

LESLIE THOMAS

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026–2027

SCHOOL YEAR



Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia

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1. WELCOME TO LTJH

Welcome to Leslie Thomas Junior High.

At LTJH, we are committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive, and structured learning environment where students are encouraged to grow academically, socially, and personally. We believe strong relationships, clear expectations, and consistent routines help students feel supported and successful.

Junior high school is an important stage of development, and we value the partnership between home and school in helping students thrive. We encourage students to become involved in school life through academics, athletics, clubs, leadership opportunities, and community involvement.

This handbook is designed to provide students and families with important information about school procedures, expectations, routines, and supports. We encourage families to review this handbook carefully and refer to it throughout the school year.

We look forward to a successful year together.

2. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Leslie Thomas Junior High

100 Metropolitan Avenue
Lower Sackville, NS B4C 2Z8

Phone: 902-864-6785

Email: ltjh@hrce.ca

Website: <https://ltj.hrce.ca/>

Office Hours: 9:00 am to 3:30 pm

Administration

Principal: Gary Miller

Vice Principal: Lisa MacNeil

Administrative Assistant: Sonja Moore

School Counsellor: Margaret Coffin

Resource: Cheryl Hartnett

Grades Served

Leslie Thomas Junior High serves students in Grades 6, 7, and 8.

Family of Schools

Leslie Thomas Junior High is part of the Sackville High Family of Schools within the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE).

3. SCHOOL SCHEDULE & DAILY OPERATIONS

Regular School Schedule

Time	Activity
8:55 am	Student Supervision Begins
9:10 am	Students Enter Building
9:15 am	Classes Begin
12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	Lunch
3:15 pm	Dismissal

Arrival, Supervision & Morning Drop-Off

Supervision at Leslie Thomas Junior High begins at 8:55 am. Students should not arrive on school property before this time, as supervision is not available.

Students who are being dropped off may arrive beginning at 8:55 am. Students may enter the building at 9:10 am and are expected to proceed directly to their lockers and then to class.

Students are expected to enter the building calmly, respectfully, and prepared for the school day.

Parking, Drop-Off & Bus Loop

Parking at Leslie Thomas Junior High is very limited and is reserved for school staff.

Parents/guardians are asked not to park, stop, or drop off students in the school driveway or directly in front of the school near the school sign. Staff need to be able to access the parking area when arriving for work.

The loop at the front of the school is for buses only and is also a fire lane. There is no stopping or parking in the bus loop at any time.

Families dropping off or picking up students should use the surrounding streets and follow all posted municipal parking signs.

Late Arrivals

Students arriving after 9:15 am must report to the main office before proceeding to class.

Attendance is monitored closely, and repeated lateness may result in follow-up from school administration.

Early Dismissal / Student Pick-Up

Students leaving school before the end of the school day must be dismissed through the main office.

When you arrive to pick up your child, please **call the office or ring the front doorbell**. Office staff will check PowerSchool to confirm there are no guardian alerts or pickup restrictions before dismissing the student.

If a restriction is noted, the adult picking up the student will be required to come into the office and show **photo ID**.

To minimize disruptions at the end of the day, students should be picked up **before 3:00 pm**. The office will not call students out of class during the final 15 minutes of the school day. Students not picked up before 3:00 pm should leave at the regular **3:15 pm dismissal**.

School Closures & Delayed Openings

Decisions regarding school closures, delayed openings, or early dismissals due to weather or emergency situations are made by HRCE.

Families are encouraged to monitor:

- HRCE website
- SchoolMessenger notifications
- Local radio stations
- HRCE social media channels

Delayed Openings

When schools operate on a delayed opening:

- Classes begin at 11:15 am
- Buses run two hours later than normal
- Lunch remains from 12:15 pm to 1:15 pm
- Dismissal remains at 3:15 pm

SafeArrival will still close at 9:45 am, even though classes begin later.

If families are unable to report an absence before 9:45 am, they must contact the school directly by:

- calling the main office and leaving a voicemail at Extension 0
- emailing ltjh@hrce.ca

Please include:

- student name
- homeroom
- reason for absence

Additional information will be shared through SchoolMessenger and the school website when required.

4. ATTENDANCE & SAFEARRIVAL

Attendance Expectations

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential for student success. Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive prepared to learn each day.

Frequent absences and lateness can significantly impact academic progress and classroom participation.

Reporting Absences

Leslie Thomas uses **SchoolMessenger SafeArrival** to manage student absences. Parents and guardians are asked to report absences through SafeArrival whenever possible.

Absences can be reported **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**, and may be entered in advance for any school day during the current school year.

Ways to Report

SchoolMessenger App

Download the SchoolMessenger app, sign in using the email address connected to your PowerSchool account, select **Attendance**, and follow the prompts.

PowerSchool Parent Portal

Log into the [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#), select **SchoolMessenger**, then **Attendance** and **Report an Absence**.

Toll-Free Phone

Call **1-833-582-6940** and follow the automated prompts. If your phone number is not recognized, you will be asked to enter a number the school has on file.

SafeArrival Cut-Off Time

Absences must be entered through SafeArrival before the daily cut-off time of 9:45 am.

After 9:45 am, please contact the school directly:

- **Phone:** 902-864-6785, Extension 0
- **Email:** ltjh@hrce.ca

Please include:

- student name
 - homeroom
-

If an Absence Is Not Reported

If your child is marked absent and the absence has not been reported, SafeArrival will automatically attempt to contact you by **email, text message and/or phone**.

If the automated system is unable to confirm the absence, school staff may follow up directly. Families receive an email confirmation when an absence is successfully reported or updated.

Reporting absences in advance helps us account for students quickly and reduces unnecessary automated notifications and follow-up calls.

5. LUNCH PROCEDURES & SUPERVISION

Lunch Supervision Form

At the beginning of each school year, all families are required to complete a Lunch Supervision Form indicating whether their child:

- remains at school for supervised lunch, or
- has permission to leave school property during the lunch hour on a regular basis

This information is kept on file in the main office and is used to help ensure student safety and accurate supervision during the lunch period.

Lunch Hour Expectations

Lunch takes place from 12:15 pm to 1:15 pm.

Students who are registered for supervised lunch spend a significant portion of the lunch hour outdoors, typically for approximately 30 to 40 minutes daily.

Students should arrive prepared for outdoor weather conditions with appropriate outerwear and footwear.

Outdoor Expectations

Outdoor time is considered a regular part of lunch supervision.

In cases of severe weather or extreme cold, indoor space may be opened depending on available supervision. This is not guaranteed and may vary from day to day.

Staying on School Property

Students registered for supervised lunch are expected to remain on school property for the entire lunch period.

Students may not leave school property without permission.

Occasional Changes to Lunch Plans

If a student who normally remains at school requires permission to leave school property during lunch on an occasional basis, a signed and dated note must be submitted to the office before lunch begins.

For safety and consistency:

- phone calls will not be accepted
- emails will not be accepted
- text messages will not be accepted
- students may not call home during lunch to request permission

Students who do not provide a written note in advance will be expected to remain at school for the lunch period.

These procedures help ensure the school can accurately account for all students during lunch supervision.

Food Delivery Services

Food deliveries to the school from services such as DoorDash, Uber Eats, and SkipTheDishes are not permitted.

Students are not permitted to leave supervised lunch areas to meet delivery drivers, and deliveries create disruptions to the school day and supervision procedures.

6. STUDENT EXPECTATIONS & SCHOOL CONDUCT

School Expectations

Students at LTJH are expected to:

- treat others with respect and kindness
- demonstrate responsible behaviour
- follow staff directions
- arrive prepared and ready to learn
- respect school property and the property of others
- use inclusive and respectful language
- contribute positively to the school environment
- demonstrate responsible digital citizenship

Respect for Our School & Community

Students are expected to help maintain a clean, safe, and welcoming school environment.

Littering on school property or in the surrounding community is not acceptable. Students are expected to dispose of garbage properly and show respect for shared spaces both inside and outside the school building.

Drinks at School

Open drinks are not permitted in classrooms.

This includes items such as:

- pop
- energy drinks
- iced coffee beverages
- other open beverages

Students are encouraged to bring water in a spill-proof water bottle.

Teachers may ask students to dispose of open drinks before entering classrooms.

Provincial School Code of Conduct

Leslie Thomas Junior High follows the Nova Scotia Provincial School Code of Conduct.

Students are expected to contribute to a safe, respectful, inclusive, and positive learning environment free from:

- bullying
- harassment
- discrimination
- violence
- intimidation
- disruptive behaviour

Digital Citizenship

Students are expected to use technology, social media, and online communication responsibly and respectfully at all times.

Online behaviour that negatively impacts the school environment may result in school consequences.

7. CELL PHONES & PERSONAL DEVICES

Grade 6 Students

Grade 6 students are not permitted to use personal electronic devices during the school day, including lunch.

Devices should remain turned off and stored in lockers or backpacks.

Grade 7 & Grade 8 Students

Students in Grades 7 and 8 may use personal devices during lunch only.

Devices must remain turned off and stored during:

- class time
 - hallway transitions during instructional time
 - assemblies
 - school activities where staff have directed devices away
-

Photos & Videos

Students may not take photos, videos, or audio recordings on school property.

This expectation helps protect the privacy and safety of students and staff.

Consequences for Misuse

Failure to follow device expectations may result in:

- confiscation of the device
- parent or guardian contact
- requirement for parent pick-up
- additional school consequences if misuse continues

8. VAPING, SMOKING & SUBSTANCE USE

Vaping and smoking are not permitted anywhere on school property, including inside or outside the building.

This expectation is not only a school rule but also a legal requirement under provincial legislation.

If a student is found:

- vaping
- smoking
- in possession of a vape
- or in possession of tobacco products

the following may occur:

- confiscation of the item
- parent or guardian contact
- suspension from school

Parents or guardians may be required to pick up confiscated items from the school.

In some cases, incidents may also involve Halifax Regional Police under the Smoke Free Act.

The possession or use of alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or related paraphernalia is strictly prohibited and will result in serious consequences under the Provincial School Code of Conduct.

9. SCHOOL SAFETY & PROCEDURES

Lockers

Students are assigned lockers for storage of personal belongings.

Lockers remain school property, and administration reserves the right to access lockers when necessary.

Students are responsible for:

- securing personal belongings
- keeping lockers clean
- using lockers respectfully

LTJH is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items.

Visitors to the School

All visitors must:

- report to the main office
- sign in upon arrival
- follow school visitor procedures

Students from other schools are not permitted on school property during the school day without permission.

Office Phone Use

The office phone is available for student use when necessary; however, students must receive permission from office staff before using the phone.

Students may only use the office phone to contact a parent or guardian. Calls should be brief and made under the supervision of office staff.

Students requesting to leave school during the day may not make their own arrangements without office involvement. Permission to leave school must be provided directly to office staff by a parent or guardian.

Students should not use the office phone without first checking in with the Administrative Assistant. Misuse of the phone or failure to follow these expectations may result in loss of phone privileges, with office staff contacting home on the student's behalf when necessary.

Emergency Procedures

Throughout the school year, students participate in:

- fire drills
- lockdown drills
- hold and secure procedures
- other emergency preparedness activities

Students are expected to follow staff directions promptly and respectfully during all drills and emergencies.

Scent-Aware Environment

LTJH is a scent-aware school.

Students and visitors are asked to avoid wearing scented products, including perfumes, body sprays, and heavily scented lotions, due to allergies and sensitivities within the school community.

Allergies & Food Safety

Leslie Thomas is an **allergy-aware school**. We have students and staff with severe food allergies, including **peanut and tree nut allergies**, as well as a staff member with a **severe banana allergy**.

Families are asked **not to send bananas or foods containing banana to school in any form**, including fresh banana, banana bread, muffins, smoothies, or other baked or prepared foods containing banana.

Please also avoid sending **peanut and tree nut products** to school.

Food allergy information may be communicated to families throughout the year as needed. We appreciate everyone's cooperation in helping maintain a safe environment for students and staff.

Medication at School

Medication should only be administered at school when it is required during the school day.

Parents/guardians must complete the appropriate **Authorization and Directions for Administering Medication(s) at School** form before school staff can administer medication. This form must be completed for the current school year and updated whenever there is a change in medication or dosage.

All medication must be provided in its **original container**. Prescription medication must have the current pharmacy label attached, and non-prescription medication must include the original package information and directions.

Whenever possible, medication should be brought to school by an adult. Students should not bring medication to school without the required authorization already in place.

The school does **not** provide over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol or Advil.

10. ATHLETICS & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

LTJH encourages students to participate in athletics, clubs, leadership opportunities, and extracurricular activities.

Participation in extracurricular activities is considered a privilege and students are expected to:

- attend classes regularly
 - maintain appropriate behaviour
 - demonstrate good attendance and punctuality
 - follow school expectations
 - demonstrate sportsmanship and respect
-

Game Day Early Dismissal

On away-game days:

- team members are **dismissed at 2:45 pm**
- parents do not need to contact the school
- dismissals are recorded as School Activity (ACT)

If a student will be travelling with another parent or family member, a handwritten note must be submitted to the office before dismissal.

This procedure applies to all LT sports teams.

11. STUDENT SUPPORTS & SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Nova Scotia School Lunch Program

LTJH participates in the Nova Scotia School Lunch Program.

The program:

- offers two healthy meal options daily
- operates on a pay-what-you-can model
- allows families to choose an amount that works for them

Orders are placed online through:

www.NSLunch.ca

Ordering opens Friday morning and closes Wednesday at noon each week.

Breakfast Program

LTJH offers a breakfast program to support student well-being and readiness to learn.

Students are encouraged to access the program respectfully and responsibly.

Guidance & Student Support

Student support services are available to assist students with:

- academic concerns
- social-emotional well-being
- transitions
- problem solving
- school success

Additional school-based supports may include:

- Resource
- Learning Centre
- Student Support Workers
- SchoolsPlus
- Guidance services

School Counsellor: Margaret Coffin

Students and families are encouraged to reach out to the school counsellor for support related to student well-being, peer relationships, emotional concerns, school transitions, and problem solving.

12. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

School Communication

LTJH communicates with families through:

- email
- SchoolMessenger
- school website
- PowerSchool
- social media when applicable

Families are encouraged to ensure that contact information remains current throughout the school year.

Contacting Students During the Day

Families are asked not to text or call students directly during instructional time.

For urgent matters, families should contact the main office.

Parent Concern Process

When concerns arise, families are encouraged to follow the appropriate communication process:

1. Classroom teacher
2. School administration
3. HRCE, if necessary

Working together respectfully and collaboratively helps support positive outcomes for students and families.

LTJH PRIDE

At Leslie Thomas Junior High, we believe every student deserves:

- a safe environment
- supportive relationships
- opportunities to grow
- a strong sense of belonging

We appreciate the ongoing partnership between students, families, staff, and the broader school community. By working together, we help ensure that Leslie Thomas Junior High remains a safe, respectful, inclusive, and positive place for all students to learn and grow.