

ST. MARY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



2015-2016 Parent/Guardian Student Handbook

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Welcome:

Welcome to a new school year at St. Mary's Elementary School.

This handbook is designed to be a helpful booklet for home and school as we work together at St. Mary's Elementary School.

We hope that you will look over all the items for your information.

Should you have a question or a concern about any area, please call the school office to discuss the item.

Our goal is for students, parents/guardians and staff to experience our school as a warm and caring place. We will work together to create a positive atmosphere where mutual support and respect abounds. We believe that unless children feel good about themselves, they cannot achieve to the best of their ability. We strive to help children develop a healthy self-image by emphasizing the positive and developing a peaceful environment where everyone's differences are recognized and celebrated.

Our school believes in preparing children for the future by establishing meaningful partnerships with parents and the larger community. We also believe that these partnerships are crucial in order to provide quality opportunities for our children to fully develop their intellectual, social/emotional, and physical needs.

To that end, we like to foster a sense of belonging in our students. We invite them to take pride in keeping our premises clean, healthy and environmentally friendly. By encouraging students to respect one another and their belongings, we teach them to become responsible citizens.

We also strongly believe in the concept of a total school community and encourage open dialogue with all partners/guardians in the on-going process of educating and nurturing our students.

Sincerely,

Mike Pinard, Principal, SMES

Great Students, Great Staff, Great School

St. Mary's Elementary, located in the village of Aylesford, is a Primary to Grade Five School with a population of approximately 150 children.

Daily Schedule:

8:30	Buses Arrive
8:40	First Bell
8:45	Classes Begin
8:50	Announcements/O'Canada
10:45	Recess
11:00	End of Recess
12:35	Students Begin Lunch
12:50	Students Outside Playtime
1:15	End of Lunch
1:20	First Class for Afternoon
2:50	End of Day for Classes
2:50	Load Buses
2:55	Buses Depart for Home

Communication Plan:

Please ensure that you complete the **Registration Form** sent home with your child. Make any changes and return the form to your child's home room teacher.

Each month a school newsletter and updated calendar will be sent home with your child. Please view the school website for up-to-date information of events and school news.

School Cancellation and School Closures:

The decision to cancel or change bus transportation and/or school schedules is taken very seriously, and we appreciate that changes like these have an impact on your family. AVRSB Transportation uses up-to-date weather forecasts, road condition reports and real-time staff observations to make decisions like these. *Safety is always our first priority.*

Any cancellations or changes due to road or weather conditions are announced in several ways:

- *Radio* (AVR network, Magic 94.9 FM, K-Rock 89.3 FM and CBC Radio 1 in Halifax)
- *Television* (ATV News/Breakfast Television)
- *Websites* (www.avrsb.ca and radio station websites-- <http://avrnetwork.com>, www.magic949.ca, www.k-rock893.com, www.cbc.ca/stormcentre/ns/)
- *By email or text message:* Sign up to receive important announcements at www.avrsb.ca/content/notify-me.
- *Twitter:* Follow @avrsb on Twitter

Cancellations or changes to bus transportation and/or school schedules *before the start of the school day* are announced shortly after 6:30 a.m.

Early Dismissal Due to Inclement Weather :

Should school need to be cancelled once classes have begun, a message will be given to the local radio stations for broadcast. A message will also be placed on the AVRSB website and we will make our best effort to get in on the St. Mary's Elementary School website. Please do not telephone the school or school staff regarding cancellations as we need the telephone line open to contact parents. Please make sure your child(ren) know where to go during instances when they are dismissed unexpectedly .

Student Use of the Office Telephone:

The office telephone is available for students to call home during the day or at the end of the day if illness occurs or if an important message or concern needs to be communicated to a parent. The telephone is not available for students to call home to make arrangements to go to a friend's house or to have a friend over after school. Those plans should be made before coming to school.

Illness :

Any child suffering from illness should remain at home. Please phone or email the school when the child is sick so we can account for his/her whereabouts. In the event a child becomes ill at school, every effort will be made to contact the parents, who in turn will be requested to arrange for the student to be picked up. If your child has a condition which might require emergency treatment, every attempt will be made to contact a parent/guardian, but if the situation is deemed critical, 911 will be called.

Parent/Guardian Concern Communication Protocol:

If you have a concern about something at your child's school, we want to work with you to have it resolved. We will make every effort to address your concern in a timely manner.

The first step is to **contact your child's teacher or the staff member involved**. Open communication often means that most concerns can be resolved at this level. If you feel more action is needed, the next step is to speak to the principal.

If the concern can't be resolved at the school level, please contact the Supervisor of School Support Services at 902-538-4745.

If a resolution still can't be reached, the Director of Programs and Services is the next person to contact, 902-538-4617.

The last step in this process would be to contact the Office of the Superintendent of Schools at 902-538-4615.

If you have a concern regarding the transportation of a student please contact the Transportation Specialist at AVRSB 902-538-4641.

Sign-in/Sign-out:

All visitors/parents are required to sign-in/out at the office. They are also required to wear a visitor badge so that they may be easily identified as persons permitted to be on school property. Any student arriving late or leaving early will also be required to be signed-in or out by a parent. This is necessary so that everyone can be accounted for in the event of an emergency. Visitors/parents should remain at the Office to avoid disrupting classes.

Pick up and Drop off :

If you will be picking up your child after school, please do so after dismissal. Please note that vehicles must remain parked until after all buses have left the school area. In the interest of our students' safety, we thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you are collecting your child during school hours, please sign the child out at the office. If you have authorized someone else to pick up your child, we must have a note from you with this information.

Discipline While Traveling on Board Provided Transportation:

Students who travel on Board provided transportation may do so as long as they display behavior that is acceptable and does not jeopardize the safety of the driver and students. Students who choose to follow unacceptable behavior may lose their travel privileges. The loss of travel privileges shall apply to all Board provided transportation operating in the region for the period of the suspension.

Discipline on Board provided transportation will be administered by the driver in a fair, equitable and consistent manner. The administration of discipline on Board provided transportation must be flexible enough to provide for reasonable adjustments in variable circumstances.

Busing:

Board Policy states that the "Board provided transportation is designed to transport eligible students to and from their normal place of residence and their school." However, students may get off at a different stop or take a different bus to another location providing:

- **a written note of request is sent to the school from the parent or guardian**
- **the note is brought to the office by the student to be signed and stamped with the school stamp**
- **the stamped note is given to the bus driver**

Please note that a bus driver may refuse a student access to the bus if the bus is full. If this should happen, students will be instructed to return to the office so that other arrangements can be made.

Changes to Transportation Plans:

Parents are requested to send a note for any change in routine transportation plans. The note will be stamped and recorded in the school office. The bus driver is not permitted to let students off at a different stop without an authorized note from the parent or the school. Unless we have received instructions, the student will be required to go on the bus or follow his/her usual transportation routine.

Visitors :

To ensure the safety and security of our students, all visitors are required to report to the office upon entering the building. We thank you for your cooperation in this regard.

Leaving School Property:

Once students arrive at school, either on the bus or with their parent(s), they must remain on the school ground at all times. Students will only be dismissed after their arrival if they are picked up by a parent/guardian or when special arrangements are made with the teacher or at the office. Parents/Guardians are asked to report directly to the office when picking up or dropping off their child(ren).

Drop Off/Pick-up Zone and Parking:

Parents dropping off (am) or picking up (pm) their children by car during bussing times are asked to use the parking lot.

Attendance -- Promptness :

Regular attendance is necessary for success in school. When your child has been absent from school, we request a written note which excuses him/her. When parents are aware that their child will be absent from school prior to the absence, notification to the child's homeroom teacher would be appreciated.

Promptness is an important quality for children to develop. Please ensure that your child arrives at school on time so that he or she feels organized and ready to begin the day.

Student Progress:

At the beginning of the school year an Open House will be held for parents/guardians. This Open House gives you the opportunity to tour the school as well as meet the school staff. It is a time to meet classroom teachers to receive an outline of the curriculum. Two parent-teacher visitations (one in the Fall and one in the Spring, check the school calendar for dates) are scheduled to discuss student progress. Additional meetings may be necessary depending upon the child. Telephone conversations, letters and emails are excellent means of communication. Depending upon the need of a student, a team meeting may be held including teachers, resource staff, and principal and support agencies to respond to the needs of the child.

General Consent to use Student Media Recordings, Names, and Student Work:

The AVRSB and the school believes in the need to protect all students and recognizes the issues around the publishing of student information, especially on the internet. We also believe that celebrating students, their work and achievements can be an important part of school life and a very positive experience for students. During the school year, the school/board may take media recordings that contain identifiable information of students as a part of curricular projects to promote various events at our school to showcase student work, or to recognize special student achievement. In these cases, the school/board may use media recordings and/or names of students, or student work in various publications outside the school to the broader community such as:

- School newsletters (which may also be posted on the school website)
- Media coverage and releases on school events (via radio, newspapers, television, news websites)
- Off-site regional educational fairs (Science, Heritage, Art) or displays
- Special award ceremonies
- School/board web pages (which can be viewed by anyone over the internet)
- Other (school/board to print description of other event here):

In such cases, the school/board must have written consent from the parent/legal guardian to publish the student's information, name or student work. Please take the time to fill out the Consent Form enclosed in your student's package.

Peanut Sensitive School:

In an effort to make our school a safe place for all students and staff who have a life-threatening allergy to peanuts, we are respectfully requesting the your cooperation in the following ways:

- Try not to send any foods with peanuts or peanut products in your child's lunchbox.
- Please encourage your child not to share their food.
- If you choose to send food to your child's class for parties or special occasions, please avoid choosing items which contain peanuts or peanut products and check with the classroom teacher for any other concerns.

Scent Free Environment:

Scented products are harmful to those with an allergy, environmental sensitivity or chronic heart or lung disease.

For the health of others, everyone is respectfully requested to refrain from using perfume, cologne, aftershave or other highly scented products when in St. Mary's Elementary School.

Lost and Found:

During the year our Lost and Found box grows bigger and bigger! We ask that students and parents/guardians regularly check for any missing items. At the end of the school year and during the school year, any unclaimed items will be donated to needy families and charity.

Walkers:

Students who walk or are driven to school should not arrive before 8:20 a.m.

Walkers are reminded to use the sidewalk when approaching the school from the road.

St. Mary's Lunch Program:

Any child wishing to purchase a lunch or supplement a lunch from home must buy a \$10.00 or \$20.00 meal card. When the child places a lunch order in the morning, the teacher deducts the amount of the order by striking out the amount the child has spent. The ticket has numbers in different denominations adding up to the amount of the ticket purchased. No money is accepted at the cafeteria.

Lunch orders are completed before 9:00 a. m. each morning. Students are not permitted to order at noon hour. Orders are delivered to classrooms.

Provincial Code of Conduct:

Please see the attached Department of Education and Early Childhood Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy that all schools in Nova Scotia must adhere to.

For a digital copy please go to:

<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/files/pspolicies/Provincial%20School%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

Special Dates for the 2015-2016 School Year

2015

September 3	First Day for Students
September 7	No School Labour Day
September 8	International Literacy Day
September 10	Pink Shirt – Anti Bullying Day
September 14	Home and School Meeting 6:30
September 17	Open House
September 18	Early Dismissal 11:45
September 21	No School Regional In-service Day
September 22	Bus Safety and Evacuation Drill
September 25	Assembly 9 am
September 30	Terry Fox Run
October 2	Picture Day
October 7	Early Dismissal 11:45
October 12	Thanksgiving
Sunday, October 18	Open House 50 th Anniversary
October 19	Home and School Meeting 6:30
October 23	No School Provincial Conference Day
October 30	Assembly 9 am
November 3	Early Dismissal 11:45
November 10	Remembrance Day Assembly 1:15
November 11	No School Remembrance Day
November 16	Home and School Meeting 6:30
November 19	Report Cards go home
November 20	Assembly 9 am
November 26	Early Dismissal 11:45
November 26	Parent-Teacher Visitations
November 27	In-service
December 10	Shopping Party
December 11	Shopping Party
December 15	Holiday Concert
December 16	Holiday Concert (Snow Date)
December 17	Early Dismissal
December 18	Assembly 9 am
Dec 21-Jan3	No School Winter Break

2016

January 4	1 st Day Back after Winter Break
January 14	Early Dismissal 11:45
January 18	Home and School Meeting 6:30
January 29	Assembly 9 am
February 15	No School Holiday-Heritage Day
February 17	Science & Heritage Fair
February 18	Science & Heritage Fair Open House
February 22	Home and School Meeting 6:30
February 22-26	Winter Carnival
February 24	Early Dismissal 11:45
February 26	Assembly 9 am
March 14-19	March Break
March 24	Assembly 9 am
March 25	No School - Good Friday
March 28	No School - Easter Monday
March 30	Primary Registration
April 1	No School In-service
April 7	Report Cards to go Home
April 14	Early Dismissal 11:45
April 14	Parent-Teacher Visitation
April 18	Home and School Meeting 6:30
April 29	Assembly 9 am
May 4	Primary Orientation
May 12	Jump Rope for Heart
May 12	Early Dismissal 11:45
May 16	Home and School Meeting 6:30
May 23	No School - Victoria Day
May 27	Assembly 9 am
June 3	Early Dismissal 11:45
June 6	Grade 5 Orientation to PRMS
June 8	Grade 5 Parent Meeting at PRMS
June 17	Assembly 9 am
June 24-28	No School-Marking Days
June 29	Last Day of School Early Dismissal 11:45