

Hawthorn Elementary Family Handbook 2023-2024

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Principal's Message

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year, and a very special welcome to all the families who are new to our community. Co-operation and communication between home and school is very important throughout the year. We strive for harmony, respect and honour in the school, on the playground, and during the journey to and from school. We look forward to working with all families this year.

Principal – Ms. Gourlay

Vice Principal – Ms. Dunn

Administrative Assistant – Mrs. Urquhart

Staff Directory

The school's website contains a current list of all staff, their assignments, email, website and twitter (for those utilizing these).



Bells & Safe Arrival

Bell Schedule

Teacher Supervision	8:40
Morning Bell	8:50
Classes begin	9:00
Recess	10:30
Lunch	12:00-1:00
Dismissal	3:00



Safe Arrival

If a student is going to be absent from school for any reason, please use our new safe arrival program.

Please see the hrce website for more

information: <https://www.hrce.ca/SafeArrival>



Communication

Hawthorn Elementary values and recognizes the important role strong communication between families and the school contributes to a successful educational experience. Our plan for Communicating School Learning can be found in detail on our school website. The school will communicate through monthly newsletters, School Messenger emails and phone calls. You are encouraged to keep updated phone numbers and emails through the school office. Access for PowerSchool for Parents can be obtained by contacting the school.

Attendance & Supervision

Student Attendance

Regular school attendance supports greater school success and achievement. **It is important that children are in school and on time.**

Student Supervision

Morning supervision on the playground by regularly scheduled teachers begins at 8:40 am. Please do not drop off or have children arrive before this time. Students can enter the building at 8:50 am and go directly to their classroom. Teachers provide supervision during recess (10:30 -10:45). Lunch supervision is provided by paid and volunteer lunch monitors.



Phone calls & early pick up

Telephone Calls

Students who request to make a telephone call must obtain permission from their classroom teacher. Students are not permitted to use the telephone to make playdate plans. Students are encouraged to plan ahead to bring items they need each day or on specific days (library books, band instruments, homework), rather than calling to have a family member bring them the item.

Early Departures

Parents/guardians who come to the school to pick up their child before the dismissal time must first call the school office, then buzz the school upon arrival. **No child should leave the school without first informing the office.** We will walk them to the door to meet you.

Illness & Allergies



Life Threatening Allergies

Students who have been diagnosed with Life Threatening allergies must complete documentation every September. The school is responsible for increasing awareness and posting signs of allergens-providing parents with the criteria for documentation and informing all staff and volunteers of the student's information. Parents/Guardians are expected to complete the necessary paperwork, provide the child with an epi-pen, and encourage them to wear a Medic Alert bracelet (see website). More information is included in the HRCE policy C.012

Students Ill in School

If your child is unwell, they are encouraged to stay home. **Follow public health protocols.**

Medication at school



Students requiring medications at school must have proper documentation on file in the school office. Forms must be completed on a yearly basis so we have current information in the office. Over the counter drugs must also follow this procedure. All medication is kept in a secure location in the office and is given to the student by appropriate school personnel when required. Families should make every effort to give medications at home. Prescribed medication should be provided to the school in the original container dispensed by the pharmacy that is labelled with the student's name, the name of the drug, the prescribed dose, the administration time/schedule, and the route the medication is to be administered, the expiry date, and the storage information. Your pharmacist will do this when requested. For complete information please refer to

<https://www.hrce.ca/sites/default/files/hrsb/c.009-administration-medication.pdf>



Lunch & Allergies

Lunch

All students are permitted to stay for lunch each day. The students eat in their classrooms. They are supervised by lunch monitors. We continue to look for more lunch monitors for our school. Please contact the school if you are interested in working or volunteering full or part-time. Parents have the option of having their children go home for lunch. If this is not the norm for your child please send a note to your child's teacher.

Peanut/Nut Smart School

All of our classrooms are "peanut/nut smart" for the safety of some of our students. We have students who have life-threatening reactions to such products. We ask parents not to include these products in student snacks and lunches.

No Scents Please

There are some students and staff in our building who are extremely sensitive to scented products (perfumes, colognes, etc.) and chemical sprays. When these scents are present in our school, these individuals become ill and their health is compromised. When visiting, volunteering, or working in our school, *please do not wear scented products.*

School Safety

Visitors are asked to ring the doorbell upon arrival and Ms. Urquhart will answer through the intercom and ask how she can help you. We would be happy to deliver a forgotten recess snack or lunch bag to your child. We will meet you at the door and retrieve the item. If picking your child up early, please call ahead. All visitors must sign-in at the office and wear a visitor or volunteer tag.

In addition, the school has a number of safety drills throughout the year. These include a minimum of 6 Fire drills, 1 Hold and Secure Drill (classroom doors are locked and classes continue working but no entrance to the hallways or into and out of the building) and Lockdowns (classroom doors are locked and children are kept quiet in a designated position within the class). In case of evacuation from our school, Findlay Center is our relocation place.

It's important to all that our children feel safe both in and outside our school. For this reason, we ask that **dogs not come onto our school property during school hours and dismissal times, as even gentle dogs can cause anxiousness and feelings of discomfort for some children.** Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

School Code of Conduct

A positive, safe and caring environment is necessary in order for students to learn. Students, parents, teachers, support staff, principals, and school centres for education share responsibility for creating a school-wide approach to maintaining a positive and inclusive school climate where all students are supported to develop healthy relationships, make good choices, and achieve success in their learning. All members of Nova Scotia's school communities have a role to play in the awareness and prevention of unacceptable behaviour. The provincial school code of conduct policy applies to all public schools and centres for education in the Province of Nova Scotia. All students and school members in Nova Scotia are required to follow this provincial school code of conduct policy, which is governed by the Education Act. The Provincial Code of Conduct outlines expectations for establishing safe and inclusive learning environments and identifies roles and responsibilities of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, centres for education, and schools. Additionally, this policy outlines acceptable standards of behaviour and ways to promote acceptable behaviours. The EECD also identifies how unacceptable behaviours will be addressed and responses specifically forbidden. You can view the Provincial Code of Conduct on our website and through [this link](#).

As a school staff, Hawthorn has simplified a series of five rules for all students PP-6 and in all areas. Adherence to these rules will contribute to a safe, orderly and efficient school. They include

1. Listen to the direction of adults (First Time listening)
2. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
3. Use appropriate language and volume
4. Have permission to move in, out and within the school
5. Walk quietly in the hallways and stairways keeping to the right.

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

Traffic in the School Area

Hawthorn School does not have a parking lot and therefore staff, school community and visitors must park on the streets around the school. The school side of Hawthorne Street next has an area designated for school buses only. Please keep this area free of all vehicles. When the bus is loading and unloading, it will have its red lights flashing. It is illegal to pass a bus at this time. The school side of Hawthorne St. does have stopping limitations. We have had a few "close calls" because some drivers have been a little rushed and careless.

We would ask that families maintain an **idle free zone** in the vicinity of the school especially during drop off and pick up times to protect all of us.

Crosswalk Guards

Crosswalk Guards can be found in the intersections on the way to school where children walk before school, at lunch, and after school.



Emergency Closure of Schools

The Halifax Regional Center for Education takes great care when making the decision to alter the normal operations of schools in the event of severe or inclement weather. Decisions on school closures and/or bus cancellations are posted:

- On the board's website at www.hrce.ca
- Twitter at [www.twitter.com/HRSB_Official](https://twitter.com/HRSB_Official)
- recorded on 902-464-INFO (4636)
- and communicated to all local radio stations.

You can also 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. If you are interested in learning more on how decisions regarding closures and cancellations are made, visit <https://www.hrce.ca/about-our-schools/parents/inclement-weather>

In the event of midday cancellation, all parents or designates will be contacted directly by phone before students are dismissed from school. Please review the instructions you supplied to the school for your child in the event of a midday school cancellation.

Hawthorn is in the Dartmouth High Family of Schools.

Volunteers

Volunteers are valued and respected at Hawthorn for the role they play in enhancing the educational experiences for our students. Please see the website and monthly newsletters for the many ways you can volunteer at the school. When working directly with children in such areas as chaperoning on class trips, coaching, or helping in the Breakfast Program it is necessary to complete a Criminal Record check including a Vulnerable Sector Check and Child Abuse Registry Search on file in the school office.



Home and School Association (HSA)

Hawthorn Home & School Association (HSA) is a volunteer, non-profit organization comprised of parents, teachers, and school staff who are committed to supporting and assisting quality educational programs at Hawthorn School. **Membership is free and open to any interested parent/guardian or staff member.** As outlined in our mandate, a primary activity of the HSA is to raise funds for extra programming (special performances, support for school clubs, etc) and teacher support (including class field trips).



School Advisory Council (SAC)

School Advisory Councils are volunteer organizations that were established by the Nova Scotia Education Act. The duties of School Advisory Councils are embedded in the Act and as a legislated body, receive their authority under the Act. They were established to provide parents, staff, community members, and where appropriate, students, with a voice that will influence school decisions that impact on student learning. School Advisory Councils bring partners together to provide advice to principals and to school boards, in the best interests of students.

School Programs

All classroom programs are based on the Public School Program.

Curriculum

All Public Schools follow the curriculum as laid out by the Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). They can be accessed at

<https://sapps.ednet.ns.ca/Cart/index.php?UID=MTNTZXAYMDE3MTgzNTlyMTU2LjM0LjE3NS4yMjM=>

The curriculum is the cornerstone of education. It sets the standards for what teachers teach and what students learn. With an improved, streamlined curriculum, we are taking steps to ensure our students will be prepared for life, regardless of the fields they choose. The Integrated Curriculum is specifically focused on improving the two most important fundamentals in education: **math and literacy**.



Mathematics

What can integration look like in Mathematics?

During integrated mathematics time teachers will explicitly instruct students in mathematics outcomes. Teachers will continue to use effective strategies such as direct and guided instruction and discovery lessons. Other subject area outcomes (Health, ICT, Science, Social Studies, and Visual Arts) will be integrated into the learning opportunities planned for and provided to students.



Language Arts

What can integration look like in Language Arts?

During integrated language arts time teachers will explicitly instruct students in language arts outcomes. Teachers will continue to use effective instructional strategies such as reading and writing workshops. Other subject area outcomes (Health, ICT, Science, Social Studies, and Visual Arts) will be integrated into the learning opportunities planned for and provided to students.

Homework



The Provincial Homework Policy was developed in 2015. Homework can help students develop academically and personally when the work is carefully planned, directly connected to classroom learning, meaningful to students, and appropriate for a student's age and stage of development.

The purpose of homework will vary by grade and subject:

Homework assigned in grades primary–6 will:

- enhance student learning of foundational skills in reading and math (e.g., reading for pleasure, educational games)
- gradually introduce time to practice or apply learning in other subject areas
- promote healthy growth and development (e.g., practicing physical skills, interviewing family members)

Homework can be a wonderful opportunity to talk to your child about what's happening at school, and to see what your child can do on his or her own. Homework can help children to review and practice what they have learned in class. It can also develop self-confidence and allow the child to be an independent learner.

Making time for homework can be a challenge. Your child needs time for family and community activities, physical activities, hobbies and unstructured play. Homework should be organized to meet the needs of individual students and families. If some nights are not good because of other commitments, then it is important to plan for a block of time on other nights or the weekend.

Parents can help with homework by:

- Finding out class and school expectations
- create a time and space to do homework
- provide supplies
- show interest
- provide positive feedback
- contact the teacher with concern