

Update message Sept. 8, 2024

Hello West Bedford High Families,

First, I would like to thank all of our students and staff for a great start. Very impressed with our student body and how quickly they are getting back into routine and following new procedures. We are still monitoring and making tweaks to morning, lunch and after school procedures, but should have this all work out by the end of this week. I would also like to thank the many parents who have reached out to provide kind words on the start of the year for their children.

Please see the below information for the upcoming week.

1) Communication. Effective and clear communication is a key to supporting students in their learning and well-being. Here is a flow chart for communication in schools and at WBH.

- Start with the classroom teacher (grades 7-9) or teacher advisor (grades 10-11).
Teacher/Teacher advisor emails can be found on the school website
<https://wbh.hrce.ca/>
- If you feel your concern or question has not been addressed, please contact the Vice Principal assigned to the alpha for your child's surname
Allyson MacKay (A- La) – allyson.mackay@hrce.ca
Alison Walker (Le – Z) – alison.walker@hrce.ca
- If your question or concern is in need of a school counsellor
Richelle Williams (A-La) – richelle.williams@hrce.ca
Julie Zinck (Le-Z) – jzinck@hrce.ca
- **Still have questions or concerns? Please reach out to the School Principal.**
Sean MacDonald – macdonalds@hrce.ca

If you feel your question or concern has still not been addressed at the school level, please contact the school supervisor, Brad McGowan at bmcgowan@hrce.ca or 902-464-2000

2) Message from Student Services – Scheduling concerns(grades 10-11).

We want to thank families and students for their patience as we continue to work through our scheduling process. Scheduling over 1000 students does not occur without course and timetable conflicts. The reality of more than doubling our population, a large growth in new registrations, and our unique blend of two models creates a level of complexity we are diligently working through.

As students follow the [Registration & Course Change Request Process](#), we have the ability to also see patterns on a larger scale. This process takes time to unfold. As it unfolds, we look for solutions as we too want what is best for our students. We can appreciate how it feels like a long wait time for a student when they want to get to work on their new courses. As we approach our 3rd day of school, we remind students they do not need to fear falling behind as they await notification their schedule has been updated. We assure you, our teachers are aware of the scheduling conflicts that occur at the beginning of every school year at every high school. There is much to learn about the Flex model that is a common focus for all classes. We ask that students continue to follow their current schedule as it appears in PowerSchool as we work to process their concerns as quickly as possible.

- 3) **Class changes for grades 7-9.** We have been getting some requests for class changes. Classes were put together last year by the feeder schools and those classes arrangements have been kept. **No changes will be made at this time as classes are balanced in numbers, needs, etc.**
- 4) **Locks and Lockers.** Locks and lockers will be handed out this week. The school was built with 70% of the school's population capacity for lockers. Thus, on the high school side we have approximately 840 lockers for over a thousand students. New high school builds are done this way because a significant portion of high school students do not purchase a locker. However, if we give a 1 to 1 lock to our junior high students we have very few left for our high school students. This was an oversight on our part and are working to fix this ASAP. We are asking for students who are willing to share with a close friend to ensure all needs are met. Any students who share would only pay \$2.50 for the lock. Any student who has paid in full already and elects to share will be reimbursed. We have already had many students say they would do this, and we want to thank them.
- 5) **Cell Phone and social media guidelines.** We would first like to thank all the families that reached out on support of our plan. We had very few issues in the first few days as students get back to routines and procedures. A few things to note about our cell phone restrictions.
 - **Taking video/making Tic Tok's inside the school is not permitted at anytime or in any location inside the school.**
 - Students in grade 7-9 can use their cell phones before the start of school, lunch time, and after school only, unless teacher is facilitating a learning activity that has been pre-approved for cell phone use. Students can not use cell phones in the hallways or stairwells, as these are cell phone free zones. Phones must be powered off and out of site.
 - Students in grade 10-11 must have cell phone powered off and out of site when not on FIT and/or in one of the designated areas (cafeteria, library, mezzanine, outside). When students enter the wings, stairwells and classrooms, phones are off and out of sight.

- It is important to note that students in grade 10&11 have greater access to their phones than any other high school in the entire province due to FIT time. A student in grade 10 at any other high school would only have access before school, lunch and after school. Grade 11 student at any other high school, would only have additional access during their one possible free block. We have the best balance possible for our older students and thus committing to these guidelines should not be an issue. When students go to class we and their families want them engaged in their learning, not what is happening on snapchat.
- Consequences. First offence: Meet with the student, review expectations and home will be contacted. Second offence: out of school suspension. Repeated Offenses: Suspension, parent meeting and individual cell phone plan. Phones will never be taken from a student. Our consequences are in direct line with our neighboring schools of CPA, Halifax West and Citadel High school.

Some questions and tips around cell phones

- **How will my child know what time it is?** 1) Students have access to Chromebooks for most of the day. Chromebooks display the time. 2) Ask the teacher. Teachers have their computers on all day, time is easily accessible. Teachers also must have their cell phones on as this is part of our emergency procedures.
- **How can I get a hold of my child when their cell phone is not on?** 1) First, we ask that you wait till lunch. In case of an emergency please call the main office 902 -405- 0442 and we will get a hold of your child. 2) If your child has an appointment or being picked up through the day, make sure they are aware of the appointment and pick-up time. We ask parents to call the main office upon arrival and let us know the name and class that your child is in. Keep a copy of their schedule at home, and or have picture of it on your phone for reference. 3) If your child has FIT, they have access to their phones in the designated areas and should be in that area when waiting to be picked up. We still ask that you notify the office, and the student signs out before leaving. This is important information we need when we have a fire drill, etc. Thanks
- **What if my child needs to contact me?** 1) Student can ask permission from the teacher to go to the office to call home. Another option is if the student really needs to call home, they can ask permission from the teacher, make their way to one of the designated areas where cell phones are allowed and call home. This should only be an occasional ask.
- **What if my child has a medical plan (ie. Diabetes) that requires use of a cell phone?** Students with medical plans, such as diabetes to check blood sugars, will still be able to do this. Staff are aware of who these students are and these exceptions will be made,

Tips for students in grades 10-11 for proper cell phone use and FIT time.

We certainly do not want students spending all their time in the designated areas where cell phone use is available to them during FIT time. Things are going to get very busy with course work in the coming weeks and students should be taking the time to access their teachers during

these times in the wings where things are quieter, and teachers are available to them. Here are some tips.

- Find the spaces and people you like to work with and that will support you in completing your work.
- Keep your cell phone off regardless of the space you are and set up little breaks for yourself to check your phone, etc. If you are working in a cell phone free environment, make your way to one of the areas where cell phones are allowed and take a 5-10 minute break, and then get back to work.
- Your teachers are here for you!! Seek them out during FIT time to get some 1 on 1 or small group time, and or answer any questions you may have concerning your course work. In our model you have the ability to have more time in areas/courses you need support if you plan for this in your TA time each morning. Also, if your specific teacher is not available during a particular FIT block, other teachers who teach the same course may be available to you. Any teacher on FIT time is there to help you.

- 6) **Student Drop-Off/Parking lot.** With the recent addition of the modulars on the elementary side we have lost a significant amount of parking. As of right now there is no parking allowed in the spaces in the lower parking lot except for staff. If you are dropping off or picking up a student please do so in the designated area that is outlined in map sent out by HRCE. Please know that I am continuing to work with HRCE operations team to look at the spaces we have and possible options to improve the current situation.

Bussing at the end of the day and safety. Students need to stay at the front of the school or inside the main foyer/cafeteria to view the white board with the list of busses that are in the loop for the first round. If your child is allowed to access social media, they can also view this @WBHBusDeparture on Twitter. The following link will take you to the twitter handle: <https://twitter.com/WBHBusDeparture> If they are not going to be on social media, the busses will still be posted on the white board in the main lobby. Having Twitter is an added layer of communication, but not necessary.

Please check <https://hrcetransportation.mybusplanner.ca/> for information about your child's bussing. If your child has access to your account, they can also see where there bus is at anytime.

In regard to safety, students are not allowed to walk through the bus loop, they must stay on the sidewalk when accessing their bus.

Students walking home, or going to parking lot area to be picked up should not be cutting between cars, but stay on the sidewalk going down, or stick to the outside area of the parking lot when walking around. Please speak to your children around this.

- 7) **School Supplies** – Students should have a binder, paper and pens/pencils to begin the school year. Individual teachers will tell students on the first day of school if there are other specific supplies needed for their course.

Students in grades 9-11 will need a scientific calculator.

- 8) **Student Fees and lockers.** Student fee - \$10.00 – please pay through school cash online. Please pay by Sept. 13th .

Locks - \$5.00 (cash only). This will be collected in homeroom/TA over the first few days. Students will not receive a locker until fee has been paid. No outside locks are permitted, school lock only.

- 9) **Athletics Fundraiser.** We are in the process of getting new uniforms for all of our sports teams, both high school and junior high. This is a very large cost and will need help paying for this. We have some fundraisers coming up and will appreciate your support. There will be info out coming out in the next few days around our first one, just working out a few details. Communication will come home mid this week.

- 10) **Team Tryouts.** Tryouts for team are underway. We at West Bedford have both Junior High and High school sports. Junior high teams are for students in grades 7-9. High school teams are mainly for students in grades 9-12. However, under SSNS (School Sport Nova Scotia) guidelines, students in grades 7 and 8 can try out and play for high school teams in schools with grades from 7-12. If a student from these grade levels decides to tryout, they should have the skill level to compete with the older students, thus it is important to assess this prior to attending tryouts. Some sports such as hockey and football may not be open to the lower grades for safety purposes. However, we know that there are some students with the skill level to do this and we will look at individual cases in regard to these specific sports.

We are excited to have the WBH football team up and running! The soccer teams have been finishing up their tryouts, and high school boys volleyball has also been working to get their team ready. Next up is girls volleyball!

Girls high school volleyball tryouts will be running on Monday September 9th from 5:30-7:30pm and Wednesday September 11th from 3:30-5:30pm in our gymnasium.

11) **Anit-bullying day.** Anti-bullying day is this Thursday. Please encourage your child to wear pink.

12) **School Pictures.** See attached letter.

13) **Fire drill.** We will be conducting our first fire drill this week.

14) **Cafeteria.** Updated menu coming out by end of the month.

Important Dates:

September 12th – Anti-Bullying Day (Pink Day)

September 16th – Picture day

September 25th – Curriculum Night (6:30-7:30pm)

September 30th – National Day for truth and Reconciliation (no classes)

Sincerely,

WBH Admin team