

May 10, 2024

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

We have had a great week celebrating our teachers and staff! Thank you to our PTA and Bluebird Yoga and Fitness for helping us celebrate our staff. We appreciate all your hard work and dedication to our community!

We have had a lot of students with cell phones, iPads, game console controllers and other personal devices out during classes and in the hallways/bathrooms. Cell phones and electronic devices are not permitted to be used during the school day. If students continue to use their phones they will be held by administrators and parents will need to pick them up.

Please keep **all** electronic devices (iPad, Kindles, game pads, etc.) at home. Cell phones must be silenced and in lockers or backpacks. Cell phones are not to be used during the school day for texting/calling/facetime, friends, or parents/guardians. If your child needs to contact a parent/guardian, they are free to come to the front office to make the call. Thank you for your cooperation.

Happy Mother's Day to all who celebrate. We also know that this can be a difficult time for some people and we will keep you in our thoughts during this time. If your child might need extra support, please reach out and let us know.

Alexia K.S. Couch

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

YEARBOOKS ON SALE NOW!

Order your HCMS Yearbook today! Please see the attached [flyer](#) for more information. **The last day to order your yearbook is Saturday, May 18.**

IMMUNIZATION CLINIC FOR 6th GRADE STUDENTS - MAY 20

If you received a letter or an email from the school nurse advising that your student needs immunizations for 7th grade, please complete the consent form for the upcoming immunization clinic. Consents need to be received by May 15. Please call the Health Room at 410-313-6934 if you have any questions.

UPCOMING DATES

05/14/2024 Schools and offices closed, Primary Election Day
05/17/2024 Schools close 3 hours early, Professional Learning Day/Articulation
05/22/2024 Band Spring Concert, 7:00 p.m. at WLHS
05/27/2024 Schools and offices closed, Memorial Day
05/29/2024 8th Grade Class Picture
05/30/2024 Chorus and Orchestra Spring Concert, 7:00 p.m. at WLHS
06/04/2024 8th Grade visit to WLHS
06/05/2024 Schools close 3 hours early, Professional Work Day
06/06/2024 8th Grade Cruise

06/11/2024 8th Grade Promotion, River Hill HS, 6:00 p.m.
06/12/2024 Schools close 3 hours early, Professional Work Day
06/13/2024 Schools close 3 hours early, Professional Learning Day
06/14/2024 Schools close 3 hours early, Professional Work Day, LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

TESTING SCHEDULE

Please see this [link](#) for the testing schedule.

SUMMER MATH SCHOLARS

Please see this [flyer](#) for more information!

QUARTER 3 REPORT CARDS

Report Cards are now available [online](#).

SCHOOL SAFETY

We appreciate everyone's help in making sure that our school is as safe as possible. All exterior doors are locked after arrival each morning, but to maintain safety and security it is important that we all do our part:

- Do not let anyone in through doorways around the school.
- All visitors or anyone arriving late needs to check-in at the front lobby using the buzzer. We know it is in our nature to be nice and hold the door, but please do not let in people you do not know. The front office staff will be focusing on groups coming to the buzzer and ensuring that all parties check-in properly. If it is difficult for you not to be friendly, be "friendly-nosy." "Good morning, your Sally's dad aren't you. Are you dropping off her oboe this morning?" Their response will indicate if you need to follow the last reminder included in this list.
- Doors shouldn't be propped open or held for people you do not know.
- If you see something suspicious, report it to a teacher, administrator, or other staff member.

We are increasing our signage around the building to remind everyone of this important information. Thanks for doing your part to help keep our school.

IMPORTANT BUS REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Parents/guardians whose children are eligible for bus transportation are asked to register to receive bus service each year to help the school system plan for student transportation needs. **The transportation registration process opened on Monday, April 8 and is open through May 31, to be completed online via HCPSS Connect Synergy.** Registration must be done for each eligible child.

To be eligible for bus service, your child's home address must be outside of a school's walk zones. You can verify address eligibility in the [HCPSS School Attendance Area Locator](#). After inputting your address, a window will appear that will indicate either bus or walk for each school level. Please note, the attendance area locator also includes a link for the bus stop locator, which is set for the current school year. Bus stop information for the 2024-2025 school year will be available in August.

You do not need to take any action if:

- Your child is not eligible for bus transportation
- Your child receives transportation as part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan, or
- Your child is a graduating senior

[Details on bus transportation registration](#), including a guide to register and scenarios families may see when registering, can be found online.

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL SCHEDULED

HCPSS used three inclement weather days this school year, and as such, the [last day of school](#) for students in full-day Pre-K through grade 11 is now scheduled to be Friday, June 14, with June 12-14 being three-hour early dismissals. The last day for half-day Pre-K/RECC students is currently Tuesday, June 11. Separately, the [last day for all high school seniors](#) is May 22.

HC DRUGFREE OPPORTUNITIES

8th to 12th Grade Leadership and Community Service Hours Opportunities. All HoCo 8-12 graders are invited to join the HC DrugFree Teen Advisory Council (TAC). TAC members are leaders who develop life skills to make healthy choices. Volunteer in the community and make a difference while building a powerful resume for job and college applications! Learn more and register: tinyurl.com/HCDrugFreeTAC or email admin@hcdrugfree.org

Know What's Happening in Howard County . Sign up for HC DrugFree's free newsletter at tinyurl.com/HCDFNews or follow us on social media to get updates on events as well as information to keep your family safe and informed:

Facebook : facebook.com/HCDrugfree

X : twitter.com/hcdrugfree

LinkedIn : linkedin.com/company/hc-drugfree

IMPORTANT BULLYING INFORMATION

As we approach the second half of the school year, we wanted to remind you that HCPSS is dedicated to providing a safe and supportive environment that focuses on student well-being. We are taking this time to uplift the importance of reporting any type of bullying that has occurred. We will be reviewing this with our students and staff as we start the second half of the school year, and hope that you too can uplift this at home.

For children facing the emotional toll of bullying, a supportive individual can make all the difference. Please encourage your children to reach out to a trusted staff member at school should they need to report anything. As parents and guardians, you will use the same reporting form as students by following the steps outlined below.

How do I report bullying?

1. When you believe bullying has taken place, you should report it through the Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Intimidation (BCHI) reporting form. Reporting can take place in one of three ways:

- Complete a [BCHI online reporting form](#)
- BCHP paper reporting form (available in the main office, staff workroom, school counseling office, media center, and health services office)
- An oral report to a staff member

2. It is important to note that policy states “in the event the reporting party does not complete a BCHP Reporting Form, school administrators/supervisors will take the appropriate steps to address and document the incident.” Therefore, if you or someone else makes an oral report, it then must be documented (i.e. through a BCHP reporting form) by the administrator.

Thank you for your partnership and attention to this important topic.

HCPSS FREE STUDENT RTA BUS PASS PROGRAM

Thanks to a continued partnership between HCPSS, Howard County Government, and Regional Transportation Agency (RTA), all HCPSS middle and high school students have access to free RTA bus passes through summer 2024. Students have full access to the RTA system and are not limited to transportation to and from schools or to school-related activities. If your child is interested, they can visit our front office to request a free pass.

SCHOOL MEALS

HCPSS no longer will use Nutrislice for school menus or MySchoolBucks* for meal payments and instead is offering a new parent site for all things food and nutrition. [LINQ Connect](#) is a secure, online portal that allows families to:

View breakfast and lunch menus

Make online payments to their child’s meal account

Monitor their child’s accounts

Schedule recurring payments and/or low balance alerts

Submit an online application for the Free and Reduced Meals program

Please review [HCPSS meal information](#) and find information on FARMs (Free and Reduced Meals). [Applications](#) must be completed every year. Students whose families do not qualify for the free or reduced lunch program will be required to pay the daily meal price for lunch - \$3.30. Students are welcome to bring their own lunch, however we do not accept food deliveries from other vendors (DoorDash, Grubhub, Uber Eats, etc.).

Breakfast will be provided to all students at no cost. Breakfast will be served from 8:20 - 8:35 a.m. All outside breakfast items (including drinks) are prohibited from being consumed in school during this time.

ATTENDANCE REMINDERS

Need to report an absence? Please email your absence notes/questions to: HCMSabsence@hcpss.org or send in a signed parent/guardian note. The email should include the student's name, the parent's name, the date(s) or period(s) (if absence is a

partial day) of the absence, and the reason for the absence. The email must be received within 5 days of the absence. Requests for changes to attendance submitted after the 5 day deadline cannot be honored.

Please Note: Absences are unexcused until an email or note is received.

For Discretionary Absences (up to 3 per school year), please complete the linked form and email it to: HCMSabsence@hcpss.org. This form must be completed one week prior to absence.

For Religious Observances, please complete the linked form and email to: HCMSabsence@hcpss.org.

HCMS FOOD PANTRY

HCMS has partnered up with the [LindaBen Foundation](#) and Safeway to help feed our HCMS community. If your family is interested in receiving food boxes or you would like to make donations to our food pantry please call the HCMS front office.

If you would like to make direct donations to the LindaBen Foundation, please view this [information](#).

COMMUNICATION TO FAMILIES

Families may find it useful to bookmark the following webpages where information will be continually updated and posted:

[HCMS website](#)

[HCPSS website](#)

[HCPSS 2023-2024 Calendar](#)

[2023-2024 School Year](#)

[HCPSS News Site](#)

[HCPSS Help Site](#)

GROCERY STORE FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS

HCMS partners with the following grocery stores as a fundraiser for our school. Please consider linking your card and help raise money for our school!

Harris Teeter Together in Education

Harris Teeter's [Together In Education](#) program gives schools a chance to earn funds when you link your VIC card and shop Harris Teeter brands. When you shop Harris Teeter brands, a percentage of your purchase is donated to the school that your VIC card is linked to.

There are NO LIMITS to how much a school can earn. Register your VIC card to our SCHOOL ID# 7984.

Weis Markets Weis4School

Through the [Weis4School program](#), you can earn cash for HCMS each time you shop at Weis. To register, simply scan the HCMS Barcode at checkout. Each time you shop at Weis, be sure to scan your Weis card to earn money for our school.

CLOTHING TO CASH

HCMS participates in the Clothing to Cash fundraising program. Clothing to Cash is a textile recycling program that donates money to the school for every pound of donated items. Look for the white donation bin at the bottom of the Harper's Choice Middle School parking lot. Clothing to Cash will accept items in ALL conditions: new with tags, or torn, stained, worn-out knees, shoes with holes or only one shoe, backpacks, old sheets, towels, blankets, stuffed animals and more. What a great way to help the school and clean out your closets! All donations must be bagged and put in the collection bin. We appreciate your support!

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please visit the [Community News and Programs](#) page on the HCPSS website for announcements of upcoming events and programs sponsored by non-profit organizations.