

ÉCOLE ST. JOSEPH'S A. MCKAY SCHOOL

ACTING PRINCIPAL: AMY HUNT

ACTING VICE PRINCIPAL: KIM CASEY

ADMIN ASSISTANT: SANDY HARRISON



Upcoming Dates:

January 19th: SAC Meeting
(5:30 via Zoom)

January 27th: Family
Literacy Day

February: African Heritage
Month

February 15th: Heritage day
Honouring Edward Francis
Arab

March 15-19: March break

Contacts:

Phone: 902- 493-5180

Safe Arrival:902-493-6180

Fax: 902- 493-5186

Website: <https://sje.hrce.ca/>

Email: sjam@hrce.ca

Follow us on **Twitter**
@SJAMSchool & the
SJAM Home & School
Facebook Page

Remember to check the
school website at

<https://sje.hrce.ca/> for
updated information.

Message to Families:

Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed a restful holiday break and feel rejuvenated for 2021. We are looking forward to January as we continue to learn and grow together. During the week of January 4-8, SJAM staff engaged in professional learning focused on student achievement, well-being and equity - with a particular emphasis on the Inclusive Education Policy, and anti-racism in our school and in our system. We are excited to welcome students back on January 11th. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teacher by email or by phoning the main office at 902.493.5180.

We are excited to introduce Sandy Harrison as the new administrative assistant in the office at SJAM. Sandy worked at St. Pat's Alexandra and then St. Agnes Junior High, and is thrilled to join our SJAM family. Please extend a warm welcome to Sandy!

Daily Covid-19 Checklist:

Please continue to use the daily checklist below to check for symptoms of Covid-19 as directed by NS Public Health. Students who are exhibiting symptoms at school will be sent home and families directed to call 811. Students cannot return until 811 has directed that it is safe to do so.



COVID-19 Daily Checklist

It is important to closely monitor your health and the health of those you care for. Please consider these questions each day before leaving home and entering public spaces.

If you are feeling unwell, you should **stay home or go home immediately, and follow the instructions below**. Stay informed. For the most recent information, changes and restrictions visit <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus>.

1

Are you feeling unwell or do you have new or worsening health symptoms?

If yes, stay home and avoid public spaces, including work, school/child care, and shopping.

2

In the past 48 hours have you had, or are you currently experiencing, any of these symptoms?



Fever (i.e. chills/sweats) **OR** Cough (new or worsening)

OR two or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening);



Sore throat



Runny nose/nasal congestion



Headache



Shortness of breath

If yes, stay home and complete the COVID-19 self-assessment online, <https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/>. If you are unable to access the online tool, call 811.

3

In the last 14 days, have you or anyone in your household travelled outside Atlantic Canada?

If yes, and the travel is not essential, everyone in your home is required by law to self-isolate for 14 days. For more information on isolation and essential travel, visit <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/symptoms-and-testing/#self-isolate>.

4

In the last 14 days, have you had close contact (within 2 metres / 6 feet) with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?

If yes, you must stay home. You are required by law to self-isolate if you have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19. If you haven't spoken with Public Health or been tested, you should complete the online assessment at <https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/> or contact 811 to be screened for testing for COVID-19.

5

Are you waiting for results from a COVID-19 test or have you tested positive for COVID-19?

If yes, stay home. You are required by law to self-isolate while awaiting COVID-19 test results or if you have tested positive for COVID-19. Please follow instructions given by Public Health.

Revised November 25, 2020

Happy New Year from the SJAM Home and School Association!

Join us! We meet (**Via Zoom**) on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30pm 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**. All you need to do is email us at sjamhomeandschool@hotmail.com and let us know that you would like to receive the invites to our monthly Zoom meetings.



With the pandemic, we are not permitted to fundraise, but would love to hear from you as to how we can continue to connect our community. Even if you are not able to attend the meetings, please email your suggestions and interests for virtual connection to sjamhomeandschool@hotmail.com. Can't make the meetings? **Interested in staying informed?** Follow our Facebook Account: "*St. Joseph's A. McKay (SJAM) Home and School Association*".

Wishing you all a happy and safe 2021,
The SJAM H&S

Non-Medical Mask Policy:



Students in Gr 4-6 are required to wear masks (properly fitted covering their nose and mouth).

Please review with your child how to wear a mask properly and remind them that it is mandatory. If your child is in grades 4-6, they must come to school with a personal reusable mask every day. PP-12 students who ride the bus are also required to wear a mask. *We will be providing all students in grades 4-6 with two reusable masks upon return in early January*.

Did you know? The Nova Scotia Health Authority, the IWK & Community Health Teams are offering free virtual/online parenting support workshops. The sessions cover many topics including (but not limited to) mental health, wellness, nutrition, anxiety, managing family screen time, behaviour, parenting strategies and self-care. Lots of great info and support available!



Check them out at www.healthyns.ca and by calling 1-844-460-4555.

Update on the Rebuild of SJAM School:



Over the past few years, the Province announced that our school was slated for major renovations. After inspecting the building in early 2020, it was decided that a better plan was a complete rebuild of the building on the same school site. The estimated timeline for this process is as follows:

- demolish the current building in July 2021 after this school year;
- relocate our school community to the former **Beaufort/LeMarchant** School for a period of two school years;
- return to a new school on the existing site in September 2023.

We will work with our morning, lunch and after-school childcare providers to continue partnering with them through the relocation process.

In the coming months, there will be opportunities for community engagement to honour, celebrate and say goodbye to the current building, discuss the relocation process, and participate in a Steering Committee, which will focus on the design of the new construction. Please let us know if you would like to participate in any of these three efforts by emailing Amy at HuntA@hrce.ca

This is an exciting process for our school community. We thank all community members past and present who have engaged over the years in engagement processes such as the School Options Committee that led us here. Please stay tuned for information on how to engage in the process and feel free to reach out to the main office with any questions or concerns. We will share any information we receive with you as the process unfolds over the coming months in this newsletter, through our School Advisory Council (SAC) and Home & School Association (HSA), and on our social media platforms (Twitter & Facebook).

Lunch at SJAM:



Students staying for lunch are expected to come with a lunch that does not require heating, as well as necessary utensils. **Don't forget a reusable water bottle from home!** Please make sure that students bring a packed lunch to school in the morning with them to school. We are not able to have outside food delivery services drop food off for students. Also for safety reasons students are not permitted to leave school grounds during lunch unless accompanied by an adult.

Arrival & Dismissal:

Student Entry (assigned back doors): 8:50-9:00am

Dismissal: 3:00 pm

Late Arrival (front doors) after 9:00am

Please drop your child off at the designated drop-and-go areas on Kaye Street. Students can come onto the school grounds and enter through their designated door at 8:50 am (no earlier). Please leave the pickup area once your child enters the school ground. Students cannot be on the school ground before 8:50 am. If your child arrives after 9:00 am they need to come to the front door on Russell Street and check in at the office. At the end of the day at 3:00pm students will be dismissed from their designated door. Please leave the pickup area quickly when you have your child, so we can prevent crowding.

When students arrive at their designated door, school staff greet them and provide hand sanitizer while classroom teachers prepare to receive students in classrooms. Students have adapted well to this arrival routine at school and we are very proud!

Parking/Vehicles:

Please be reminded that there is **no parking** at the private Seton condo building next door to SJAM on Kaye Street, or in the SJAM staff parking lot. Parents who drop off and pick up their child(ren) for school or for Excel using a vehicle are required to use street parking. Thank you.

Safe Arrival:

If your child will not be in school for the regular entry time of 8:50 am, due to illness or appointment, please call the school **Safe Arrival number @ 902-493-6180**. If your child arrives after 9:00 am, they must arrive at the front door (Russell Street main entrance) and check in at the office so we can avoid unnecessary calls. If a child is not in school, and we do not have previous communication as to an absence or appointment, we are required to call.

Communication:

Communication with your child's teacher is important, especially now as parents/guardians are not permitted into the school due to Covid-19. Please reach out and let them know if you have any questions or concerns. It is our priority to work together in partnership. Please allow up to 48 hours for your child's teacher to respond.

Nut Aware/ Scent Aware:

Please be reminded that all schools in the HRCE are nut-aware schools, meaning you are asked not to send any food which contains nuts of any sort. Our schools are also scent-free due to environmental sensitivities.

Outdoor Clothing:



Winter is here! Please send your children to school with weather-appropriate clothing including warm coats, boots, hats, mittens/gloves, and snow pants so that they can play outside safely and comfortably. We have extra hats and mittens in the main office as well!

Guidelines for Closure due to Inclement Weather:

The Halifax Regional Centre for Education takes great care when making the decision to cancel schools and/or buses, or delay the opening of school, in the event of severe or inclement weather. When these situations occur, the information is posted on the HRCE's website at www.hrce.ca, on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/HRCE_NS](https://twitter.com/HRCE_NS), recorded at 902-464-INFO (4636) and communicated to local radio stations. Families can also subscribe to receive notice of cancellations and delayed openings by e-mail or text message by following this link: <https://www.hrce.ca/about-our-schools/parents/subscribe-notifications>

If weather conditions warrant, the HRCE could implement a delayed opening. Delayed openings would be considered when a weather event has concluded but snow clearing or other operations require additional time. Delayed opening may also be considered when the physical plant is experiencing an issue such as a power outage or loss of water and additional time is required to prepare the school to open. If this was to occur, school and Pre-Primary would be delayed by two hours. In our school, this means school would start at 11:00am. If school buses are operating, the expectation will be that students are picked up two hours later than their regularly assigned time pending any weather-related delays. Our lunch and dismissal times will remain at their regularly scheduled times. The EXCEL program will be cancelled for the morning only.

The weather in Nova Scotia is unpredictable so it's always a good idea for families to have a back-up plan for childcare when school is cancelled. 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>

Guidelines for school and/or bus cancellations due to inclement weather

Nova Scotia winter weather can change quickly and can be challenging to predict. This document outlines the steps we take when deciding whether to cancel school and/or bussing.

A 6:00 am announcement could be:

All schools are closed for the day

OR

Some schools (either individually or by family) are closed for the day

OR

All schools are open, but some or all busses are not operating for the day

OR

All schools are delayed in opening by 2 hours

If weather deteriorates, or is forecast to worsen throughout the morning

An 11:00 am announcement could be:

Bussed students will be picked up 2 hours earlier than their regular dismissal time

AND

Walking students will be dismissed at their regularly scheduled lunch hour

Remember:
Parents/guardians always have the right to keep their child home from school if they believe that the travelling conditions are unsuitable.

How does Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) decide on school and/or bus cancellations?

By 4:30 am, HRCE staff begin to gather information from:

- A contracted weather service that provides radar and satellite imagery, real-time road conditions and weather warnings;
- A meteorologist who provides forecast details, level and type of precipitation and impact on road conditions;
- HRCE’s three transportation service providers, who provide updates on road conditions in their area;
- Municipal and provincial transportation staff; and
- Other local weather services, including Environment Canada and the Weather Network.

By 5:30 am, HRCE staff make recommendations to the Regional Executive Director (or designate), who then makes the final decision.

This decision is communicated by 6:00 am.



Halifax
 Regional Centre for Education

Where can cancellation information be found?

Website: www.hrce.ca

Twitter: @HRCE_NS

Phone: 902-464-INFO (4636)

Local media outlets

Subscribe to email/text notifications at www.hrce.ca