

ANNAPOLIS WEST EDUCATION CENTRE

<https://sites.google.com/gnspes.ca/awec/home>



SCHOOL HANDBOOK

2025-2026

2025-2026 School Calendar

September

02 Organizational Day for staff (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)
03 Professional Development (PD) Day (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)
04 First Day for Students
29 Professional Development (PD) Day (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)
30 Truth & Reconciliation Day (Culturally Significant Day – NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)

October

08 AVRCE Collaborative Afternoon (ALL GRADES DISMISSING AT 1:20)
13 Thanksgiving Day – Holiday (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)
24 Provincial Conference Day (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)

November

05 AVRCE Collaborative Afternoon (ALL GRADES DISMISSING AT 1:20)
11 Remembrance Day (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)
21 Middle Level Assessment & Evaluation Day (NO SCHOOL GRADES 6-8)
17-20 HS Report Cards sent electronically

December

02 Middle Level Report Cards sent electronically
04 ML Progress Conferences PM & Teacher Professional Practice Day (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)
19 Last teaching day before Winter Break
22 Teacher Professional Practice Day (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)

January

05 First teaching day after Winter Break
28-29 High School Summative Assessments
30 High School Assessment & Evaluation Day (NO SCHOOL HS ONLY)

February

02 Second Semester Begins
03-13 HS Report Cards sent electronically
16 Heritage Day – Holiday (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)
25 AVRCE Collaborative Afternoon (ALL GRADES DISMISSING AT 1:20)

March

13 Middle Level Assessment & Evaluation Day (NO SCHOOL GRADES 6-8)
16-20 Spring Break (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)
24 Middle Level Report Cards sent electronically

April

02 ML Progress Conferences PM & Teacher Professional Practice Day (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)

03 Good Friday (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)

06 Easter Monday (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)

21-28 HS Report Cards sent electronically

29 HS Progress Conferences PM & Teacher Professional Practice Day (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)

May

06 AVRCE Collaborative Afternoon (ALL GRADES DISMISSING at 1:20)

18 Victoria Day – Holiday (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES)

June

03 AVRCE Collaborative Afternoon (ALL GRADES DISMISSING at 1:20)

12 National Indigenous Peoples Day (Culturally Significant Day – SCHOOLS OPEN)

15-26 High School Summative Assessments

26 High School Assessment & Evaluation Day (NO SCHOOL HS ONLY)

29 Marking Day (NO SCHOOL ALL GRADES) Graduation at 6:30 PM

30 Last Day of School – Report Cards sent electronically for all grades

Staff Emails 2025-2026

Main Office

- Deborah Hannam: awec@avrce.ca
- Pam McCaul: awec@avrce.ca

Administration

- June Brown: jbrown@gnspe.ca
- Becky Benoit: rbenoit@gnspe.ca

Guidance Counsellor

- Bruce Gilbert: tgilbert@gnspe.ca

Child and Youth Care Practitioner

- Megan MacDougall: megan.macdougall@gnspe.ca

Teaching Staff

- Pat Atwell: paatwell@gnspe.ca
- Vic Beaumont: vbeaumont@gnspe.ca
- Tegan Butler: tbutler@gnspe.ca
- Candina Doucette: candina.doucette@gnspe.ca
- Allan Duffy: duffya@gnspe.ca
- Gwenn Firth: kaitlyn.firth@gnspe.ca
- Brendon Frail: bjfrail@gnspe.ca
- Claudia Fulton: cfulton@gnspe.ca
- Joel Hardy: jjhardy@gnspe.ca
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- Liz Jefferson: ljefferson@gnspe.ca
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- Anona Siwik: asiwi@gnspe.ca
- Derick Smith: dsmith@gnspe.ca
- Beth Strange: bstrange@gnspe.ca
- Courtney Taylor: cktaylor@gnspe.ca

Student Support Staff

Native Student Advisor

- Tammy Morrison: tmmorrison@gnspe.ca

Student Support Worker

- Charma Freckleton: cfreckleton@gnspe.ca

English as an Additional Language Teacher

Math Support Teachers

Grades 7-8

- Francine Sanford: francinesanford@gmail.com

Grades 8-9

- Richie Shipp: rshipp@gnspe.ca

Mi'kmaw Students

- Miranda Andrews: mmandrews@gnspe.ca

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to AWEC for the 2025–2026 school year! It is with great pleasure that we take this opportunity to welcome you to our school community. At AWEC, we are deeply proud of the programs, opportunities, and supportive environment we offer all students. We encourage you to make the most of your time with us—get involved, strive for excellence, and embrace learning as a lifelong journey. This handbook has been updated to help you and your families understand our school policies, procedures, and the many services available to support your success.

AWEC Mission Statement

At AWEC, we are a family of learners who aspire to celebrate and advocate for each person's culture, abilities, and achievements. We are dedicated to fostering a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment where every individual feels valued, supported, and encouraged to take personal responsibility for their growth and success.

AWEC Vision Statement

Our vision at AWEC is to build a vibrant school community where meaningful relationships, high expectations, cultural celebration, and personal responsibility inspire lifelong learning. Together, we strive to nurture confident, compassionate individuals who contribute positively to their communities and embrace the diversity of the world around them.

ADMINISTRATION

Principal: June Brown | jbrown@gnspe.ca

Vice Principal: Becky Benoit | rbenoit@gnspe.ca

SCHOOL SECRETARIES

Deborah Hannam and Pam McCaul

The school office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Contact: awec@avrce.ca

AWEC School Configuration

AWEC serves students from Grade 6 through Grade 12:

- **Middle Level (Grades 6–8)**
- **Senior High (Grades 9–12)**

Our school follows an 8-day cycle. You can find the full school calendar and cycle days on the **AWEC website**. <https://sites.google.com/gnspes.ca/awec/home>

Daily Schedule at AWEC

- Middle School students follow a block schedule with eight periods per day and High School students have four periods per day.

Time	Middle School	Time	High School
9:05 - 9:10	Homeroom	9:05 - 10:30	Period 1
9:10 - 9:50	Period 1		
9:50 - 10:30	Period 2		
10:30 - 11:05	Period 3	10:30 - 11:50	Period 2
11:05 - 11:20	RECESS		
11:20 - 12:00	Period 4	11:50 - 12:00	RECESS
12:00 - 12:40	Period 5	12:00 - 1:20	Period 3
12:40 - 1:15	LUNCH		
1:20 - 2:00	Period 6	1:20 - 2:00	LUNCH
2:00 - 2:40	Period 7	2:00 - 3:20	Period 4
2:40 - 3:20	Period 8		

Scheduled Early Dismissals

When we have a scheduled early dismissal, we follow the schedule below to ensure that all students have an opportunity to eat prior to dismissal.



Unexpected School Closures & Cancellations

Parents/Guardians: AVRCE will notify you by text message and email using the contact information you provide in September. Please remember to inform the AWEC office if your email address or phone number changes during the year.

AVRCE also shares announcements about school closures or delays through:

- Website: www.avrce.ca
- Twitter/X: [@AVRCE_NS](https://twitter.com/AVRCE_NS)
- AVRCE Info Line: 902-538-4600 or 1-800-850-3887
- Local media: AVR Network, Magic 94.9, 89.3 K-Rock, CBC Radio 1, CTV Morning Live Atlantic

AWEC Communication Plan

Clear and timely communication helps us support every student's success. Please contact AWEC office staff or your child's teacher if you have questions or concerns.

Here's how we stay connected with families:

- **AWEC website:** <https://sites.google.com/gnspes.ca/awec/home>
- **Parent/Student Portal:** (for attendance and assessment updates)
- **AWEC Handbook:** key information provided at the start of the year
- **Monthly Newsletters:** sent home middle of the month and posted on the website
- **Course Outlines & Teacher Communications:** via websites, email, or printed materials
- **Automated Alerts:** for urgent updates

Change of Address/Telephone Number

Many students have changes to their initial registration form during the year (address, telephone number, parental employment number, medical concerns, etc.). Any changes should be reported to the office immediately to ensure our records are kept up to date.

Student Transportation & Attendance Guidelines

At AWEC, we believe that personal responsibility and accountability are important life skills that help our students succeed both in and out of school. To support these values, we have clear guidelines for transportation, attendance, and punctuality.



AWEC Bus Policy

Students at AWEC are provided the privilege of traveling to and from school on buses operated by the AVRCE. With this privilege comes the responsibility to follow all AVRCE transportation policies and AWEC expectations to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone on board.



Expectations for Students on the Bus

- The bus driver, as a member of our school community, has the same authority as any AWEC staff while students are on the bus.
- Students must:
 - ✓ Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
 - ✓ Avoid behaviors that may compromise the safety of others.
 - ✓ Keep noise levels reasonable so the driver is not distracted.

If a student's behavior is unsafe or inappropriate:

- The bus driver will submit a written report to the school and AVRCE.
- A copy of this report will also be sent to parents/guardians.
- Repeated or serious offenses may result in a temporary loss of bus privileges.



Requests to Ride a Different Bus or Get Off at a Different Stop

Board-provided transportation is designed to take students to and from their regular place of residence and school. However, students may request to travel to a different stop or on a different bus if:

- ✓ A written note signed by parent/guardian is received by the school prior to 2:00 PM on the day it is required.
- ✓ If a student is dropping off a note, this must be done during their scheduled breaks—not during class time.
- ✓ The office will create and record a bus note, which must be picked up by the student at the end of the day.
- ✓ The bus note must be given to the bus driver before boarding.

Important: If the bus is full, the driver may not be able to accommodate the request. In this case, students will be instructed to return to the office so other arrangements can be made.



Questions or Concerns About Busing?

Parents/guardians with questions or concerns about transportation are asked to:

- Contact the AVEC main office at 902-532-3150, or
- Call the AVRCE Bus Garage at 902-825-5300.



Leaving School During the Day

AVEC is a closed campus. For safety reasons, students in grades 6–8 are not permitted to leave school grounds unless:

- ✓ They are picked up by a parent/guardian.
- ✓ They have a signed note/phone call from a parent/guardian that has been given to the office.

For students in grades 6-8 to sign out during school hours:

- A phone call or written note from a parent/guardian is required.

- In an emergency, students may call home and ask the school secretary to speak directly with a parent/guardian for permission.
- Students must sign out at the office before leaving. If this step is missed, the absence may be treated as skipping.



Sign-In / Sign-Out Procedures

To ensure student safety, we require the following:

- Students arriving late or leaving early must sign in or out at the office as this helps us account for every student in case of an emergency.
- Students signing out should have permission from their parents/guardians before doing so. If a student signs out without prior parent knowledge, we consider this skipping.

Important:

If a student does not return after lunch for their afternoon classes, we must receive a call from a parent or guardian before the afternoon classes begin to confirm the absence. Without this notification, the absence may also be considered skipping



Skipping Classes

At AWEK, regular attendance is key to student success. When students skip class, they miss valuable learning time and disrupt their progress.

- Skipping a scheduled class is not following the expectations here at school. According to the provincial code of conduct, this could be considered insubordination and consequences could result.

We encourage families to talk with their students about the importance of being present and engaged every day. Together, we can support a positive and productive learning environment



Being On Time Matters

Arriving on time for class helps students stay on track with their learning and sets them up for success in life.

Here's how we support students in building punctuality:

- If a student is late to class five times, they will be referred to Detention Hall.

- **Detention Hall runs during lunch (30 minutes) on Tuesdays and Thursdays.**
- **If a student misses their scheduled detention, they will be assigned a second detention.**
- **Missing a second detention will result in a half-day internal suspension.**
- **If a student cannot attend their detention for a valid reason, they must make arrangements through the office before their assigned date.**

We appreciate your partnership in helping our students develop habits that support their learning and future success.

AWEC School Policies

At AWEC, we believe a safe, respectful, and positive environment supports every student's well-being and success. The following policies outline our shared expectations for students, staff, and visitors.

Scent Awareness Policy

AWEC strives to maintain a scent-aware environment for the health and comfort of all. Students, staff, and visitors are asked to avoid wearing scented products such as perfumes, colognes, deodorants, hairsprays, or gels.

If a scent is impacting members of our school community, students may be asked to wash, change clothing, or return home to address the issue.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is essential to student success. Frequent absences mean missed opportunities for learning and skill development.

As per the Provincial Student Attendance and Engagement Policy:

- Students are expected to attend at least 80% of class time.
- Missing 20% or more of a course may result in loss of credit.

✓ Excused absences include illness, medical/dental appointments, urgent family matters, or other reasonable causes. These must be confirmed by a parent/guardian (note, email, or call).

✗ Unexcused absences may result in loss of credit for work missed and could lead to internal suspension.

Students must attend school during the day to participate in any after-school or evening activities and to ride the school bus.

Personal Devices Policy

Rationale

- Evidence shows that excessive cell phone usage is harmful to children, including detrimental effects on learning, mental health and social development
- We are seeing increasing incidents of unacceptable behaviour related to cell phones
- Teachers are reporting increased levels of disengagement and are struggling to get students to put phones away during learning time.

Middle Level Practices

- AVEC a cell phone free space for middle level students
- Students are encouraged not to bring a cell phone, tablet, wireless earbuds or other mobile device to school. If they do, these devices **MUST** be dropped off at the office upon arrival and can be picked up upon dismissal.
- If a student is found to have a device at school, it will be brought to the office and stored securely until a parent or guardian can pick it up. Repeated incidents will result in consequences which can include suspension.

High School Practices

- We recognize that high school students are better able to exercise judgment on when and how to use mobile devices
- High school students are not permitted to use cell phones during class time. High school students will be permitted use of their phones at recess and lunch periods. Cell phone hotels will be provided in every classroom and students will be required to store their phones in the cell phone hotel during class time. Phones can only be visible during recess or lunch.
- If a student uses a cell phone during class time, they will be asked to put it in the hotel. If they refuse, it will be confiscated and stored securely in the office until the end of the day.

- Students will continue to have school-issued Chromebooks for use during class time

Exceptions

- There are certain circumstances where a child may need to use a cell phone at school, such as students who use phones to manage medical conditions.
- If this applies to your child, we ask that you contact the office to discuss

Sports and Clubs

- Taking photos and video of sporting events after school is permitted if allowed by coaches.
 - If your Middle Level student is attending a sports event after school and will be using a cell phone during the event, students **MUST** bring their phone to the office at the beginning of the school day and it will be stored securely until the end of the school day.
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- Inappropriate use of devices may lead to confiscation or other disciplinary actions as per the provincial code of conduct.
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Dress Code

Students are encouraged to express their individuality while respecting our shared community. Clothing must not display:

- Discriminatory, offensive, or vulgar language/images
 - Messages supporting violence, illegal activity, tobacco, alcohol, drugs or making sexual suggestions are not appropriate.
Students wearing inappropriate clothing will be asked to change or will be referred to administration.
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Smoking & Vaping Policy

Smoking and vaping are prohibited on school property under the Smoke-Free Places Act. Students who do not follow this policy will face disciplinary action as per the provincial code of conduct, which may include suspension and referral to support services.

Technology & Internet Use

Network access is a privilege at AWEC. Students are expected to use technology responsibly and in alignment with AVRCE's Acceptable Use Policy. Misuse may result in restricted access, disciplinary action, or suspension.

Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Discrimination (RCH) Policy

AWEC is committed to equity and inclusion. Discrimination of any kind—based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic—is not tolerated.

Students are expected to report incidents to a staff member immediately. Responses, as per the provincial code of conduct, may include restorative practices, education, and disciplinary measures. All incidents are documented at the school and AVRCE level. Please know that all matters are investigated and responded to accordingly. We do not share the outcome of these matters due to confidentiality but have confidence in us that we respond in the most appropriate way for that given situation.

Chromebook Policy

Chromebooks are loaned to grade 9-12 students each year. Once paperwork has been completed, signed and returned students will be issued a chromebook and charger. Students are responsible for keeping these in good condition and need to report immediately when something is not working properly, damaged or lost. Chromebooks **MUST** be returned at the end of the year. Failure to do so could result in a bill for \$385 per chromebook and \$40 per charger. Middle level students will have access to a chromebook when needed for a given activity or as per their adaptations. Again, these are to be treated with respect and students are asked to report any issues as soon as they notice it. Middle level students have been asked to each sign an acceptable user policy as well.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking another person's work and presenting it as your own. This includes copying text without citation, using someone else's homework, or cutting and pasting from the internet.

- Plagiarized assignments may receive no credit.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools at AWEC

At AWEC, we recognize that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are becoming part of everyday life and the modern workplace. As educators, we believe it is important to guide students in developing the skills to use these tools responsibly, ethically, and thoughtfully.

Guidelines for Students

- ✓ AI tools may be used to support learning, creativity, and research when approved by a teacher. Examples include brainstorming ideas, improving writing, or practicing skills.
- ✓ Students must always give credit when AI tools contribute to their work. Copying and submitting AI-generated work as your own without acknowledgment is considered plagiarism and will result in a loss of credit for the assignment.
- ✓ AI should never be used to generate inappropriate, offensive, or harmful content.
- ✓ AI tools are not a substitute for critical thinking, effort, or authentic learning.

School Dances

AWEC dances are a privilege and a celebration of community. Eligibility is based on attendance, behavior, and academics.

- Middle/High School Dances (sign-in only).
- Students may not leave and re-enter during dances.
- Guests (Grades 6–12 only) require prior approval from administration.

Food and drinks must stay in designated areas. The school dress code applies as does the cell phone policy. Phones will not be permitted at AWEC during middle level dances. Opportunities will be provided to take photos at the beginning of the event, and following

this, cell phones will be stored securely in the office until the dance is over.