

November 8, 2024

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

UPCOMING PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled for November 25, 26, and 27. They will be held in person on Monday, November 25 and virtually on Tuesday, November 26 and Wednesday, November 27. **The scheduling window opened today for parents to schedule conferences** and will be open thru Friday, November 21 at 4:00 p.m. To schedule conferences, parents/guardians can log into [HCPSS Connect](#) to select available times to meet with teachers. Please refer to these [directions](#) for assistance. If you need additional support, please contact Mr. Rodriguez in Student Services at 410-313-6931.

Each family may schedule up to three conferences at this time. If you find that you need to see more teachers, please contact those teachers individually to set up an alternate conference time. Thank you.

QUARTER 1 REPORT CARDS

Quarter 1 Report Cards will be available online today thru HCPSS Connect (11/8) after 4:00 p.m. [Directions to view.](#)

UPDATE FAMILY FILE TODAY!

As field trips and our December dance is quickly approaching, please make sure that you have submitted your Family File. We are only at 74% completion. All families must update their emergency contact information annually. While we recognize many of you may not have any changes, you must transition through each screen and click submit at the end for this task to be completed. **The completion of the Family File is essential to your student's participation in field trips, dances, and other fun activities throughout the year.** Please visit [HCPSS Connect](#) today and click submit on the final screen! If you need assistance, please call the front office.

Family File Directions

[FAMILY FILE USER GUIDE \(ENGLISH\)](#)

[FAMILY FILE USER GUIDE \(SPANISH\)](#)

HCMS YEARBOOK COVER ART CONTEST

Are you looking for a way to share your creative talents? Do you want your artwork to represent Harper's Choice? Please see this [flyer](#) for more information and how to submit your artwork.

WINTER COAT GIVEAWAY

November 25 and 26 at Harriet Tubman Lane, Columbia. See [flyer](#) for more information.

UPCOMING DATES

11/08/2024 Report cards issued, 4:00 p.m. view at HCPSS Connect
11/08/2024 Parent/Teacher Conference scheduling window opened
11/13/2024 PTA Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
11/18/2024-11/22/2024 American Education Week
11/19/2024 Hispanic Heritage Celebration
11/21/2024 Parent/Teacher Conference scheduling window closes at 4:00 p.m.
11/25/2024 Schools close 3 hours early, Parent/Teacher Conferences, in person
11/26/2024 Schools close 3 hours early Parent/Teacher Conferences, virtually
11/27/2024 Schools closed for students
11/28/2024 Schools and offices closed, Holiday
11/29/2024 Schools and offices closed, Holiday

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 2025. 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.

HC DRUGFREE UPDATES

Free Online Parenting Classes (Open to HoCo grandparents too) - HC DrugFree offers an evidence-based, interactive prevention program that helps parents, guardians and/or grandparents develop stronger relationships with their kids, while also providing skills proven to reduce the risk of youth engaging in substance use or other risky behaviors. These classes are for families with children 9-14 years old (slightly younger and older may register and will be considered) and held on Zoom on November 12, 15, 19, 22, and December 3 from 12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. For more information and to register, go to <https://hcdrugfree.org/currentevents/>

Teen Advisory Council - The Teen Advisory Council (TAC) receives Community Service Hours for providing the youth perspective to HC DrugFree's staff and Board of Directors. Youth input increases the effectiveness of HC DrugFree's educational programs, newsletters, website and other services. TAC is open to Howard County students in grades 8 through 12 (public, private and homeschool) who meet monthly during the school year to discuss teen use of alcohol and other drugs and to develop educational messages that promote a vision of a county where youth are drug-free by choice. For more information and to register, go to <https://hcdrugfree.org/currentevents/>

HCPSS POLICY 9400 - STUDENT BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is committed to providing a safe, engaging, and supportive school environment that fosters the social and emotional safety, dignity, and well-being of all students. HCPSS acknowledges the need for employees

1. to use an array of research-based positive behavior interventions, strategies, and supports to address student behaviors and keep students safe.

2. to minimize the practice of exclusion from the classroom environment
3. to minimize the practice of physical restraint (which may only be used when necessary to protect a student or other person from imminent, serious, physical harm and only after other less intrusive, nonphysical interventions have failed or been determined inappropriate).

It is an expectation that HCPSS employees will be responsive to all incidents of exclusion or physical restraint and appropriately case manage impacted students to minimize unsafe behaviors and maximize instructional engagement.

Additional information can be found at [HCPSS Policy 9400 - Student Behavior Intervention](#). If you have any questions regarding this policy or its implementation, please contact a school administrator.

HCPSS POLICY 9460

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all students. Preventing bullying is an important part of this goal. [HCPSS Policy 9460](#) states that bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation are prohibited in HCPSS. Our administration and staff have been trained and made aware of this policy as well as preventative and responsive measures.

We know how important your role is in not only supporting your children, but also reporting possible incidents as you become aware of them. The BCHI Reporting Form should be used to report all alleged incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation that occur at school or have a connection back to the school setting that create a risk of harm to other students while they are at school, or interfere with the educational environment. An [online version](#) is available and can easily and confidentially be used by students, staff, and family members. Hard copies of this form are available in the main office, staff workroom, school counseling office, media center, and health services office. If you believe your child has been bullied, please complete and submit this form as soon as possible and/or assist your child in doing so.

Once the form is submitted, school administrators will ensure the parent/guardian of both the alleged target and alleged offender are aware of the report and will begin an investigation within two school days of receiving the report. Parents/guardians can expect a school administrator to reach out to them during the investigation. Once the investigation is completed, parents/guardians will be provided written notice of the outcome of the investigation within fifteen days of receiving the complaint, excluding extenuating circumstances.

CAR LOOP REMINDERS

Please remember that anyone dropping off students in the morning should use our designated drop-off location which is located at the back of our bus line in the large parking lot. We are asking parents to refrain from dropping off students in the small parking lot as it causes congestion. Our concern is the safety of our students, parents and staff. Thank you for using our [designated student drop-off location](#).

WILDE LAKE HIGH SCHOOL SPECTATOR RULES/GUIDELINES

Please view this [flyer](#) for more information.

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 2024-2025 Calendar](#)
[2024-2025 School Year](#)
[HCPSS News Site](#)
[HCPSS Help Site](#)

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!

Please remember to follow these [guidelines](#).

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.

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.