May 24, 2024

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

We'd like to start off with congratulating Ms. Miller and the HCMS bands who had a wonderful concert on Wednesday evening! We are so proud of our students and how they performed.

While there are only 14 days left in the school year, it is important to ensure your children come to school prepared to work. They need to be bringing their charged device to school to use for school work. We are also asking for home support in reiterating to them that chromebooks are to be used only to complete school assignments during the school day.

We would like to work as a team to ensure that students are also keeping their phones up and away during the school day, as per HCPSS Policy 8080. Students who are not following this policy will be addressed by administration and will have to check-in their phones each day in the office. We also need your support in not calling or texting your children during the school day. Please call the school at 410-313-6929 and we will get the message to your child. We also have a dedicated phone in the Front Office for students to use if they need to get in contact with home. We have 14 days of school left, and we want to make sure your children have a good end to the school year.

Alexia K.S. Couch

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

ACTIVITY DAY - JUNE 7

Field Day/Activity Day will take place all day on Friday, June 7 (raindate will be June 10). All students will participate in Field Day with outside activities that are arranged by our PE department from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. After lunch students will participate in the Activity Day. Students will get to participate in activities of their choice from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Sign-ups for preferred activities will begin on May 28 - June 3. Students will use their Kudos to sign up for activities.

If you would like to donate individually wrapped candy and/or granola bars, please drop off to the front office by May 30.

HCPSS 2024 FREE SUMMER MEAL PROGRAM

HCPSS' free summer meal program will run weekdays June 24-Aug. 2, on days schools are open, with no meal service Thursday, July 4. Meals will be provided to any HCPSS students, any children aged 18 and under, and to students participating in HCPSS summer programs. Site locations will be available across the county.

BIPOC LEADERS PANEL DISCUSSION

BIPOC Leaders Panel Discussion: The Howard County Student Committee for Equity has planned a BIPOC Leaders Panel Discussion for June 6 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Please register and share with others. Registration is recommended (for refreshment planning). See this flier for registration information.

WELLNESS WORKSHOPS AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS
Wellness Workshop and Supports Summer Series: In partnership with Backpack Healthcare and Congruent Counseling/Integrative Counseling, HCPSS presents a spring/summer series of "Wellness Workshops and Support for Parents". All HCPSS parents are invited to attend any or all of these free, virtual evening workshops. Sessions are from 6:00 -7:00 p.m. on a variety of dates. Wellness Workshops and Supports for Parents Flier

Atholton High School Future Raiders: Fall 2024 Athletics Meeting
Hello future Raiders! The athletic department at Atholton High School will be hosting an athletic information night on **June 3 at 6:00 p.m.** in the cafeteria. This meeting is for all parents and players who wish to tryout for a fall sport.

Tryouts begin August 14, 2024. All potential student athletes will need to be at all tryouts and practices will begin immediately after tryouts. Please plan vacations accordingly. There are no supplemental tryouts for high school sports. Fall sports include field hockey, volleyball, football, boys/girls' cross country, boys/girls' soccer, cheerleading, and boys/girls' golf.

Additionally, the athletic department. More information will be coming out closer to this date. If you have any questions about high school athletics, please contact Mr. Senisi at Michael_Senisi@hcpss.org.

UPCOMING DATES
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
06/07/2024 Field Day/Activity Day
06/07/2024 PTA Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
06/10/2024 Rain Date for Field Day/Activity Day
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

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
- BCHI 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 BCHI 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 BCHI 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 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 8:20 - 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 donatons 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, simple 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.