



Dartmouth South Academy

111 Prince Arthur Avenue - Dartmouth, NS - B2Y 0C5

Tel # (902) 464-2081 Website: hpe.hrce.ca Email: dsa@hrce.ca

Principal: Jacquelyn Reid Vice Principals: Susan Aucoin & Ashley Grant

Administrative Assistants: Amanda Drake & Doug Jarvis



Handbook for Families

2026-2027

MESSAGE FROM YOUR ADMINISTRATION

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! A very special welcome to all returning families, and those who are new to our community. We have put together a handbook that explains some of our procedures, policies, and school information. Each month we will also send families a newsletter with upcoming dates, important information, and of course highlights from our school!

Dartmouth South is a vibrant community school with a dedicated staff, amazing students, and supportive families. We are looking forward to getting to know you all, and partnering with you this year.

Yours in Education,
Jacquelyn Reid, Susan Aucoin & Ashley Grant

Principal – Mrs. Reid
Vice Principals– Ms. Aucoin & Ms. Grant
Administrative Assistants- Ms. Drake & Mr. Jarvis
School Counsellors: Ms. Ash & Ms. Rowe

Address and Telephone Numbers

111 Prince Arthur Ave
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 0C5

Phone Numbers

Main Office..... 902-464-2081

- Dial 0 for the Main Office
- Dial 1131001 for Mrs. Reid
- Dial 1131002 for Mrs. Aucoin
- Dial 1131003 for Ms. Grant

Safe Arrival..... 1-833-582-6940

Email Address

dsa@hrce.ca

Website

dsa.hrce.ca

Staff Directory

You can find your child's teacher and email address by logging into PowerSchool.

Bell Schedule

- 8:50-9:10 Morning Entry
- 9:10 Classes Begin
- 3:10 PM Dismissal

OUR VISION

At Dartmouth South Academy, we are committed to fostering an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment where students and staff feel valued, respected, and empowered. Together we embrace diversity, take pride in our identities, and cultivate connection, collaboration, resiliency, and growth. We believe lifelong learning, emotional well-being, and social responsibility are fundamental building blocks for our community to thrive.

Safe Arrival

One of our greatest priorities is ensuring that all our students arrive safely at school each day. You are able to report future absences using an app, website, or toll-free phone number.

If a student is going to be absent from school for any reason, you have 3 options to report the absence:

- 1) Call Safe Arrival toll free at: 1-833-582-6940
- 2) Report via [SchoolMessenger](#)
- 3) Download the SchoolMessenger app for Android and iOS devices and use your username and password for the PowerSchool Portal.

All three methods are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Up to five consecutive absences can be recorded at once. If your student is absent and the absence has not been reported in advance, you will receive notifications via email, text, and phone calls from [SchoolMessenger](#). If SchoolMessenger cannot reach you, office staff will follow up. Please make sure you contact Safe Arrival before 8:00 am as teachers will be completing their attendance at that time.

Students arriving late must check at the office.

Communication

Dartmouth South Academy values and recognizes the important role strong communication plays in setting our students up for success. Our plan for Communicating School Learning can be found in detail on our school website.

We believe strong relationships between home and school make a difference for students. We encourage families to reach out when they have questions, concerns, or information that will help us better support their child. Our first step when a concern relates to the classroom is usually to connect with the classroom teacher, who knows your child and their day-to-day experience best. We are committed to listening, communicating respectfully, and working together to find solutions that support your child.

The school will communicate through monthly newsletters, emails, and phone calls which are sent home through the PowerSchool Alert system. 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.

Student Attendance

[The Student Attendance and Engagement Policy](#) guides our approach to attendance and is in place to support all students. The policy states that regular, punctual attendance supports academic success, responsibility, and preparation for the future.

Ensuring regular attendance is a joint effort between students, families and schools. As a parent/guardian, you play an important role by monitoring attendance, communicating with the school when your child is absent, and supporting your child's regular attendance.

Communication about absences

- Schools will monitor attendance and lateness.
- All absences must be communicated to the school, following the school's procedure.
- If absenteeism or lateness reaches 10% of class time, the school will begin to engage more actively with the student and family.
- If it goes beyond 15%, more targeted supports may be used (counselling, referrals, community supports)

Student Supervision

Morning supervision by teachers begins at 8:50 AM and students are to come directly into the school. Please do not drop off or have children arrive before this time. Teachers provide supervision during recess. Lunch supervision is provided by paid and volunteer lunch monitors.

Early Pick-Ups

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

Emergency Closure of Schools

The Halifax Regional Centre 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 [HRCE website](#)
- Recorded on 902-464-INFO (4636)
- Communicated to all local radio stations

You can also receive notice of school and bus cancellations by email or text message by signing up for notifications [here](#). If you are interested in learning more on how decisions regarding closures and cancellations are made, visit [this link](#).

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.

In the event of a 2 hour delayed opening, our instructional day would begin at 11:10 AM. If bus transportation is operating, morning buses would pick students up 2 hours later than their regularly assigned time pending any other local weather delays. Lunch, afternoon and dismissal times will remain at the regularly scheduled times. Dartmouth South Academy is in the *Dartmouth High Family of Schools*.

School Breakfast Program

There will be bins of fruit in each classroom everyday. Our hot and cold breakfast will start Sept. 7th between 8:50-9:10.

Lunch

All students are permitted to stay for lunch each day. The students eat in their classrooms or in our cafeteria. They are supervised by lunch monitors. Families have the option of having their children go home for lunch.

Students in grades 7 and 8 are welcome to stay at school for lunch or go offsite. If students go offsite, it is imperative they return to school on time for afternoon instruction.

Provincial Lunch Program

The Nova Scotia School Lunch Program is a provincial lunch program that offers public school students across Nova Scotia nutritious lunch every school day. Ordering will open on Friday mornings and close on Wednesday at noon. All information regarding the program, menu, and ordering options can be found [here](#).

Medications 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.

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.

Head Lice:

Head lice are common among school-aged children and do not spread disease. They can affect anyone and are not a reflection of personal hygiene. We understand that discovering head lice can be uncomfortable or stressful for families, and we are committed to responding in a way that protects students' privacy, dignity, and well-being. If your child has head lice:

- Please notify the school and your child's teacher so we can help monitor and prevent further spread.
- Begin treatment at home and follow the product directions. Nova Scotia Public Health recommends a second treatment 7-10 days after the first to break the life cycle. Regular combing and removal of nits is also important.
- Your child may continue attending school once treatment has begun.
- If your family is having difficulty accessing or managing treatment, please reach out to the school. We are happy to help connect families with information and available supports.

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. This includes Nutella, Ferrero Rocher chocolates and pistachios.

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 families 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 has been ill the night before or in the morning and cannot participate in regular school activities, including playing outside at recess and lunch, please keep your child home. **Follow public health protocols.**

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.

Spectators Expectations

The safety, well-being, and positive experience of all students, volunteers and spectators is our priority. [This policy](#) is designed to ensure appropriate supervision, accountability, and expected conduct for students attending junior high sporting event home games.

School Safety

The safety of your children is a top priority at Dartmouth South We practice 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 the building) and 2 Lockdowns (classroom doors are locked and children are kept quiet in a designated position within the class). In case of evacuation from our school, Hawthorn School and Church of the Holy Spirit are our relocation sites.

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.

No Scents Please

There are some students and staff in our building who are extremely sensitive to scented products (perfumes, colognes, etc. Please do not wear scented products.

Curriculum

All Public Schools follow the curriculum as laid out by the Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). Curriculum information can be accessed [here](#).

Cell Phones in School Policy

Cell phones/ devices for all students P-8 will be kept in lockers or backpacks when students arrive at school and for the duration of the school day. During class time, parents will always be able to get a message to break your child through the office. Exceptions will be made for students who rely on their personal device for health reasons, (eg. blood glucose) after consultation with parents. Students in grade 7-8 will be able to use their devices at lunch. The policy is available [here](#).

Lost and Found

Families are encouraged to label their children's clothing and personal items as there can be more than one of a particular item in a class

Volunteers

Volunteers make a difference in our students' experiences, whether they are helping in the library, supporting our Breakfast Program, joining a class trip, or lending a hand with special school activities and events.

Anyone volunteering directly with students is required to have a [Criminal Record Check](#) including a [Vulnerable Sector Check and Child Abuse Registry Search](#) on file in the school office. They must be updated every 3 years.

Provincial Homework Policy (Grades P-12)

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.

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 in Grades 7-8 will:

- support students in practicing and applying skills and knowledge developed in class, including reading, writing, mathematics, and subject-specific learning.
- provide opportunities to prepare for upcoming learning or extend classroom learning through activities such as reading, research, studying, completing projects, or applying skills in new ways.
- help students develop independence, organization, time management, and self-directed learning skills as they prepare for the increased expectations of high school.

As students move into Grades 7-8, homework gradually shifts toward greater independence and responsibility, while remaining purposeful, connected to classroom learning, and appropriate to students' individual needs. 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.

School Advisory Council

Our School Advisory Council (SAC) is an important part of our school community. Made up of parents/guardians, staff, community members, and, where appropriate, students, the SAC provides a space for people to share ideas, perspectives, and feedback about what matters most for our students.

SAC members work together to support student learning and well-being and provide advice to the principal and school board on matters that affect our school. It's a great way to learn more about what's happening at school, share your voice, and help shape our school community. The SAC is a legislated body under the Nova Scotia Education Act, with responsibilities and authority outlined in the Act.

Parent & Teacher Organization

Dartmouth South Academy is a volunteer, non-profit organization of families, teachers, and school staff who are committed to supporting and assisting quality educational programs. Membership is open to any interested parent/guardian or staff member, and we welcome you to join at any time! The primary function of the PTG is to raise funds for extra programming (special performances, support for school clubs, etc) and teacher support (including class field trips). Please reach out to Mrs. Reid if you would like to join!