

Saint Mary's Elementary School  
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# Saint Mary's Elementary School

## December 2025 Newsletter

Dear Families

December is here and our school is filled with joy and excitement! We are looking forward to many special events and activities this month including the Holiday Concert, Winter Spirit Week, and a few school-wide celebrations!

We are also looking forward to welcoming you into the school for Progress Conferences this week. This is an opportunity to celebrate your child's achievements, reflect on their growth, and set goals for next year. You can always reach out to discuss your child's progress and well-being, even if you can't make it in on the scheduled conference days.

Wishing you and your family peace, happiness, and warmth throughout the holidays and into the new year.

**Ms. Johnson**  
Acting Principal

### Important Dates

- **Monday Dec 1:** Report Cards/IPP Reports sent home by email
- **December 3-5:** Book Fair
- **Wednesday Dec. 3:** Learning Conferences (evening)
- **Thursday Dec. 4:** Learning Conferences – no classes  
Holiday Concert (6-7pm)
- **December 15-19:** Winter Spirit Week!
- **Wednesday Dec. 17:** School-wide Pizza Lunch
- **Friday Dec. 19:** Last day before break
- **Monday Jan 5:** First day back



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## Life at Saint Mary's

- All classes have been working hard to prepare for the Holiday Concert—a huge Thank You and Bravo to Ms. Wilson for her incredible organizing this special event!
- We will be saying farewell to Ms. Cyr this month, as her teaching term ends. We look forward to having her back at SMES as a special guest teacher! Ms. Cordoba-Fields returns from parental leave in January 2026 and will take over teaching the Grade 6 class.

## Scholastic Book Fair

Get ready! The Scholastic Book Fair is almost here! The Book Fair will be set up from December 3-5.

Classrooms will visit on Wednesday, December 3 and during their regular library time on Friday, December 5. Families can visit during Learning Conferences on Wednesday, December 3 (3-6pm) and Thursday, December 4 (1-4pm).

Every purchase benefits our school and helps kids become lifelong readers. We accept cash, debit, credit, and Mydoh.

## SchoolsPlus is here to support you



**Connect with us!**

SchoolsPlus is a confidential, free service available in every school in Nova Scotia. Our goal is to build positive relationships between families, schools, and communities. We can help families navigate complicated situations when they are involved with many different services.

**SchoolsPlus**  
Écoles Plus  
NOVA SCOTIA / NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

**Phone:** 902-464-2041  
**Email:** [schoolsplus@hrce.ca](mailto:schoolsplus@hrce.ca)

SchoolsPlus is a confidential, free service available in every school in Nova Scotia. Our goal is to build positive relationships between families, schools, and communities.

Parents, guardians and students (12+) can self-refer to SchoolsPlus 12 months a year! Just contact the SchoolsPlus Facilitator at your school.

Call 902-464-2000, ext. 2331 or email [schoolsplus@hrce.ca](mailto:schoolsplus@hrce.ca).

Learn more about SchoolsPlus [here](#).

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## Resources for Parents from Unplugged Canada

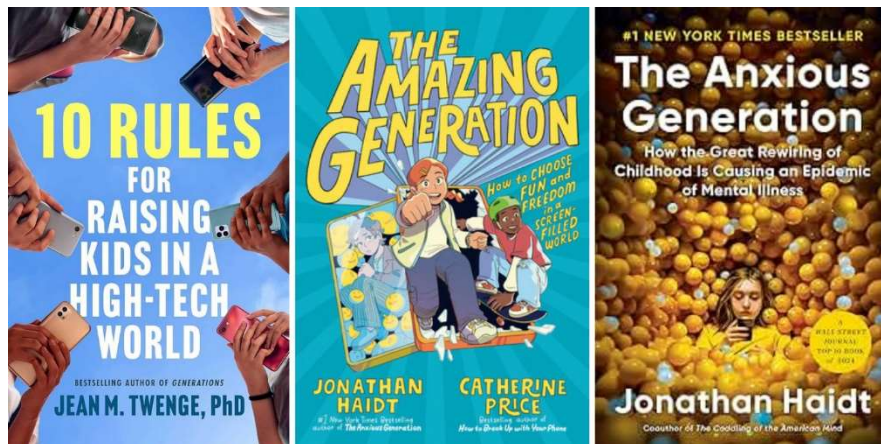
If you're concerned about your kids' screen time, smartphone use, or social media pressure, there are some wonderful resources below to help parents and caregivers navigate the challenges of raising kids in a digital world.

**For parents: The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt** highlights the research and evidence behind how early smartphone and social media exposure have shaped a generation over the last 10–15 years.

**Ten Rules for Raising Kids in a High-Tech World by Jean Twenge** offers practical, actionable guidance to help parents set healthy boundaries and support their kids' digital wellbeing.

**For kids: The Amazing Generation, written for pre-teens and teens and co-authored by Jonathan Haidt**, will be released on December 30. It explains the impact of today's digital environment in an engaging, age-appropriate way.

All of these books are available at your local library or bookstore.



*Unplugged Canada is a parent-led, national movement advocating for healthier childhoods by delaying smartphones and social media until kids are more developmentally ready. Join thousands of Canadian families choosing to delay by taking the Unplugged Canada Pledge at [unpluggedcanada.com/sign-pledge](https://unpluggedcanada.com/sign-pledge).*

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## New educational technology resource for families

We're excited to share a new online resource designed to help families understand how technology supports student learning in HRCE. This page provides an overview of how tools like Chromebooks and Google for Education are used in classrooms, what provincially approved online platforms students may access, and how student privacy is protected. You'll also find information about Nova Scotia's guidance on the provincial cell phone expectations, tips for supporting online safety and digital citizenship at home, and an introduction to how students are learning about artificial intelligence in a thoughtful and responsible way. It also includes answers to common questions about screen time, passwords, communication during the school day, and more.

You can find the webpage [here](#).

## We're ALWAYS hiring!

Did you know that HRCE has more than 10,000 employees serving more than 60,000 students?

Our job postings are updated every Wednesday at noon and feature a wide variety of career opportunities!

As HRCE grows, so does our staff. Check out new opportunities weekly at [www.myhrce.ca/jobs](http://www.myhrce.ca/jobs).



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## Planning for Inclement Weather

Did you know? HRCE takes great care when making the decision to alter the regular operations of schools and school buses in the event of severe or inclement weather. It is HRCE's goal to communicate any changes to the regular operations of schools and/or buses as close to 6:00 a.m. as possible. **A 6:00 a.m. announcement could be:**

- All schools are delayed in opening by two hours and bus pickups are delayed by two hours; or
- All schools are open, but some or all busses are not operating for the day; or
- Some schools (either individually or by family) are closed for the day; or
- All schools are closed for the day.

If weather deteriorates, or is forecasted to worsen throughout the morning, **an 11:00 a.m. announcement could be:**

- Bussed students will be picked up two hours earlier than their regular dismissal time; and
- Walking students will be dismissed at their regularly scheduled lunch hour.

### How will I find out?

- By email to the addresses in PowerSchool
- By text message, **if you have opted-in**. If you aren't sure if you have opted-in, text Y to the following number: **978338**
- [On the HRCE website](#)
- [On Instagram](#)

It's important to always have a plan in place for childcare in the event of any cancellation. Please remember: As a parent or guardian you always have the choice of whether or not to send your child to school.

For more information on how HRCE manages during inclement weather, visit [hrce.ca/families/cancellations](https://hrce.ca/families/cancellations).

