

Nelson Whynder Elementary January Newsletter

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Jan 1: New Year's Day
- Jan 5: First day of school for 2026
- Jan 26: SAC meeting
- Jan 27: International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- 26-30 Family Literacy Week
- 29: NWES Family Literacy Evening

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear NWES Families,

Happy New Year! I hope you and your families enjoyed a restful and joyful holiday season. As we begin 2026, I want to thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are building a school community where every child feels valued, supported, and proud of who they are.

As we start the new year, our focus remains on creating a safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment for all students. We continue to support student success in literacy, math, and overall well-being by using teaching practices that help students build confidence, skills, and a love of learning. Our staff is committed to providing meaningful learning experiences that reflect students' cultures, voices, and strengths.

This January, we are excited to continue an important initiative called **The Legacy of Identity**. This is a student-led project that gives African Nova Scotian students opportunities to learn about their history, culture, and identity in meaningful ways. Through research, storytelling, and creative work, students explore who they are and where they come from.

We will also continue to focus on our **Student Creed and the Schoolwide Matrix of Behaviour**, which guides students in showing kindness, respect, and responsibility each day. These values are celebrated through our Positive Participation Awards and Celebration Assemblies, where we recognize students who make positive choices and contribute to our school community.

Your support at home makes a big difference. Reading together, talking about school, and encouraging positive choices all help your child succeed.

We look forward to a year filled with learning, growth, and shared success. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions, ideas, or concerns.

Warm regards,

April Desmond

Principal, Nelson Whynder Elementary School

Nelson Whynder Family Literacy Night - Our Stories Matter

- ★ On Thursday 29th January, from 5:00–6:00pm, we invite families to join us for a special **Family Literacy Night**. Together, we will celebrate reading, writing, speaking, listening, identity, and joy.
- ★ Come along for an evening of sharing stories, connecting with one another, and celebrating the voices and experiences that make our community unique. **Our stories matter, and we look forward to celebrating them with you.**



Life-Threatening Allergies

Nelson Whynder Elementary School kindly asks that all families continue to respect our Life-Threatening Allergy Policy. Please note that students and staff have life-threatening allergies, including those to **nuts, fish, shellfish, and various scent sensitivities**. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated, as it helps us maintain a safer environment for everyone.



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

Please share the following with families on behalf of the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

Fast Facts about the Flu Vaccine

- Influenza (the flu) is 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

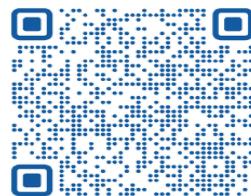
For more information, [click here](#).

Learn about the Influenza vaccine

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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



Online Platform Risks From Unplugged Canada

Sharing on behalf of 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.

APPS EVERY PARENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF

unplugged Canada



SNAPCHAT

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



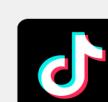
INSTAGRAM

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



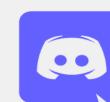
ROBLOX

- 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.

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:

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.



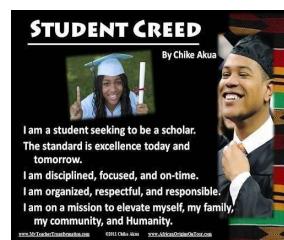
How will I find out?

- 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.

Positive Participation Awards For the Month of November and December

Classroom Awards	Music	Phys.Ed	French
Pre- Primary Taraji Downey Primary Kalayah Simmonds Grade 1 Zakyiah Simmonds Grade 2/3 Kayden Smith Grade 4 /5 Royalty Whalen Grade 6 Lucius Fourgaud	Primary Ree'Nyan Downey-Galbraith Grade 1 Tutuu Nyeunti Grade 2/3 Novah Downey Grade 4/5 Egypt Simmonds Lamb Grade 6 Carter Shearer	Primary Chyzier Willis Grade 1 Avaya Smith Grade 2/3 Heaven Downey Grade 4 /5 Lavonia Beals Grade 6 Zy'Zayian Provo	Grade 4/5 Erina Downey Grade 6 Faliscity Beals



Safe Arrival

Safe Arrival If your child will not be attending school or will be late, it is imperative that you call the school's safe arrival line at 1-833-582-6940 or visit <https://sishrsb.ednet.ns.ca/public/> to record them as absent. The automated system will call out for all unaccounted absences. If your child will be arriving late, please record them as absent, and the office will mark them present once they have arrived at school. The automated system is not set up to account for half day absences. Daily attendance and prompt arrival at school ensure your child(ren) and all other students in the class a successful start to their day. Missing even 10 minutes of a morning routine can interrupt student learning. We encourage parents to call the safe arrival line rather than calling the school.



Resources for Parents from Unplugged Canada



If you're concerned about your kids' screen time, smartphone use, or social media pressure, there are some wonderful resources below to help parents and caregivers navigate the challenges of raising kids in a digital world.

For parents: *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt highlights the research and evidence behind how early smartphone and social media exposure have shaped a generation over the last 10–15 years. *Ten Rules for Raising Kids in a High-Tech World* by Jean Twenge offers practical, actionable guidance to help parents set healthy boundaries and support their kids' digital wellbeing.

For kids: *The Amazing Generation*, written for pre-teens and teens and co-authored by Jonathan Haidt, will be released on December 30. It explains the impact of today's digital environment in an engaging, age-appropriate way. All of these books are available at your local library or bookstore.

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.

New educational technology resource for families

We're excited to share a new online resource designed to help families understand how technology supports student learning in HRCE. This page provides an overview of how tools like Chromebooks and Google for Education are used in classrooms, what provincially approved online platforms students may access, and how student privacy is protected. You'll also find information about Nova Scotia's guidance on the provincial cell phone expectations, tips for supporting online safety and digital citizenship at home, and an introduction to how students are learning about artificial intelligence in a thoughtful and responsible way. It also includes answers to common questions about screen time, passwords, communication during the school day, and more.

You can find the webpage [here](#).



SAC News

Thank you to everyone who attended our SAC meeting on the 24th of November. These are the dates of our next meetings. Our next meeting is at **6pm Monday 26th January 2025**.

Future meetings

- 6pm Monday 23rd February 2026
- 6pm Monday 30th March 2026
- 6pm Monday 27 April 2026
- 6pm Monday 25th May 2026
- 6pm Monday 29th June 2026