

# **BFEC**

# **Student Handbook**



**2025-2026**

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear BFEC Students and Parents/Guardians,

Welcome back to BFEC! As we embark on another exciting school year, BFEC remains committed to supporting your academic growth and success. We are proud of the accomplishments of our students and the dedication of our staff.

Whether your goals include post-secondary education or entering the workforce, developing essential skills, positive attitudes, and responsible behaviors is crucial. Regular attendance and active participation in learning are expected of all BFEC students. We also prioritize a safe, supportive, and healthy learning environment, which is reflected in our BFEC Core Values.

By fostering a sense of community and prioritizing personal growth, we aim to create meaningful and lasting high school experiences. We encourage all students, teachers, staff members, and parents to contribute to our shared learning environment. Please don't hesitate to contact the school if you would like to get involved.

Best wishes,

*Jarrett Feeney*

Principal

# DAILY SCHEDULE



9:20–9:40am	Doors Open  Students can arrive for Breakfast Program
9:40am	Morning Quarter Class Begins
12:05pm	LUNCH
12:40pm	Lunch Ends
12:45pm	Afternoon Quarter Class Begins
3:10pm	School Day Ends

## SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The School Advisory Council is a committee of 10 people who meet monthly to discuss issues of importance at Bedford Forsyth Education Centres. Equal representation from students, staff, parents, and community members provides the framework by which the council operates. Please watch for our minutes on the school website. We welcome your input and encourage you to rely on your guardian, community, and student representatives as a vehicle to improving your learning experiences at BFEC.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Nova Scotia's Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy is in the process of being updated. Until the new version is implemented the existing [Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy](#) remains in effect. Violent, disruptive, and other inappropriate behaviours are not acceptable in school.

## VALUABLE ITEMS

Students are asked not to bring valuable items to school, such as expensive clothing, jewelry, or large sums of money. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## \*NEW PROVINCIAL DIRECTIVE ON CELL PHONE USE IN SCHOOLS

Effective September 5, 2024 Nova Scotia is implementing a new [Provincial Directive on Cell Phone Use in Schools](#) to create an optimal educational environment at all grade levels that maximizes student learning, safety, and positive social interactions. This directive aims to reduce distractions and the potential for cyberbullying and inappropriate use of technology, creating school environments where children and youth can thrive. This Policy and Information Release is intended to support the Provincial Code of Conduct Policy and provide direction and clarification related to the use of personal cell phones in schools.

### Directive

Beginning September 2024, all public schools in Nova Scotia will ensure that access to personal cell phones during the school day adheres to the following expectations:

- Every student, PP–12, will have their **personal cell phones turned off and stored during instructional time.**
- Students in grades 7–12 may be **permitted to use their cell phones during non-instructional times** (between classes, recess, lunch, afterschool activities) as determined by the school.
- **Cell phones are not permitted in washrooms and/or change rooms at any time.**
- Exceptions may be made to address students' individual needs (medical or ability) when determined in consultation with the Student Planning Team, which includes parents/caregivers.
- Teachers and support staff will reinforce these expectations by modelling behaviour and not using personal cell phones during class for non-work-related reasons.
- Restricted access to social media sites on wifi networks will continue.
- In accordance with section 39(2)(e) of the Education Act, principals can direct a student to surrender their phone if not complying with expectations and will follow the Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy when addressing non-compliance.
- Principals will work closely with staff and the School Advisory Council to develop an implementation plan specific to their school.
- Principals will ensure that school specific expectations are communicated in advance of, and throughout, the school year.

## STUDENT MESSAGES

The main office phone is not for general student use, but emergency use only. However, students who need to leave school for any reason during the regular day should go to the office and have the Administrative Assistant contact home. Students will not be interrupted during the class time to receive messages from parents or guardians, except in emergency situations.

## STUDENT TRANSIT PASS PILOT PROGRAM

We are pleased to announce that the [Student Transit Pass Pilot Program](#) has been expanded to include students in grades 7 to 12 in all HRCE and CSAP high schools and junior high schools located in Halifax Regional Municipality for the upcoming school year. The expansion of the program has been made possible through a funding agreement between the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia.

As part of the program, students in grades 7 to 12 in all HRCE and CSAP high school and junior high schools located in Halifax Regional Municipality will receive a free annual transit pass valid from September 5, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Passes will be delivered to schools by the beginning of September 2025 and will be available to students through their school administration offices.

## DAILY ATTENDANCE

If your child is absent, parents/guardians need to call the school attendance line at **902-832-8630** to inform the school. Please do not leave attendance messages for administrators or teachers. Nova Scotia has an [Attendance and Student Engagement Policy](#). This policy can be found on our website under Documents and Policies. Students may be withdrawn for attendance if they are absent more than 80% of scheduled classes.

The attendance line is used to enter attendance directly into the school's computer system to inform both subject teachers and administrators of students who will not be attending for that particular day. The attendance line is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week for your convenience.

At the end of the day, an automated call will be forwarded to your home telephone to notify of any unexcused absences.

## BFEC Attendance Practices

The following school practices were developed using the operational procedures from the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Student Attendance and Engagement Policy as its guiding documents.

### What supports are available at BFEC if a student is having attendance issues?

- Staff take the time to know their students
- Teachers at BFEC use Culturally Relevant Practices every day in their classrooms
- We have a daily breakfast program that students can access to support their on-time arrival

at school

- School Counsellor at each campus
- A referral can be made to our school social worker
- A referral can be made to our school psychologist
- Reduced Schedules (one course a day)
- Referral to our Health Centre Nurse
- Choices Counsellor at each campus every second Friday
- Attendance Contract
- Attendance Letters
- And other individual supports as required once the school is made aware

### **Regular attendance at school leads to greater student success and achievement.**

Students who are having trouble attending school on a regular basis need to contact their campus VP's as soon as possible to discuss how BFEC can support you being in school. With teacher permission, students can have a break in the morning from 11-11:10 and in the afternoon from 2-2:10. Attendance is taken before and after break and is updated by the end of each day.

Class	Period	Times
AM	1	9:40-11:10
	2	11:10-12:05
PM	3	12:45-2:10
	4	2:10-3:00

#### **Teachers will be using the following codes for attendance:**

“P” is present (this means on time and stayed the entire class)

“AWN” means absent with notification (parent / guardian called)

“A” means absent without notification

“R” means absent due to the observance of a religious holiday or ceremony

“MR” means Absent for Medical reasons

There are NO special circumstances for attendance.

Arriving late to class or leaving class early is very disruptive to the learning of your classmates and to your own learning. Teachers will be using the code “L” in Power School to note when a student arrives late to class and “LE” when a student leaves class early. This time can add up to a missed period.

#### **What if I am suspended from school?**

The code “OSS” will appear and this type of absence counts in your total number of absences per course each quarter when considering credit loss.

### **What is credit loss?**

At 20% missed time each quarter – approximately 20 missed periods per course at BFEC (this takes into account all appointments, absences with or without notification, how many minutes' late or leaving early students are to a class) can result in a student being removed from that course for that quarter and not being eligible to earn that credit.

It is the responsibility of students, parents and guardians to monitor their Power School accounts to view attendance records.

Each night our automated phone system also calls home indicating if a student has missed a class, has been late to class, or has left class early. If you are concerned about missing these calls, please confirm your phone numbers with your campus school secretary at (902) 832-8630.

If you need your Power School account please contact our school registrar, Mrs. Megan Paris, at mparis@hrce.ca

### **The following processes will be followed by BFEC staff to support positive student attendance and to follow the provincial policy:**

- **5 missed periods:** the classroom teacher will contact both the student and the parents or guardian (of students under the age of 19) to discuss why a student has been missing classes, what is keeping the student from being in school and if there is anything the school can help support regular and on time attendance.
- **10 missed periods:** the vice-principal contacts the parent or guardian (of students under the age of 19) to discuss why a student has been missing classes and what is keeping the student from being in school. An attendance contract will be put into place and a letter sent home which informs the students, parents and guardians of the possible consequences of further missed time from school.
- **20 missed periods:** the vice-principal/principal will contact the student and parent or guardian (of students under the age of 19) to review expectations for attendance, current interventions in place and to discuss other possible interventions for improving regular and on time attendance.
- **21 missed periods:** the principal will determine loss of credit for the student. If a student loses credit the student will be removed from the course and will not be eligible to earn this credit at this time or to recover this credit.

### **What incentives does BFEC have in place to recognize students who attend school regularly or are making positive changes to their attendance?**

- Breakfast program each day
- Break time
- Monthly Attendance certificates
- Bi-weekly gift card draws for excellent and improved attendance
- We are able to provide reference letters for students who attend regularly because we know them and can speak to their character and academics.

## SCHOOL HOURS

BFEC Campuses open its doors at 9:20am and closes at 3:30pm. Students are not permitted in the building outside of those hours unless they are involved with a supervised extra help session with a teacher.

## STUDENT SERVICES

The Student Services Department of BFEC welcomes both new and returning students.

Our Student Services team provides support designed to help students gain a better understanding of themselves and the career and educational opportunities available to them. Our student services team includes school counsellors, a social worker, resource teachers, a school psychologist and a public health nurse.

## SCHOOL COUNSELOR SERVICES

### Counseling

Academic, vocational and personal counseling are available through the school counselor. Outside agencies may be accessed through school counselor and social work referrals.

- **Course Selection**, all students will have the opportunity to discuss course selections with a counselor. Please make your course selection carefully.
- **Information**, post-secondary information and applications are available in the guidance office. Students should pay close attention to deadlines for the institution of their choice.
- **Scholarships and Financial Aid**, each year our guidance office posts scholarship/bursary information for graduating students.
- **Student Transcripts**, students may request copies of their transcripts.

**School Social Worker** – Support to highly anxious families, helps students with daily living needs, connects students to community organizations, food and clothing bank.

**Resource teacher** – Supports the implementation of the Inclusion Policy including helping teachers program for students, monitors student progress and offers support to students.

**Health Centre** – Do you need a confidential place to go and talk? BFEC's Health Centre is a place where students can **receive confidential health information** and talk to the nurse or social worker privately about their concerns. Joelle, BFEC's school health nurse, is in Bedford and Dartmouth through the week to address any emotional, mental, social and sexual health issues. You can drop in to talk to her.

**School Psychologist** – Accessed through referral. Please speak with your vice-principal.



## **POWERSCHOOL**

The Halifax Regional School Board uses the Student Information System called PowerSchool. The system allows students and parents to log on using their own private online account to see grades, track attendance, learn about upcoming assignments, and catch up on school events and announcements.

Information is made available about how to log on to a private account and access real-time information. Students and parents will be able to log on anywhere there is internet access and access information.

### **10 REASONS WHY IT IS RECOMMENDED TO USE POWERSCHOOL:**

1. To check on the accuracy of my attendance and late records to make sure everything is in order to receive my exam exemption
2. To read the daily announcements using the School Bulletin feature so that I don't miss an event or other important information
3. To track my grades so that I know where I stand and see if I have any outstanding assessments
4. To view the Grade History section, and click on my grade percentage to see the breakdown of all assignments and tests and the marks I received for each that has brought me to that grade percentage to date
5. To see courses/credits I have completed to date so that I know what I need to graduate
6. To directly email my teacher from PowerSchool if I have any questions
7. To read comments from my teachers about my areas of strengths and needs in my learning
8. To choose my course requests for the following school year from PowerSchool
9. To be more in charge of my learning and attendance by looking at common patterns (eg. I'm always late for the first class in the morning)
10. To see my attendance and marks before my parents do

For access to your PowerSchool log in information, please visit our website:

<https://bfec.hrce.ca/bfec/students/studentparentguardian-powerschool-portal> you may email Ms. Paris at [mparis@hrce.ca](mailto:mparis@hrce.ca) if you have any questions.

## **PARENT CONCERN**

If students and / or parents have questions, concerns, or require clarification around classroom activities and assessment items, your first point of contact needs to be with the classroom teacher. Classroom teachers are the best people to answer your questions about what is happening with your child in their classrooms.

All staff email addresses are posted on our website at <https://bfec.hrce.ca/> . Teachers will make every attempt to return your email within 48 hours of the start of the next school day.

If, after attempting to resolve / clarify something with the classroom teacher, you still find yourself needing to communicate with someone regarding the same issue, your next point of contact is with the department head for that subject. Their email addresses are also on our website. Finally, if all attempts to resolve your

question or concern are not successful, please contact the school's administration.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY

Assessments:

- contribute to student learning, achievement, and well-being.
- are valid, reliable, and fair.
- are planned, purposeful, inclusive, and equitable.
- are aligned with the expected learning outcomes, instructional approaches, and individual student learning needs (e.g., assistive technology, extra time).
- provide students with multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate their understanding and application of concepts and skills related to the expected learning outcomes.
- provide ongoing information about student learning that is meaningful, accessible, and communicated to parents and students in a variety of ways.

It is important that students complete their assignments on time so that teachers can provide timely feedback. Therefore assignments require due dates. The Provincial [Student Assessment Policy](#) outlines responsibilities including: grades 9–12—students are expected to adhere to due dates with increasing independence. They are expected to negotiate extensions with teachers prior to the original due date, except in exceptional circumstances

## EXAMS

***BFEC believes that writing exams:***

- Is valuable as an on-going assessment tool
- Prepares students for post-secondary and life experiences
- Encourages and promotes mastery of material beyond a one-time assessment providing opportunities for maturation, connection, synthesis and reflection
- Provides opportunities for students to build comfort level and self-confidence
- Provides a structure for students to further develop skills in organization, time management and self-discipline

Given that exam dates are published well in advance, it is expected that family vacations, or other non-medical absences, will be scheduled around this important assessment time. Absence for any reason other than a documented medical excuse will not be considered an acceptable reason for not writing an exam.

There may be instances when the school is closed during the scheduled exam day due to inclement weather, a power failure or other unforeseen circumstance. **Exams will be moved forward a day when a situation like this happens.** It is important to understand that the student must be present to write the exam on the rescheduled date. Please take this into account when planning and scheduling family vacations.

Where a student misses an examination without an acceptable excuse as defined above, a mark of zero will be given. Make-up exams may be written at a scheduled time approved by the administration for students who have a documented medical excuse.

The school administration will be responsible for ensuring consistent implementation of this policy. All arrangements are to be referred to school administration; no arrangements will be made between teachers and students.

## **ACADEMIC RECOGNITION**

Academic recognition will occur following each the conclusion of each Quarter and at Graduation in June for Grade 12 students. Certificates will be presented to students who have achieved academic excellence.

Averages will be calculated using all courses the student was enrolled in during each of their grade 10, 11 or 12 year using a straight average.

There will be no minimum number of courses enrolled in to qualify for the mark distinctions. There will be 3 categories of recognition: Honours, High Honours, and Principals List

**Public School Program Requirements: The following criteria is used when calculating averages for student recognition:**

<b>Honours</b>	<b>High Honours</b>	<b>Principal's List</b>
80%-84.9%	85%- 89.9%	90% or above

## **CARE OF SCHOOL**

It is the responsibility of all staff and students to maintain a clean working environment. As we become more aware of environmental issues, it is obvious that we must all work together to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

## **SMOKING and VAPING**

Smoking and vaping is forbidden on school property, inside or outside any school building, facility, or vehicle.

## **SCENT AWARE**

BFEC is committed to the provision of a healthy and safe environment. Some staff and students are sensitive to perfumes and colognes and become quite ill when exposed to the slightest amount of these products. In consideration of these individuals, please refrain from wearing scented products. You may be asked to change your clothing or leave if wearing scents that cause discomfort to others.

## **VISITORS TO SCHOOL GROUNDS**

Students are **NOT** permitted to have non-BFEC students or friends visit during school hours.

All visitors, regardless of purpose, **MUST** report to the Main Office. Visitors must sign in at the main office

and will wear a visitor's pass. Visitors and speakers staying for an extended period for the day will have been cleared through administration in advance.

### **PARENT-TEACHER/GUARDIAN Conferences**

There will be two curriculum nights for parents/guardians and two parent/guardian/teacher sessions per year at BFEC, this year parent/guardian/teacher conferences are scheduled for December 5, 2024 from 1-3 and 5-7 and April 30, 2025.

### **School Cancellations Due to Weather**

The Halifax Regional Centre for Education takes great care when making the decision to alter the normal operations of schools and school buses in the event of severe or inclement weather. You can find more information below or by viewing (and printing) our guidelines, [here](#).

HRCE staff gather information from a variety of sources beginning at 4:30 am, including:

- Weather forecasts from Wood Group consulting service which provides radar and satellite imagery, real time road conditions and any weather warnings;
- Consulting with a meteorologist to discuss details of forecast, level and type of precipitation and impact on road conditions;
- HRCE Transportation which consults with our service providers' bus drivers to determine local road conditions throughout the municipality;
- 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 of Education (or a designate), based on the information gathered and assessments of each area. The Regional Executive Director of Education makes the final decision based on this information.

It is our goal to make the decision as close to 6:00 am as possible. A 6:00 am 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 buses 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.

What if the weather deteriorates throughout the day?

If the weather deteriorates, the HRCE can decide to dismiss students early. In the event of an early dismissal, the decision will be communicated to all schools as close to 11:00 a.m. as possible.

- Bused students will be picked up two hours earlier than their regular dismissal time; and
- Non-bused students will be dismissed at their regularly scheduled lunch hour.
- In the event of an early dismissal, students in grades primary to 6 will not be released from school unless parents/guardians or designates have been notified by the school.

**Information will be shared in the following ways:**

- 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 our website [www.hrce.ca](http://www.hrce.ca)
- On Instagram at [www.instagram.com/hrce\\_ns/](http://www.instagram.com/hrce_ns/)



## **RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS**

At BFEC, we are building skills for life. Learning is an important life skill that should be developed in a positive way. Everyone at BFEC deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

### **BFEC Equity Team:**

BFEC has an Equity Team comprised of teachers and admin. The Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights, Policy of the HRCE will be followed. In addition, BFEC has and will continue to approach teaching and learning with Culturally Relevant Approaches and will provide a supporting educational component:

- At all grade levels teachers will reinforce the need to recognize and educate students around racist, sexist and discriminatory behaviours.
- Counselling will be advocated and provided at student, staff, or parental request.
- A culture of mutual respect will guide all personal interactions within the BFEC community.
- All students at BFEC are respected and treated with equity. Racial, ethnic, cultural or gender intolerance is unacceptable. These types of actions will have serious consequences.
- In keeping with our mandate to prevent discrimination of any kind, BFEC will take punitive action for any types of bullying or harassment based on discrimination. Staff will, to the best of their ability, attempt to stop any form of discrimination if they witness it.





## Core Values at BFEC

At BFEC we SOAR in the following ways:

S – Self-Respect: Being the Best You

- Care for yourself (self-care, balance, boundaries)
- Believe in your potential (learn, grow, try again)
- Build a positive mindset (focus on strengths, be accountable)

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O – Open Hearts, Open Minds: Respect for Others

- Value individual journeys (accept differences, no judgment)
- Promote mutual respect (speak kindly, respect space, body language)
- Challenge discrimination (address hate, educate ourselves, keep conflicts out)
- Respond with care (work through conflict with empathy, treat others as you want to be treated)

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A – Acting with Respect in Our School Spaces

- Use appropriate behavior (language, quiet spaces, designated areas)
- Value learning and time (arrive on time, respect washroom privacy, stay engaged)
- Care for shared spaces (clean up, share resources fairly, only take what you need)

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R – Recognizing and Respecting Our Community

- Follow expectations (guidelines, rules, cooperation)
- Practice awareness and empathy (kindness, understanding situations, no judgment)
- Own your reactions (choose respectful responses)
- Make a positive impact (support inclusivity, respect businesses and spaces around us)

## **ACADEMIC FRAUD**

Academic fraud occurs when a person uses the intellectual property of another individual such as information or data from books, magazines, newspapers, the Internet, music or educational disks or audio/visual disks without acknowledging the owner in writing.

To avoid academic fraud (plagiarism), document your resources. As Joanne Buckley states in Checkmate: A Writing Reference for Canadians describes, "When writing academic research papers, you must acknowledge information and ideas obtained from other sources. This includes information and ideas that you directly quote, summarize, or paraphrase from others' work" (Buckley 363)

Teachers will address the issue with the student and parents and appropriate actions will be taken

Academic Fraud includes but not limited to the following:

- (a) Plagiarism: this is defined as the representation of the ideas or work of another person as the students own.
- (b) Collusion: this is defined as supporting malpractice by another student, as in allowing one's work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another student, as in allowing one's work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another.
- (c) *Duplication of work: this is defined as the presentation of the same work for different assessment components and /or assessment requirements.*
- (d) *Any other behaviour that gains an unfair advantage for any student or that affects the results of another student (for example, taking unauthorized material into an examination room, misconduct during an examination).*

## **HOMEWORK**

The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has established a province wide Homework Policy. This policy establishes standards for homework in all schools. All student and school members in Nova Scotia are required to follow this homework policy, which is governed by the Education Act.

This policy came into effect on September 1, 2015. To view this policy, please visit the About Us section on the BFEC website under Documents and Policies.

### **Use of Video Surveillance:**

Our school uses a video surveillance system as part of our continued efforts to support a safe, positive and effective learning environment. We recognize that the images recorded by this video surveillance system are personal information and, as with all other personal information, we take steps to balance privacy rights with safety and security concerns. The school has the legal authority



to collect this personal information under Section 24 of Nova Scotia's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Only designated staff has access to our video surveillance equipment and such access is restricted as required by law. The system is used to enhance school safety and to deter or take action in response to unlawful behaviours.

If you have any questions about video surveillance at our school, please contact Mr. Feeney (Principal) at 902-832-8630.