August 25, 2023

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

We would like to thank the Local Children's Board for partnering with us for a successful Back To School Block Party and Resource Fair. It was great to see so many community members and families helping us to celebrate the start of a new school year.

We are so excited to welcome all of our Harper's Choice Cougars to the building on Monday, August 28, 2023. Doors will open at 8:27 a.m. and students will report to their 1st period class. Classes start at 8:40 a.m. If your child is unsure where to go there will be lists to help the students find their Period 1 class. Have a wonderful weekend and we look forward to seeing all of our students on Monday.

Dr. Alexia K.S. Couch

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

School Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures (please read)
It is very important to us that we make sure everyone is safe getting to and from school. We are asking everyone to be patient and respectful of each other when dropping off and picking up your student. We will have staff outside to help support the process. We are asking you to remain in a single file line, do not park in the staff lot next to HCMS. This will help keep our students safe and the traffic flowing. Please see the map for dropping off. You will follow the red arrows in to drop off and exit following the white arrows. Please have your children exit as quickly and safely as they can. Thank you for your support as we help our new families learn this process.

EMERGENCY CARD PROCEDURES - FAMILY FILE
HCPSS utilizes Family File for parents/guardians to supply emergency information. Parents/guardians must verify and/or update information for each child every year. Details on Family File are available online. We are currently at 35%. If you haven't had time to complete, please take the time this weekend. If you need assistance, please call the front office.

IMPORTANT IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR 7th GRADE STUDENTS

Effective the first day of school for the 2023-2024 school year, all students entering the 7th grade are required by the State of Maryland to have one dose of the Tdap vaccine and one dose of the Meningococcal vaccine (MCV4). If your student has started the vaccines, please send an updated immunization record to the health room. The Howard County Health Department is offering a free Back to School Vaccine Clinic. Please see these flyers for more information (English version)(Spanish version).

SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

View the School Supply List for 2023-24 school year. If you need assistance with school supplies, please call the HCMS front office at 410-313-6929.

STUDENT SCHEDULES

All students and parents/guardians can log in to HCPSS Connect to view teachers and schedules.

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2023-2024

You may view, download, print or subscribe to the HCPSS 2023-2024 calendar online. The calendar is subject to change; the online calendar reflects the most recent version. There will be no printed 2023-24 calendars.

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT and GT INFORMATION NIGHT

Save the date, September 7! GT Information Night will be from 5:30 - 6:00 p.m. Back to School Night will be held from 6:00-8:00 p.m. We look forward to meeting our HCMS families and working together for a positive and productive school year.

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 thier 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 8:30 - 8:45 a.m. All outside breakfast items (including drinks) are prohibited from being consumed in school during this time.

UPCOMING DATES
08/28/2023 School begins for students, 8:40 a.m.
09/07/2023 GT Information Night, 5:30 - 6:00 p.m.
09/07/2023 Back To School Night, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
09/13/2023 Individual student picture day
09/14/2023 PTA Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

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

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
- 2023-2024 School Year
- HCPSS News site
- HCPSS Help site

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.

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 , you can earn cash for HCMS each time you shop at Weis. To register, simple scan the 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.

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.