

10-4-24

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Happy October and Shanah Tovah to those who celebrate Rosh Hashanah. We are also still celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month and will be having an evening celebration on November 19. More details will be coming soon for that event. However, on the evening of October 30, we will be having our Math and Literacy Night. As you see we have lots going on at Harper's Choice and we can't wait to see so many of our community members there!

This week you received an email highlighting the importance of attendance at school. Attendance is a priority for HCPSS this year, and also HCMS, as children cannot learn if they are not in class. This also includes being at school on time. The tardy bell rings at 8:30. This means your child is expected to be in class at that time. Starting in Quarter 2, we will be tracking tardies to school and assigning morning consequences for those students who continue to be chronically tardy to school. If there is a concern about your child getting to school on time, please reach out and we can work together to problem-solve the concern.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who is supporting our first 6th grade Mash Up! We appreciate your flexibility as the weather was not cooperating with us this week. So far it looks like we are due to have GREAT weather on Friday, October 11 and we look forward to an awesome day! If you still have snacks you signed up to donate, please bring them as soon as you can. Thank you for all the support and teamwork you all are doing to help us make Harper's Choice a successful, community-oriented school!

We would also like to highlight Mr. Burke, Mr. Nwalal, Ms. Acheampong, and Ms. Tarwo who are an amazing [building services team](#)! They do a GREAT job keeping our building looking amazing! We were able to give them tokens of our appreciation on Wednesday for National Custodians Day. If you or your child see them, please thank them for their hard work.

Dr. Alexia K.S. Couch

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

MAP TESTING NEXT WEEK

MAP testing starts next week. ELA testing will be on 10/7, 10/8, and 10/9 and Math testing will be on 10/14 and 10/15.

Please have your students come to school with their fully charged computers, their chargers, and well rested.

HCMS INTRAMURALS HAVE STARTED!

Below you will find permission slips for our Intramural Programs that will be starting this month. Please return the specific signed permission slip to the front office.

[Boys Basketball](#)

[Girl's Group](#)

[Jazz Band](#)

[Co-Ed Soccer](#)

[Art Club](#)
[Cooking Club 1](#)
[Cougars to Kings](#)
[Drama Club](#)

HCMS SCHOOLWIDE FUNDRAISER

Charleston Wrap fundraiser will be open to place orders for the **month of October**. They have gift wrapping, candles, gourmet foods, and so much more! This fundraiser is easy, online ordering and shipped right to your home! Please see this [flyer](#) for more information. See this link to view their [website](#).

ABSENTEE AND RETAKE PICTURE DAY - NOVEMBER 6

Parents of students whose child was absent on the original picture day, please have your student stop by the front office for an order form if you wish to place an order. **They must have their order form on the morning of Nov. 6.**

If you want your child to retake their photo, the **entire portrait package must be returned on Nov. 6 for them to have their portrait retaken.**

[Absentee and Retake Picture Day Information](#)
[Picture form](#)

HCMS FLU VACCINE CLINIC

Each year, the Howard County Public School System partners with the Maryland Partnership for Prevention to bring flu immunizations into our schools for students. This year, they will also be offering the latest Covid vaccine *if it is available at the time of the clinics*. The clinic at HCMS will be held on Friday, November 1 during school hours. If you would like your child to be vaccinated against the flu and/or Covid at this clinic, please register at this link: [HCMS Flu vaccine clinic](#). You are not required to provide your child's insurance information. If you have any concerns about the new Covid vaccine, you are advised to speak with your child's pediatrician. All in-school clinics will be closed to registration **one week** before the clinic date to allow our health room staff time to review and prepare the consents and make sure enough vaccine is ordered. If you wish to cancel your child's appointment after then, please call the nurse at your child's school. If you have any questions, please call your school's health room at 410-313-6934.

Cada año, el Sistema de Escuelas Públicas del Condado de Howard se asocia con la Asociación para la Prevención de Maryland (Maryland Partnership for Prevention) para llevar las vacunas contra la gripe a nuestras escuelas para los estudiantes. Este año, también ofrecerán la vacuna contra Covid más reciente de encontrarse disponible al momento de las clínicas. La clínica en HCMS tendrá lugar el Friday November 1 durante el horario escolar. Si desea que su estudiante se vacune contra la gripe y/o Covid en esta clínica, inscribalo/a en este enlace: [HCMS flu vaccine clinic](#). No está obligado a proporcionar la información sobre el seguro de su estudiante. Si tiene alguna inquietud sobre la nueva vacuna contra Covid, se le recomienda que hable con el pediatra de su estudiante. La inscripción a todas las clínicas en las escuelas se cerrará **una semana antes de la** fecha de la clínica para permitir que nuestro personal de la sala de sanidad tenga tiempo para revisar y preparar los consentimientos y asegurarse de que se encarguen vacunas suficientes. Si

desea cancelar la cita de su estudiante después de esa fecha, llame a la enfermera de la escuela de su estudiante. Si tiene alguna pregunta, llame a la sala de sanidad de su escuela al 410-313-6934.

6th GRADE MASHUP DAY

On October 11 (raindate), Harper's Choice will be hosting Mashup Day that will be filled with activities and fun for all 6th grade students! See this [flyer](#) for more information.

If you are volunteering, please remember to complete the [two trainings](#) prior to October 11. You may bring the signed certificates with you that day. We will have extra copies in the front office for you to sign confirming that you completed the trainings as you sign in to volunteer.

We appreciate your support!

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.

FREE COLD WEATHER GEAR GIVEAWAY

The North Laurel Community Center is hosting a FREE cold weather gear giveaways on October 19 at 10:00 a.m. See flyers below for more information.

[English flyer](#)

[Spanish flyer](#)

PEP FAMILY RESILIENCE PROGRAM

Spaces fill quickly so register today! For information visit pep-frp.org or register now with the QR code or at tinyurl.com/2w4k2sxp

UPDATE FAMILY FILE TODAY!

We are only at 51 % 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!

Family File Directions:

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

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

APPLY FOR FREE AND REDUCED MEALS-DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 31

Please visit <https://www.hcpss.org/food-services/farms/> to apply for Free and Reduced Meals. **Families must submit a new application every school year.** If you have additional questions regarding the FARMs program, please review the [FAQ Section](#) or email foodsvc@hcpss.org. **Participation in FARMs qualifies students for a wide range of opportunities and resources beyond breakfast and lunch, including free college applications, free or reduced JumpStart tuition, discounted internet through the Comcast Internet Essentials program, and more.**

GIRLS ON THE RUN REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Click [here](#) to view more information.

UPCOMING DATES

10/07-10/09/2024 ELA MAP Testing
10/09/2024 PTA Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
10/11/2024 6th Grade Mashup Day
10/14-10/15/2024 Math MAP Testing
10/18/2024 Schools closed for students, Professional Work Day
10/30/2024 End of first marking period
10/30/2024 Math and Literacy Night
10/31/2024 Schools closed for students, Professional Work and Development Day
11/05/2024 Schools and offices closed, Election Day
11/06/2024 Student picture retakes, 8:40 a.m.
11/08/2024 Report cards issued
11/19/2024 Hispanic Heritage Celebration

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

HC DRUGFREE UPDATES

Drive-Thru Medication and Sharps Disposal – Saturday, October 26 in the Wilde Lake Village Center Parking Lot near the Swim Center from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Safely dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medication, EpiPens and other sharps, vitamins, pet meds, vape devices, inhalers, and more! Need student, adult, and medically-trained adult volunteers. Giving away 25 medication lockboxes purchased by HCPSS. For more information and to volunteer, 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