

DARTMOUTH SOUTH ACADEMY



Newsletter# 6-Feb 2023

Dartmouth South Academy
111 Prince Arthur Avenue
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 0C5
<http://dsa.hrce.ca>

Phone: (902) 464-2081/Fax: (902) 461-0199

Principal: Adrienne Blumenthal

Vice Principal: Susan Aucoin/Ashley Grant

School Closure for Inclement Weather

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 board's website at www.hrce.ns.ca, on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/HRCE_Official](https://twitter.com/HRCE_Official), recorded on 464-INFO (4636) and communicated to all local radio stations. You can also receive notice of school 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

<http://www.hrce.ns.ca/content/id/1137.html>



COLD WEATHER

Just a reminder that the cold weather is upon us. Our school is not open for students until 8:40 am. **Please ensure that your children do not arrive at the school too early as there is no supervision. Students are unable to come inside unless they are in the Excel Program.** The students need to be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions.

February is Registration Month

Effective February 1, 2023, we will be accepting registrations for the 2023-2024 school year through our new online portal, PowerSchool Enrollment.

Tip: Before you begin, make sure you have the following documents in electronic form (image, PDF or Word document):

- Proof of identity/age with one of the following: birth certificate, passport, immigration papers, or legal adoption papers) if you are new to the HRCE;
- Proof of home address (a recently dated official government or utility document with your current address that includes your name and date, such as water bill, power bill, internet bill, home fuel bill, a tax receipt, property assessment or a mortgage contract); and
- Nova Scotia Health Card or Canadian Province Health Card or, for non-citizens while in Canada, proof of Medical Insurance Information.

Visit the [HRCE website](http://www.hrce.ca) for more information and to enrol your child today!

Don't have a child to register? Maybe you know someone who does! Please help us spread the word and pass this information on to friends, neighbours or relatives who will be looking to register for the fall.



DARTMOUTH SOUTH ACADEMY

Musical 2023 – Annie Jr.

Below please find a list of dates for upcoming after school practices:

Feb 2 – 3:15 – 4:15 pm

Feb 6 - 3:15 – 4:15 pm

Feb 9 - 3:15 – 4:15 pm

Feb 13 - 3:15 – 4:15 pm

Feb 16 - 3:15 – 4:15 pm

Feb 23 - 3:15 – 4:15 pm

Feb 27 - 3:15 – 4:15 pm

We are underway with rehearsals for Annie Jr! Students and staff are looking forward to our performances in May. Any parent or community member that can offer assistance with tech, behind the scenes, costuming or supervision are encouraged to reach out to Ms. Grant at granta@hrce.ca.

Lunch News

A reminder to parents that we are not equipped to be able to heat up student's lunches. Students must bring a lunch that doesn't require a microwave or a kettle. Also, eating utensils are necessary ... the cafeteria is unable to provide cutlery.

Lunch Monitors

We are in need of lunch monitors at Dartmouth South Academy. The times would be from 12:00 – 1:00 pm and/ or 1:00 - 2:00 pm. A criminal record check and child abuse registry form are required to work as a lunch monitor. Please phone the school office at 902-464-2081 if interested and we will be more than happy to help you.

SLOW DOWN IN SCHOOL ZONES

To ensure our students' safety, here are a few reminders for drivers navigating school zones.

- Follow school zone speed limits whenever children are present. This always applies, not just during school hours.
- Be prepared to stop for a school bus at any time.
- Remember to stop whenever you approach a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing, regardless of the direction of travel or which lane the bus is in.
- Give yourself extra time during your morning commute.
- Always watch for pedestrians. There are more kids walking, riding, and getting dropped off in school zones.
- Always obey crossing guards.
- Avoid distractions while driving.

Celebrate African Heritage Month!

February is African Heritage Month! This year's theme, *Seas of Struggle – African Peoples from Shore to Shore*, recognizes the resiliency, strength, and determination of people of African descent from the shores of Africa to the shores of Nova Scotia – with the Atlantic Ocean being the everlasting connection. Learn more [here](#).

Looking for ways to recognize and celebrate African Heritage Month?

- Attend events happening throughout the month at your local [Halifax Public Library](#).
- While you're at the library, [borrow books](#) that will inspire the whole family to learn more about African heritage.
- Visit local heritage sites, such as the [Black Cultural Centre](#), [the Africville Museum](#), and the [Black Loyalist Heritage Centre](#).



DARTMOUTH SOUTH ACADEMY



Dates to Remember

Feb 1st – 28th – Pre-Primary/Primary Registration

Feb 20th – Heritage Day (no classes)

This year's Heritage Day honours Elder Rita (Bernard) Joe, a member of the We'koqma'q Mi'kmaq Community and published author, who was instrumental in paving the way for other Mi'kmaq authors. Her greatest wish was to see more writings come from her people and "that the children would read it."

NO PARKING ZONES

Please be mindful of the no parking zones/fire lanes on our school property. It is no secret that the parking lot is unsafe at the end of the school day. We need to be more aware for the safety of our students.

PLEASE NOTE

- We have a no cell phone expectation at our school. Cell phones are to be placed in lockers and not be seen or heard during the day. If they are seen or heard in a pocket/bag or being used in classrooms or hallways, phones will be kept in the office until lunch or the end of the day. The parent will be contacted.
- Lates – 7 & 8 students are especially encouraged to be on time for each period. Also, lates make additional work for our office and admin team. Students with 3 or less lates will be invited to the next dance.
- Students need to be in good academic and behavioral standing in order to play on sports teams.

Winter Concert

All students in Grades Primary-3 will be participating in our Winter Concert, "A Canadian Winter", on Thursday, February 16th, 2023. There will be an afternoon concert at 1:30pm and an evening concert at 6pm. For the evening concert, students are asked to arrive at the school at 5:30pm and will go directly to their classroom to be supervised by a teacher. Due to capacity restrictions in our gymnasium, each child is allowed to have 3 guests for the evening performance. Anyone who cannot attend the evening concert is encouraged to attend our afternoon concert.

Because of the success of last year's virtual performance in December 2021, our Winter concert will be filmed and shared with families in your child's Seesaw music classroom. Only parents and guardians signed up for Seesaw and connected to the Seesaw classroom will be able to access the video.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Morgan Banfield, P-8 Music/Band teacher at BanfieldM@hrce.ca

Cannabis Caution for Families

Cannabis products can look like regular food such as baked goods, chocolate, or candy. As a result, children are potentially at risk of poisoning from unintentional cannabis consumption. In fact, in 2021, the IWK Poison Centre recorded an 83% increase in the number of cases regarding children eating cannabis edibles—a trend that continues to increase every year since legalization.

Here are some resources to help keep children safe:

- [IWK Child Safety Link tips](#)
- [Cannabis Talk Kit: How to talk with your teen](#)
- [Be in the Know: Talking with Youth about Cannabis](#)
- [Cannabis information for caregivers](#)
- [Alcohol, cannabis and other drugs: Know the facts](#)

EXCEL 2023-2024



EXCEL is a High Five® registered before and after school recreational program offered by the Halifax Regional Centre for Education at 69 elementary schools across the Halifax Regional Municipality. EXCEL's dedicated and qualified program leaders plan and facilitate weekly games and activities that consider the needs and interests of the registered students. These program plans reflect EXCEL's overall philosophy which is focused on providing opportunities for physical activity and positive social interaction in a safe and fun environment.

While program size and operating space may differ at each school, EXCEL's programming objectives are consistent. Since the program began over 25 years ago, it has developed significantly based on experience, advancements in the field of youth recreation, and feedback from participants, parents and staff. Today, EXCEL is one of the largest before and after school programs in Canada, providing engaging and inclusive recreational opportunities for nearly 4000 program participants.

Program Highlights:

- **Structured and unstructured active play both inside and outside;**
- **A minimum of 45 minutes per day of structured physical activity;**
- **Opportunities for participant choice in programming;**
- **Fun and exciting special guest presenters and external programming;**
- **Loose Parts and Loose Arts Play - open-ended activities using a variety of natural and human-made materials to build, create and imagine;**
- **P.A.L.S. (Playground Activity Leaders in Schools) for participants in Grades 4-6; and**
- **HRQ Gym (Homework/Reading/Quiet Time/Gym) from 5:30 to 6:00 pm.**



The EXCEL Program does not operate on Professional Development/Assessment & Evaluation days. These days are used to provide valuable training for EXCEL staff, including First Aid and CPR C, High Five® Principles of Healthy Child Development, Fundamental Movement Skills, Verbal De-escalation, Child Guidance, and Respectful Workplaces, to name a few.

2023-24 EXCEL Registration Dates:

Early Registration (for Parents/Guardians with children currently enrolled in EXCEL and siblings who will be starting school in September 2023): April 24-28 and May 1-5, 2023

General Registration: May 8-12, 2023 and onward.

Registration will be completed online by accessing the EZChildTrack Parent Portal. If you have an existing account with EXCEL, access the Parent Portal by entering your email and password in the Returning Parents Sign In section. If you are new to the EXCEL Program, enter the Parent Portal using the "New Parents Open Account" section.

Specific details on the registration process and fees for 2023-24 will be posted on the HRCE website at https://www.hrce.ca/excel_registration after March Break.

EXCEL is Hiring!

Employment Opportunity – The EXCEL program is always searching for fun, energetic, and reliable individuals to commit to a regular weekly schedule or work as substitutes in EXCEL programs across HRCE. This is a great way to get involved in your child's school!

Regularly scheduled staff receive competitive wages along with benefits including:

- paid sick/personal leave;
- paid bereavement leave;
- Employee & Family Assistance Program;
- paid Snow Days;
- free EXCEL for their children while at work;
- paid training; and
- discounted GoodLife memberships.

Should you or anyone you know be interested in working with EXCEL, please contact one of the administrators below for more information.

Lori Fougere, EXCEL Administrator, Unit 1: 902-464-2000 ext. 2492 – lfougere@hrce.ca

Quentina Parsons, EXCEL Administrator, Unit 2: 902-464-2000 ext. 2494 – quentina.parsons@hrce.ca

Amy Moore, EXCEL Administrator, Unit 3: 902-464-2000 ext. 2013 – amoore@hrce.ca

Tracey Penney, EXCEL Administrator, Unit 4: 902-464-2000 ext. 5596 – tracey.penney@hrce.ca

*It's a great way to get involved
in your child's school!*



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A New Way to Report Student Absences

Dear Parents/Guardians

One of our greatest priorities is ensuring that all our students arrive safely at school each and every day. Our school will be implementing a new way to report absences through SchoolMessenger. As of **Thursday, September 1**, you will be able to report future absences using an app, website, or toll-free phone number. Starting on **Wednesday, September 7**, 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.

To report your student absent, you can use any of the following methods:

- **PowerSchool Parent/Student Portal**
Parents/guardians can log into <https://sishrsb.ednet.ns.ca/public/> to access the link to the SchoolMessenger website to report future absences.
- **SchoolMessenger App**
Parents/guardians can download the SchoolMessenger app for Android and iOS devices, create an account and use their email that the school has on record for them as their username.
- **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. If you have students attending other schools, please continue to report absences using the existing procedures for those schools.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we implement this new tool. Please visit <https://www.hrc.ca/SafeArrival> for more information.

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School Safety and Security

As you are likely aware, our school practices lockdowns as part of our emergency planning/preparedness cycle. Staff and students are familiar with lockdowns, but we wish to increase your knowledge of our procedures.

It is important to understand that school staff will implement a lockdown and call police if and when there is any reason to believe that imminent danger to students and staff may exist. At this stage, everyone in the school will move to a secure location, safe from harm. Police will respond to the school and no one will enter or leave, until the situation is resolved.

The first instinct of parents/guardians is to either phone the school directly or your child, or to attend directly to the school. You are asked not to do any of these, but instead to understand and follow the procedures outlined in this letter.

Experience has shown that roadways need to be kept clear for responding emergency vehicles, and parents and others attempting to drive to the school can slow police and other emergency responders from getting to and securing the area as quickly as possible. Therefore, if you hear that a lockdown is occurring at your child's school, do not attend to the school. Instead, you may attend to your schools' designated Parent location to receive information which will be provided by police and school representatives.

School Safety and Security...CONT'D

Please be assured that every effort will be made to keep you informed as to what is happening during the event. Experience has shown that incorrect information often circulates during an event when it does not come directly from the police or school board. After the lockdown, you may be asked to go to the school or to wait where you are until your child is brought to your location.

We also ask that you not attempt to phone your child. In a lockdown, everyone must remain quiet, and a ringing cell phone may draw undue attention to the secure location where your child and his/her classmates are.

Aside from lockdown procedures, your child's school may also implement a precautionary "Hold and Secure" if there is an unrelated emergency situation occurring outside the building or in the neighborhood that could potentially present a danger to the school. In this situation all doors to the school are locked and monitored to allow any students from outside entry into the school. Classes will generally continue but no one will be allowed to enter or leave the building until the situation is resolved. We also ask that you do **NOT** attend to the school unless asked to do so by school board staff.

We encourage you to discuss school safety with your child and to address any concerns they may have and we welcome any questions you may have about this or any other issue related to the safety and security of our school.

SCHOOL	PRIMARY PARENT STAGING AREA	SECONDARY PARENT STAGING AREA
Dartmouth South Academy	North Woodside Community Centre	Grace Baptist Church 51 Athorpe Drive 902-434-3047

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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 to discuss details of forecast, level and type of precipitation and impact on road conditions;
- Stock Transportation consults bus drivers throughout HRM about 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, staff make recommendations to the Regional Executive Director (or designate), who makes the final decision and communicates it by 6:00 am.

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



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