

Ian Forsyth Elementary School Newsletter



Where Everyone Is A Star!

October 2024

Ian Forsyth Elementary School

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Important Dates to Note

October

Mi'Kmaq History Month

- 1 - Treaty Day
- 2 & 3 - Grade 6 Assessment - Literacy
- Week of Oct 7 - Fire Drill #2 (this week)
- 8 & 9 - Grade 6 Assessment - Math
- 8 - Virtual SAC 5:30 and Home & School 6:30
- 11 - PD day - no school for students
- 14 - Thanksgiving - No Classes
- 18 - Bus Evacuation Drills
- 18 - Online orders for NS School Lunch opens
- 23 - Retake - School Photos - **No family/group photos**
- 23 - **Noon** - Online orders for NS School Lunch closes
- 25 - NSTU Conference Day - No school

November

- Week of 4th - Third fire drill
- 5 - Virtual SAC 5:30 and Home & School 6:30
- 8 - Remembrance Day assembly
- 11 - Remembrance Day - no school
- 22 - Assessment and Evaluation Day - no School
- 26 - Band and Strings Concert IFES - 5:30
- 28 - Term One Reports home

Dec 3 - Holiday Concert Woodlawn High

Dec 5 - Professional Learning morning / Progress Conferences afternoon and evening - no school for students

Message from Principal

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our students, families, and staff for a fantastic first month of school!

In September, our children have been busy building friendships, learning routines, and engaging in class meetings, along with enjoying our curriculum night, popsicle social and a Saturday Fall Fun Fest. As we begin a full month of fall weather, we encourage everyone to dress in layers and to pack mittens, hats, and a change of clothes as needed!

As the season changes, we've noticed an increase in colds and flu circulating. If anyone is feeling unwell, please remember to stay home and rest. We truly appreciate everyone's commitment to keeping our community healthy together.

Additionally, when students spend time together in school, we often receive reports of head lice. Although we have not had any reported cases, please take a moment to review the *Head Lice in Schools* attachment and follow the provided guidelines. Thank you for your cooperation!

Angela Yerxa-Weeks - Principal

Pre-Primary and School Events

There have been some questions around how pre-primary students are integrated into the events we have at school. On days when school staff are engaged in professional learning, there will be no pre-primary program those days. As well, all school holidays are observed in pre-primary.

Any curriculum-based events (curriculum evening, parent/teacher...) are not pre-primary events as pre-primary is a play-based program and these students do not follow a curriculum. If you have any questions or concerns your lead ECE is available via email.

Pre-Primaries are welcome to participate in other school events such as Home and School events, school lunch and the milk program. If you ever have questions about participation, please call our main line 902-435-8435 to inquire.

Mi'kmaq Heritage Month

October is Mi'kmaq Heritage Month. Students and teachers will be engaged in learning about and honouring the Mi'kmaq culture and way of life. Besides playing a Mi'kmaq version of O Canada, we will be finding out about the earliest inhabitants of our province through story telling, art, fact learning, and research. Please ask your child what they are learning about as the month progresses.

This year's theme is Food Gathers us Together. "Food gathers us together for celebration, nourishment and comfort. It is central to our ceremonies, considered part of our medicines, and key to our resiliency." Join us this Mi'kmaq History Month as we celebrate the proud history of the Mi'kmaq in Mi'kma'ki! We are all treaty people.

Nova Scotia School Lunch Program

Please visit <https://nslunch.ca/> for information on the NS School Lunch Program. This site contains a lot of valuable information. The ordering platform for IFES will open on October 18. It is important to note that the window for ordering closes at noon on the Wednesday before the order begins. That means that for the first order, you must place your lunch orders by noon on Wednesday October 23. Late orders or changes to can not be made after the ordering window closes.

Please note that orders for the NS School Lunch Program are **NOT** made through SchoolCash. All orders must be made through the provincial site listed above.

Student Lunches - No deliveries, please.

We are asking that parents do not drop off student lunches at school if at all possible. Please send your child to lunch with their lunch pre-packed. School-based staff need to make all deliveries to students' classrooms, when lunches are delivered to school, adults have to leave what they are doing to deliver lunch. Deliveries also mean "Skip the Dishes" and meals delivered by taxi. We do not accept Skip the Dishes type deliveries for student lunches. We also realize that there may need to be some exemptions when situations arise. As long as lunch delivery is not the norm, we can work with families.

Please be reminded that we cannot heat up lunches for students. If you are sending in items that need to be served warm, a thermos is your best bet. As well, we **do not** have a supply of plastic forks and spoons for students. Please ensure that you send any necessary cutlery for your students' lunches.

It is very important that you do not send in food containing nuts or nut products. We have several students with severe nut allergies at our school.

School Photos

We are proud to have Adams Photography as our school photographer again this year. Adams Photography is a local Black business owned and operated by entrepreneur, Paul Adams Sr. who has connections with many in our school community. We are proud to support local Black business, and we consider Paul to be a role model for our school community. Monday October 23rd will be our retake date.

School Attendance

Last year, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) fully reinstated the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy. The policy is attached here for your reference.

School attendance is a shared responsibility between families and school. Per the Education Act, students are required to attend school regularly and punctually. All students are expected to be present and prepared for the beginning of class. Students in elementary school rely on parent/guardian support to maintain regular attendance.

If your child has missed more than 10% of the school year (9 days total), you will receive additional communication from your child's teacher. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help you support regular school attendance for your child.

Home and School

Our first Home and School meeting will take place virtually on Tuesday October 8th at 6:30. If you are interested in attending future Home and School meetings, please RSVP Krista Hetherington Duffy at kristamack24@gmail.com She will require your email address to email you the virtual meeting link.

School Advisory Council

Please join me in welcoming the current members of our SAC:

Parent Members: Cait Green, Krista Hetherington Duffy, Melanie Smiley

Staff Members: Meghan Conrad (Teacher), Jenna Hawkins (Teacher), Tracey Johnson (VP/Teacher), Angela Yerxa-Weeks (Principal)

Community Members: Tammy Mahar, TBA, TBA

We do require two community member spots to be filled to complete our council. If you are interested in joining SAC please send an email to the school ifes@hrce.ca

Other School Safety Items

Please help to keep our students safe when dropping off and picking up your children. Here are a few friendly reminders:

- Smoking is not permitted in public places. This includes on the sidewalk or at school bus stops. If you are picking up or dropping off students, please refrain from smoking while on the sidewalk.
- All student pickups will take place outside. If you are picking up students from school at dismissal time, please meet them at their regular entrance doors.
- If you are picking up students outside of dismissal time please follow the directions below:
 - Call the school when you are on your way to the school to let them know who you are picking up and what class they are in. 902-435-8435
 - Buzz the doorbell when you arrive.
 - Your child will be brought to you in the school lobby.
- Picking up from pre-primary, you must go directly to the appropriate pre-primary class and knock on the door.
- Bikes, scooters and skateboards are not to be driven on school grounds. Please remind your children that they must walk with these items while on the school grounds.
- When parking, be certain not to stop in areas that block the crosswalk in front of the school. As well, you are asked to please observe the pylons as non-stopping areas.
- Please do not move, drive past or drive on the pylons in front of the school or the pylons blocking the driveway of the school.
- There is no parking for visitors available on the school grounds. If you need to park to come to the school, carefully check that you are in a permitted parking area.
- Dogs are not permitted on schoolyard or playgrounds while students are present.

School Bus Safety

We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring a safe environment for our students during drop-off and pick-up times! To enhance safety, please remember to respect the

designated school bus zones and avoid driving around any vehicles that are stopped in front of the school. Often, a school bus may be present, and we want to keep everyone safe.

We understand that mornings can be busy, and time may be limited. Together, we can make a positive impact on our school community by prioritizing safety. Thank you for your support in helping us protect our students!

Arrival Time / Safe Arrival

Bus students are supervised on the school grounds when busses arrive. All other supervision begins at 8:35 a.m., when teachers are ready to welcome students in their classrooms. To ensure a smooth start to the day, please have your children arrive after this time and head directly to their classrooms.

For safety reasons, students are not permitted to play on the playground before school begins. Classes start at 8:45 a.m., and classroom doors will remain open until then. If students arrive after 8:45, they can enter through the main entrance and collect a late slip from our admin assistant.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us create a safe and organized start to the school day!

We appreciate your support in keeping us informed about your child's attendance! Ensuring that all our students arrive safely at school each day is one of our top priorities.

To make reporting absences easy, we're using a SchoolMessenger system. You can report future absences conveniently via an app, website, or toll-free phone number. If your student is absent or arrives late after 8:45 a.m. without prior notification, you'll receive helpful reminders via email, text, and phone calls from SchoolMessenger.

If we can't reach you through SchoolMessenger, our office staff will follow up to ensure everything is okay. Thank you for being a vital part of our school community!

Please report your student absences in any of the following ways:

PowerSchool Parent/Student Portal

Parents/guardians can log in to <https://sishrsb.ednet.ns.ca/public/> to access the SchoolMessenger website to report future absences.

SchoolMessenger App

Parents/guardians can download the SchoolMessenger app for Android and iOS devices and use their username and password for the PowerSchool Portal.

Toll-Free Number

Parents/guardians can call 1-833-582-6940 to report future absences using an automated system.

All three methods are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Absences can be reported at any time before the start of school on the day the student will be absent. Up to five consecutive absences can be recorded at once.

Please visit <https://www.hrce.ca/SafeArrival> for more information.

Changes to end of day routines

Please do not leave messages on our phone with messages for changes of end of day routines. If you are changing the regular arrangement for your child, please make sure that you speak directly with our admin assistant **before 1:30pm**. We often receive phone calls around bell times and it is near impossible to get those messages to students before they leave for home. If you know of a change in advance, please email you child's teacher in advance.