



Upcoming Events: May

May 5: Red Dress Day

May 7: Spring Concert-Grades
3/4-6

May 10-16: Education Week

May 11-15: Grade 3 Provincial
Assessments

May 12: SAC (6-7pm) & HSA (7-
8pm)

May 13: DAL/SJAM Day

May 15: Black Excellence Day

May 17: International Day
Against Homophobia,
Transphobia, and Biphobia

May 18: Victoria Day-NO
SCHOOL

May 30: Spring Fair (11am-
2pm)

May 31-June 6: Access
Awareness Week

Other Notable Dates:

May Is:

- *Asian Heritage Month
- *Canadian Jewish Heritage
Month
- *Canadian Polish Heritage
Month
- *Speech & Hearing Month

école ST. JOSEPH'S A. MCKAY SCHOOL

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Follow us on The SJAM Home & School Facebook Page.

Dear SJAM Families:

As we welcome the month of **May**, we are anticipating the vibrant energy of spring is in full bloom across our school grounds. It has been a joy to watch our students thrive in our new building; the sense of "home" continues to grow stronger every day, fueled by the incredible community spirit that defines SJAM.

Even as we settle in, we recognize that we are **only 9 weeks into life in our new space!** We are still very much in a period of transition, finding our way through new processes and refining our daily procedures. We appreciate your patience and flexibility as we navigate these "growing pains" and work to make our new home run as smoothly as possible.

While we appreciate receiving emails of concern regarding our evolving processes, we want to remind our community that **modelling respectful communication** is the most effective way to move forward together.

Please rest assured that our staff's primary focus is the wellbeing of our children. We are reflecting daily on our systems and searching for ways to improve. When we approach these challenges with a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect, we set a powerful example for our students.

We ask for your continued partnership by reinforcing and reflecting the values of kindness and constructive dialogue.

Spring Concert!



A reminder that we will be hosting our **Spring Concert** in-house this month! We cannot wait to fill our new space with music and celebrate the talents of our students.

- **Who:** Students in Grade 3/4-6 & Band Students
- **Date:** Thursday, May 7th
- **Time:** 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Student Arrival: Please ensure students arrive by **5:30 PM** to prepare for the performance.

Celebrating Education Week



From May 10-16 we recognize Education Week. The theme is Fostering Empathy: Learning and Leading with Kindness. This year, we celebrate and recognize teachers, school staff, and community partners who show how kindness can make a big difference in learning. When schools focus on fostering empathy, they create safe and welcoming spaces where everyone feels included. Empathy helps students build strong friendships, work well together, and grow into leaders who care about others. By learning and leading with kindness, we prepare students not just for success in school, but for making their communities better places.

Honoring Red Dress Day



Red Dress Day 2026, held every May 5th, is a National Day of remembrance and activism honouring the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirited People (MMIWG2S+). It began with the REDress Project, created by Métis artist Jaime Black in 2010. On this day, red dresses will be draped in trees, hanging from windows, pinned to jackets, worn as earrings and red hands painted across faces. People will be partaking in

rallies and ceremonies to honour their loved ones, participating as allies and fighting for justice.

[Black Excellence Day \(May 15\)](#)



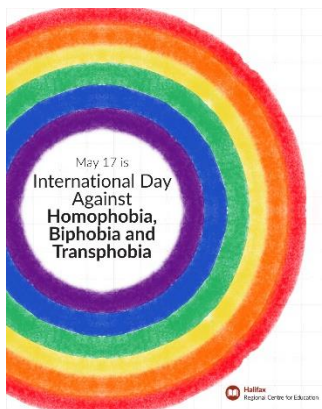
Black Excellence Day 2026 in Nova Scotia is an opportunity for schools to reflect on the learning and exploration of Black people and culture over the past year. It recognizes, celebrates, and supports learning from the achievements, contributions, and leadership of Black individuals and communities. More than a single-day celebration, Black Excellence is the recognition of meaningful steps toward strengthening inclusive learning environments where all students see themselves reflected in curriculum materials, through the stories we tell and the histories we honour.

The purpose of celebrating Black Excellence in our schools and classrooms is to affirm student's identities, build confidence, and inspire futures by highlighting role Black people have made in education, science, arts, leadership, and community advocacy. It reflects and celebrates thoughtful conversations in schools about equity, representation, and the ongoing work to remove systemic barriers.

This moment of reflection also invites educators and school communities to consider how Black Excellence is represented within their own classrooms and learning spaces. For some, this may affirm intentional work already underway; for others, it may serve as an opportunity to begin or deepen this practice. Black Excellence Day reminds us that this work is ongoing, and that there is always time to plan, reflect, and be deliberate in ensuring all students see themselves meaningfully reflected in our schools.

We welcome everyone to wear a black shirt or a shirt that represents Black culture or support for Black culture, if you're able, on May 15 to show your support for Black Excellence Day!

[International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia](#)



On May 17, our school community recognizes the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, a global day established in 2004 to raise awareness about the discrimination and violence faced by 2SLGBTQI+ individuals. This date marks the historic 1990 decision by the World Health Organization to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders. IDAHOBIT is an opportunity to promote inclusion, educate our students about respect and diversity, and stand together against hate. Observed in over 130 countries, the day reminds us of the ongoing work needed to ensure equity and belonging for all.

Access Awareness Week



**Access
Awareness
Week
Nova Scotia**

Access Awareness Week in Nova Scotia, taking place May 31–June 6, 2026, is an opportunity to recognize the importance of accessibility, inclusion, and the leadership of people with disabilities. This year's theme, "Disability Justice: Stronger Together, First Voice Leading Change for Collective Action," emphasizes the importance of centering lived experience and working collaboratively to create meaningful, lasting change.

In schools, this week is a powerful reminder that inclusion is everyone's responsibility. Classrooms are where understanding begins — through learning, conversation, and action. By listening to diverse voices, removing barriers, and fostering accessible learning environments, educators and students help build school communities where all learners feel valued and supported.

SJAM School Advisory Council (SAC)

Curious about the SJAM School Advisory Council?



- The SAC is a group of parent, staff, and community volunteer members who meet once a month to support and advise the school team on the academic achievement and well-being of students who attend SJAM.
- Did you know that anyone can attend an SAC meeting? Come check it out on **Tuesday May 12 from 6-7pm at SJAM.**
- We will be looking for new members to join in September, so now is a great time to scope it out!

If you have any questions reach out to either the Principal, Cheyanne Gorman-Tolliver (Ms. T) at cgorman-tolliver@hrce.ca or SAC chair Jamesie Coolican at hrce-sac-sjam@gnsps.ca

Home & School Association (HSA)

Join us! We meet in person and online (via TEAMS) to cook up future fundraising and community building activities for SJAM. All parents/guardians of current students are invited to join the team, which also includes SJAM staff.

**The next meeting for HSA will be in person (at SJAM)
Tuesday May 12th, 2026, 7-8pm.**



If you'd like to become a member or just pop in and see what's it all about before becoming a member, please reach out to either the Principal, Cheyanne Gorman-Tolliver (Ms. T) at cgorman-tolliver@hrce.ca or our committee chair, Erin Galliot, at sjamhomeandschool@hotmail.com

Screen Free Summer: Digital Diet Guidance



As summer approaches, many families are thinking about screen time. This article introduces the idea of a “digital diet,” encouraging a focus on the quality and purpose of screen use rather than just limiting it. It offers practical ways to help children build healthier, more balanced habits with technology. Read more [here](#).

Unplugged Webinar on Smartphones, Social Media and More

Unplugged Canada is hosting a LIVE webinar on May 6 every parent and caregiver needs to hear. We're talking smartphones, social media, the research — and most importantly, what we can do about it.

Hosted by Kirsten Sweet, educator and National Program Director with Unplugged Canada with Tania Johnson, Co-founder of the Institute of Child Psychology and Dr. Michele Locke, Clinical Psychologist, learn about the impact of smartphones and social media on youth and how the Unplugged Canada Pledge and our resources can spark meaningful conversations in your home, school, and community.

We'll also introduce two new initiatives: the National School Champion Program and Operation Landline — a summer campaign helping families delay smartphones and reconnect in simpler, more intentional ways.

Come ready to learn, connect, and be part of the movement. Register [here](#).

SJAM Track & Field



Message from Ms. Lucas:

Our school has been invited to participate in the Elementary Track meet at Beazley Field in Dartmouth this June. **Track is for students in grades 4, 5 and 6.** There are many different events that involve running, jumping and throwing:

Jumping: Long Jump and High Jump

Throwing: Shot Put (with a softball)

Running= 100m Sprint, 800m Race, 1500m Race and a 4x100 Relay.

We will be holding tryouts for any students who are interested in participating in track and field this year. Tryouts will be mandatory as there are a limited amount of spaces due to event capacity.

We will be holding tryouts for the running events on **Monday, May 4th** beginning right after school and running until approximately 4:15-4:30pm at the latest. The tryouts will be at Fort Needham Park. We will walk there together after school and students can be picked up there or walk home when it is finished.

Additionally, we will be holding tryouts for the jumping and throwing events on **Tuesday, May 5th** beginning right after school and running until approximately 4:15-4:30pm at the latest. Tryouts for the jumping events will be held in the gym and throwing out on the playground.

If it rains on a tryout day, an email will be sent by the school to let parents/guardians know about the cancellation and a new date for the tryout will be picked.

Inclusivity is also important to us so if there are any reasons why they are unable to make the tryouts and are interested in trying out please reach out to me via email at Hayley.Lucas@gnsps.ca and I will try my best to help!

Thank you,
Hayley Lucas, SJAM Phys. Ed Teacher

[SJAM 2 Spring Fling](#)



Join us on Saturday May 30 11am-2pm at SJAM for a few fun filled hours for both students and families with lots of games for all ages! Fishpond, Hockey and Basketball Shoot, Bouncy castles and Pluck a Duck! The grade 6s will also run a cake walk to raise funds for their end of year celebrations! We will also have a canteen with BBQ hamburgers and hotdogs as well as other treats! Pay at the door to get tickets which will be used at the games and canteen (cake walk will be cash only). Stay tuned for more info sent out by classroom teachers, the school email and posts on our Facebook page as we will be looking for

volunteers to run games and donations of food items.

[Life @ SJAM2](#)

The SJAM Community Social Fundraiser "Bids & Bites" was held April 17th and was a huge success! Big thank you to the SJAM's Home & School Association and all those who planned and volunteered their time for the event. Also, thanks go to all our sponsors, local businesses, and community members who donated items for our Silent Auction. All proceeds will go towards providing SJAM classes with valuable educational experiences.

See you next month!
Your SJAM Admin Team