March 15, 2024

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

MATH AND LITERACY NIGHT~DINNER AND PRIZES INCLUDED

We are thrilled to invite you to our upcoming Math and Literacy Night at Harpers Choice Middle on Tuesday, March 19 at 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Please see this flyer for more information and to RSVP, as there is limited seating. We will have **FREE drawings with some fabulous gift baskets as prizes!**

This event is designed to showcase the importance of mathematics and literacy skills, providing an engaging and informative evening for students, parents, and the entire community.

Dinner will be served and there will be opportunities for interactive participation. We encourage all parents and students to attend and be a part of this enriching experience.The first 100 families that attends will be given Math or Literacy resource material to be used at home to better assist your child.

HCMS 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

This year marks 50 years for HCMS!! We will be celebrating on Saturday, April 13. Please see this flyer for more information and to RSVP! Please RSVP by April 2. We hope you can join us!

To coincide with our celebration, we have created a new 50th Anniversary logo for HCMS spiritwear! **Please see this website to place an order** (short and long sleeve, sweatshirts, and hoodies). It is open and will **close on 3/15.**

Place your order now!

MARYLAND SCHOOL SURVEY

Students will take the Maryland School Survey during regular school hours on Friday, March 22. Please see the attached letter for more information.

SUMMER MATH SCHOLARS

Please see this flyer for more information!

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 65% completion. If you haven't had time to complete, please take the time this weekend. If you need assistance, please call the front office.

UPCOMING DATES

03/19/2024 Math/Reading Literacy Night, 5:30 p.m.

03/25/2024 - 03/28/2024 School closed for students, Spring break
03/29/2024 - 04/01/2024 Schools and offices closed, Holidays
04/09/2024 End of 3rd quarter marking period
04/03/2024 PTA meeting, 7:00 p.m.
04/10/2024 Schools closed for students, Professional Work Day
04/13/2024 HCMS 50th Anniversary Celebration, 9:00 a.m.

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRAMURALS
We are excited to announce that our Winter/Spring Intramurals are starting up at HCMS. Please see below for permission slips:
Art Club
Boys Basketball

HC DRUGFREE OPPORTUNITIES
HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council
Free Life Skills Classes for HoCo Kids (grades 6-9)
February 27, and March 5, 2024 • 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
HC DrugFree is providing another series of *FUN* and interactive skills-based classes designed to **promote positive health and personal development.** This curriculum was designed for students in **grades 6 to 9,** but for slightly younger or older students, we will consider each request. Taught by college students with assistance of high schoolers who act as mentors and role models, this innovative series uses developmentally appropriate, collaborative learning strategies so students will learn skills that have been shown to help **resist high-risk behaviors**. The curriculum is designed to strengthen student's social skills, personal self-management skills, substance resistance skills, and more! Learn more and register: **https://tinyurl.com/LifeSkillsSpring24**

Free Online Parenting Classes - Tuesdays, March 12 to April 16. HC DrugFree's Guiding Good Choices parenting classes can equip parents/guardians and grandparents with the knowledge and skills to reduce the risk that their children will engage in dangerous behaviors including using drugs and alcoho l. Learn more and register: **tinyurl.com/HCDrugFreeGGC**

Middle and High School Teens and Parents Invited - Monday, March 18 at 5:30 p.m. on Zoom. Learn from HoCo teens about Bridging the Gap between Middle and High School **.** Program hosted by HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council. Bring your middle or high school student to hear teen-created mini TED Talks and more. Q&A to follow. Learn more and register: **tinyurl.com/TACTalks**

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**

Looking for Creative Students to Make PSAs – Films due by Sunday, April 14. Educate the community by entering the HC DrugFree Public Service Announcement (PSA) category in the HoCo Student Film Festival. Submission deadline is Sunday April 14. Learn more: **tinyurl.com/HCFilmFest**

Medication & Sharps Disposal and 100 Free Medication Storage Boxes to be Given Away – April 27. Wilde Lake Village Center Parking Lot from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Safely dispose of prescription medication, over-the-counter meds, sharps, vitamins, pet meds, vape devices, inhalers, and more! Wanted: Medically-Trained Adult Volunteers to handle the collected items and other Adult Volunteers to assist as needed. Youth Volunteers can earn Community Service Hours. Adult/student volunteer registration will open by April. Learn more: **tinyurl.com/HCDFTakeBack**

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

HCPSS AND THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS (TCOE) COMMUNITY ACADEMIES
HCPSS and The Council of Elders of the Black Community of Howard County (TCOE) have partnered to sponsor the following parent workshops series:

- March 9: Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

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.

FAN EXPECTATIONS AND SAFETY AT HCPSS ATHLETIC EVENTS
High school athletic events serve as a wonderful opportunity for students, friends, families, staff and community members to come together in support of their favorite teams. To ensure these games are able to be safely enjoyed by all in attendance, it is imperative that everyone adheres to the rules, expectations and laws in place to ensure safety.

All children who are in 8th grade or younger must be accompanied by an adult at all HCPSS athletics contests or will be turned away from entry. Adult supervision must continue for the entirety of the athletic contest.

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.