

PWS UPDATE

Park West School Newsletter

Phone: (902) 457-7800 E-mail: parkwest@hrce.ca Website: www.pws.hrce.ca
Principal: Mr. D. Carter Vice Principals: Mr. B. Melanson and Ms. D. Olsen

November 17, 2020

Receive the PWS Update electronically for the 2020-21 school year. All parents/guardians/families will receive our school newsletter, PWS Update, via email using the SWIFTK12 automated messaging system. Paper copies of the newsletter are available upon request from the school office.

Public Health Is Leading the Way: During the COVID-19 pandemic schools take direction from Nova Scotia Public Health authorities (in collaboration with EECD and HRCE) in all matters related to school operational guidelines, practices, and health and safety protocols. Public Health determines when a school, or group of schools, should be temporarily closed, and when they transition to other methods of teaching/learning (such as online at-home learning).

We're Still Open: Park West School is currently open and operating. Teaching and learning is occurring in all classrooms for grades pre-primary to nine. Public Health authorities and the EECD have determined it is safe to do so. Online learning for students is not an option at this time. If Public Health dictates we move to a different model of teaching, online learning may be an option then. We take our direction from Public Health. If parents/guardians choose to keep their child home for an extended period of time, they may register for home schooling through the Home Schooling Federation of NS. As long as schools remain open at-home work packages will not be provided by teachers. Teachers are currently engaged in preparing and presenting in-class/in-school learning opportunities for their students. If students are absent for a few days due to short term illness they can catch up on missed work when they return to school after consulting with their teacher(s).

Safety First: No vehicles (except authorized vehicles) are permitted on school grounds (on the school driveway, traffic loop, staff parking lot, etc.) daily **8:00 am – 3:00 pm**. If you see the **orange pylons** at the entrance to our school that means no unauthorized vehicles are permitted on our grounds. This message had been communicated numerous times in newsletters, on our school website, and on our school display sign at the front of our property on Langbrae Drive. Please do not expect exceptions to be made for only you and your child/children. Plan ahead for inclement weather. These measures are to ensure the safety and well-being of our students, your children. We are a community, and work together to ensure the safety of all our children. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Keeping You Informed: Effective communication to keep our parents, guardians, and community informed is always a priority here at PWS; but especially during the COVID era. We have been using the SWIFT-K12 automated messaging system extensively this year to share information via telephone calls and emails. We will continue this practice throughout the year. **Please ensure we have on record here at school your most current telephone numbers and email addresses, so you receive all communication from us.** Every Sunday evening you will now be receiving a SWIFT-K12 message with COVID-19 information and reminders. Please contact us if you have any questions or require clarification. The email message will include the following documents:

- *Contact Tracing: What steps does Public Health take when a case of COVID-19 is reported in a school community?*
- *COVID-19 in Schools: FAQ's*
- *COVID Checklist* (in 7 languages)
- *Shared Health – Shared Responsibility* (protocols and reminders)
- *Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Schools* (in 7 languages)

Are You Ready for Winter Weather and Possible School Closures (grades pre-primary to 9)?

- Student safety is the first priority of the *Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE)* when making school cancellation decisions. HRCE staff begins to gather information from various sources beginning at 4:30 am. Staff consults with Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) staff (on road conditions), local weather services, and our school bus transportation providers. By 5:30 am, HRCE staff makes a recommendation to the Executive Director based on the information gathered. If it is safe to have students on the roads and sidewalks, then schools will be open. If not, **all or some schools** may be closed depending on the weather and road conditions in different geographic areas of HRCE.
- For **full day closures** of **all or some** schools, the decision will be announced as close to 6:00 am as possible. Announcements will be:
 - Posted on the HRCE's website (www.hrce.ca);
 - Posted on the HRCE's Twitter account www.twitter.com/HRCE_NS;
 - Recorded on the HRCE's School Cancellation Information Line **902-464-INFO (4636)**;
 - Emailed or texted to subscribers. Subscribe to receive notice of school and bus cancellations by **e-mail or text** message by following the link on the front page (left side) of the HRCE website;
 - Communicated to local media (radio and TV) outlets.
- If conditions deteriorate throughout the day HRCE may **close schools early** when weather or road conditions are considered to be a threat to the safety of students. In the event of an **early school closure**, the announcement will be **made by 11:00 AM**. School busses will be dispatched to schools two hours earlier than their normal regularly scheduled pick-up for the afternoon dismissal. **Walking students** will be dismissed at **11:35 am**. Elementary students at PWS will be dismissed according to the directions we received from parents/guardians earlier this school year.

- On school days when weather conditions exist that make it unsafe to open schools at the regularly scheduled time, but it is predicted that conditions will improve, a **2 hour delayed opening** may occur. Delayed openings would be considered when a severe weather event has concluded but snow clearing or other operations require additional time. Delayed opening may also be considered when the school building is experiencing an issue (no power, no water) and additional time is required to prepare the facility for opening. In the event of a delayed opening the following will apply:
 - School opening will be delayed 2 hours (**that will be 10:25 AM at Park West – grades PP-9**)
 - School bus pick up times will be delayed 2 hours
 - Excel child care will be cancelled for the morning only
 - Each school will alter morning schedules to best address their timetables.
 - Lunch times will not change (**11:35 AM and 12:35 PM at PWS**)
 - Afternoon class schedules will not change
 - Dismissal time will not change (**2:45 PM at Park West**)

HRCE encourages parents and guardians to use their own discretion when it comes to sending their child to school when the weather is inclement. Remember: parents/guardians always have the right to keep their child home from school if they believe the travelling conditions are unsuitable. Students who are unable to attend school due to the weather and/or bus cancellations will not be penalized if assignments are given that day. The weather in Nova Scotia can be unpredictable. Schools can be closed unexpectedly. HRCE encourages parents to have plans in place for their children. That includes making sure your child knows where to go if school is cancelled early, making sure children are dressed properly for the weather conditions, and having a back-up plan in place for childcare if schools are closed or delayed in opening. To learn more about the process on how decisions regarding closures and cancellations are made, visit: <https://www.hrce.ca/about-our-schools/parents/inclement-weather> .

Here to Assist You: HRCE families: **Parent Navigators** are part of your school learning community team. Typically families reach out to a Parent Navigator when they:

1. *Have questions about policy.* If you are wondering who to speak to about all things related to HRCE, we can direct you.
2. *Have registration inquiries.* If you are registering a child for school and have questions or need help with the registration process, we are here to assist.
3. *Are searching for resources and supports.* Parent Navigators are here to help families understand how to access and navigate key supports within HRCE and communities.
4. *Need to talk with someone.* A Parent Navigator can have an informal chat with you over the phone, through email, or virtually via “Zoom”.
5. *Have no access technology.* Have no internet? A Parent Navigator can assist with filling out and submitting electronic forms with you over the phone.
6. *Are looking for answers.* Are there questions we can help you get answers to? Please give us a call and we can either get the information for you or navigate you to a person who can help.

There is no referral process. Just pick up the phone and give a Parent Navigator a call, or send us an email. Your School Learning Community Parent Navigator can be found at www.hrce.ca

How to reach them: **Stephen Somers** ssomers@hrce.ca 902-464-2000 ext. 4361 or 902-219-0587

Some Reminders:

- Students should bring a **filled water bottle** to school with them everyday. They are not permitted to use the water fountains at this time due to COVID restrictions. Cups are not provided by the school.
- Students (in grades 4 – 9) must **bring a mask to school** with them every day. They were provided with two cloth masks in early September. We have a *very limited supply* of masks available in the office when students forget theirs at home.
- If students require a **fork or spoon** to eat their lunches they must be brought from home. The school cannot provide cutlery to students at lunch time.
- Our **lunch supervision program** does not provide drop-in service to students when it's convenient for them (or their parents) to stay at school for lunch or when the weather is inclement. Students who remain at school for lunch **MUST** be registered in the lunch program. All other students must go home for lunch.
- Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions there will be **no Christmas concerts** presented at PWS this season. Performances and concerts are not recommended by Public Health until physical distancing restrictions are lifted.
- PWS is closed on **Friday, November 20** for *Assessment & Evaluation (no school for students)*
- PWS is closed on **Thursday, December 3** for Professional Development for staff and virtual parent-teacher interviews.
- Due to COVID-19 restrictions there will be no in-person/at-school **parent-teacher interviews** in December. All communication between teachers and parents will be via telephone. More information will be available soon.

Dates to Remember:

NOVEMBER		
18	SAC virtual meeting	6:30 pm
20	Assessment & Evaluation Day (no school for students)	
DECEMBER		
01	Term 1 Report Cards distributed to parents/guardians	
03	P.D. and Parent-Teacher Interviews (no school for students)	
01-04	Parent-Teacher Interviews via telephone (no in-person meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions) <i>*more info to follow</i>	
22	Last day of school before Christmas holidays <i>*schools re-open on Jan. 4</i>	

