our school will begin on Tuesday, September 8.

Key dates for the first ordering cycle:

Ordering opens: Friday, August 28

Ordering closes: Wednesday, September 2, at noon

Registering and ordering

All lunches must be ordered through the online ordering system. To get started, visit www.NSLunch.ca and click "Order Now." Returning users can sign in using their existing account. More information, including instructions on how to create a diner account, is available at www.NSLunch.ca.



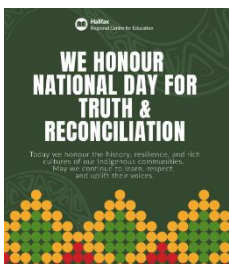
October is Mi'kmaq Heritage Month

This year's History Month poster theme: Nepisulti'k: We Are Healing. This year's theme honours the importance of healing. Elder Murdena Marshall encouraged us to understand healing as a process. For her, healing and health are not something a person "achieves." They are a journey people live every day. For more info follow the link: <https://mikmaqhistorymonth.ca/>

Stand Up Against Bullying Day is September 10

On Stand Up Against Bullying Day, we come together to promote kindness, inclusion and respect in our school communities.

Every student deserves to feel safe, supported and welcome at school. On Thursday, September 10, we invite students and staff to wear pink, if they're able, and help show that bullying has no place in our schools. Together, we can help create school communities where everyone feels they belong.



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On September 30, we honour the children who never returned home from residential schools, and the survivors, families and communities who continue to live with their lasting impacts. Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led movement that reminds us that Every Child Matters and encourages all of us to learn, reflect and support truth and reconciliation. As there are no classes on Wednesday, September 30, we invite students and staff to wear orange, if they're able, on Tuesday, September 29.

Bus Planner

Everything you need to know about student transportation, including eligibility, stop times and stop locations can be found on BusPlanner. Once you register and subscribe, you can choose to receive email and/or text message notifications on changes to routes, bus delays or cancellations.

To sign up, go to BusPlanner at hrce.mybusplanner.ca and click on Parent Portal. Follow the instructions to create an account. Don't have a BusPlanner Parent Portal account? Need help logging in? Please contact the HRCE Student Transportation Team through the Transportation Inquiry Form [here](#).

Looking for 2026-27
busing information?
Login and check BusPlanner Parent Portal!



