

Hawthorn Elementary January Newsletter



Dear Hawthorn Families,

We would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year. I hope your winter break was filled with special moments and meaningful time spent with family and friends.

The staff at Hawthorn is happy to be back with students and is looking forward to a year of continued learning and growth.

Math

We are excited to welcome David Rodger, a Math coach who will be working with our staff to optimize learning in Math, with a specific focus on computational fluency. David will be with us for the next 5–6 weeks, working closely with administration and teachers, as well as providing professional development during staff meetings. We look forward to this collaboration and the learning opportunities it will bring in support of student achievement.

Student Safety and Well-Being

Please join me in welcoming our new 100% school counsellor, Ms. Renu DeSilva. Ms. DeSilva will be working in classrooms, with small groups, and with individual students to promote well-being, mental health, and social-emotional development. We are thrilled to have her as part of the Hawthorn team.

As a school, we remain focused on fostering an environment where all students feel a strong sense of belonging. This is achieved by building positive relationships with students and providing academic and social opportunities where they feel safe, supported, and included. We have been doing monthly assemblies that teach and promote belonging. So far we have had assemblies on “Who are the adults in the school” and “Who are the students in our school”.

Also, to support this work, we will be focusing on our school-wide behaviour matrix as a shared foundation for expectations and belonging. In a later communication this month we will share this with the community.

SAC

In Nova Scotia, SACs continue to be an important way for families and community members to have a voice in their school. Councils may also apply for provincial Innovation Fund grants to support projects that enhance student success and well-being. Last year’s Hawthorn SAC applied for and received funding for an Innovation Grant. The Grant supports our students to explore the Hawthorn community through local history. Students will be learning, researching, writing and creating. Stay tuned for updates as the project progresses.

The Hawthorn Elementary School Advisory Council (SAC) supports student learning, well-being, and school culture by bringing family and community voices together. We warmly invite parents, guardians, and community members. We are especially welcoming members of First Nations, African Nova Scotian, and all newcomer communities, as these voices are not yet represented on our committee. Join us for our next SAC meeting on Wednesday, January 7th, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. Please contact the principal if you would like more information. (TWaterhouse-Campbell@hrce.ca)

[SAC Information](#)

Home and School

Our next Home and School meeting is Wednesday January 7th at 7pm. All parents and guardians are welcome to attend.

A huge shout-out to our Home and School volunteers! This year, they have worked incredibly hard to create fun and inclusive activities for our school community. So far,

they have organized the Halloween Howl and supported the organization and running of Shopping Under the Stars. Both events were a tremendous success!

In addition to organizing events, Home and School raises funds to support resources that enhance learning for our students and staff. While there is a long list of contributions, we would like to highlight a few special items.

Gym Benches

This year, Home and School generously purchased two benches for our Physical Education program. On behalf of our staff, students, and Mr. Foot, our PE teacher, we extend a heartfelt thank you for this generous donation.

The benches will be used for a variety of activities, including fitness, gymnastics, and cooperative games. Thank you for your continued support!

Grade 6 Sweatshirts

Home and School members also organized the purchase, distribution and helped to fund sweatshirts for our Grade 6 students. The students look fantastic, and the sweatshirts are a wonderful way for them to feel connected and celebrated during their final year at Hawthorn. Thank you for making this meaningful tradition possible.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our families and community and look forward to a wonderful year ahead.

Together in Learning,
Hawthorn Administration

Ms. Waterhouse and Ms. Bambury

Important dates to remember in January

January 7: 6pm School Advisory Council Meeting and 7pm Home and School Meeting
(All are welcome)

January 9: Belonging Assembly- Respecting One Another

January 27: International Holocaust Remembrance Day

January 27: Family Literacy Day

January 30: Assembly- Mi'kmaq elder Charlotte Bernard - Presenting about Two eyed seeing and talking circles. (Pr-3 session and 4-6 session)

Dressing for the weather



As winter weather continues, we would like to remind families of the importance of dressing students appropriately for outdoor learning and play. Students go outside daily for recess and lunch whenever weather permits, and being properly dressed helps ensure they are safe, comfortable, and able to enjoy their time outdoors.

Please ensure your child comes to school with:

- **A warm winter coat**
- **Hat and mittens/gloves**
- **Snow pants**
- **Winter boots**

Labeling items is also very helpful, as winter gear often looks alike.

Thank you for your continued support in helping our students stay warm and ready to learn!

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](#).

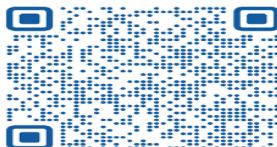
Learn About the Influenza Vaccine

Learn about the Influenza vaccine

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

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

Shared with families on behalf of the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

Fast Facts about the Flu Vaccine

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

Online Platform Risks From Unplugged Canada

APPS EVERY PARENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF

un-plugged
Canada



SNAPCHAT

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



ROBLOX

- Inappropriate games
- Unmoderated private servers
- Chat with strangers
- Pressure to buy Robux



DISCORD

- High grooming risk
- Adult/NSFW content
- Harassment & cyberbullying
- Unmoderated servers



CHARACTER AI

- Sexualized roleplay bots
- High grooming-style risk
- Fake "AI relationships" with kids
- Encourages secrecy from parents



REDDIT

- Unfiltered communities
- Adult/disturbing content
- Harmful topics easily found
- Anonymous users & predators



INSTAGRAM

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



TIKTOK

- Highly addictive feed
- Harmful viral trends
- Attention fragmentation
- Frequent adult content



YOUTUBE

- Inappropriate content
- High risk of grooming
- Addictive short form content
- Attention fragmentation



TELEGRAM

- Encrypted hidden content
- Large, risky group chats
- Minimal moderation
- Hard for parents to monitor



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.

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.

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](#).