

Dear Patapsco Families:

It has been a great week welcoming our new and returning students to Patapsco Middle School. Our students are responding well to our new bell schedule and our newest knights are getting used to opening their lockers.

In this issue of the Knightly News you will find detailed information about our Back to School Knight being held on Thursday, September 4, 2025. We look forward to welcoming our parents/guardians at this annual event.

Finally, we are closely monitoring our student enrollment and will be making adjustments to student schedules next week. The changes are not done lightly as we look to combine some classes with low enrollment in order to create additional sections for classes that need additional seats. Students and their families who are impacted will be notified via email.

We hope that you and your family enjoy the long Labor Day weekend and the unofficial end to summer!

Kelly Hearn, Principal  
Shannon Motsco, Assistant Principal

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## Important Dates

September 1 – Schools and Offices Closed

September 4 – Back to School Knight, 6:00pm

September 17 – 3 Hour Early Dismissal (12:15pm dismissal time)

September 23 – Schools and Offices Closed

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## Back to School KNight

**When: Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 6:00pm – 8:00pm**

We are excited to welcome all parents/guardians to the 2025 Back to School Knight at Patapsco Middle School. Our doors will open at 5:45pm and the event will end by 8:00pm. We would like all parents/guardians to be in Period 1 by 6:15pm.

**What You Can Expect:** Back to School Knight will allow you to visit your child's classrooms and to meet the staff who teach them. Parents/guardians will start in Period 1 as your child does each day. You will then have the opportunity to follow your child's schedule and hear from their teachers. Each class visit is only eight minutes; therefore, if you wish to have an individual conversation with your child's teacher, feel free to [email](#) the teacher to arrange a time for a parent/teacher conference.

Since space in our building and parking lot are at a premium, if you are able, we ask that you come to Back to School Knight without your child(ren) as space will be limited. We will have plenty of maps and staff to help guide you.

**Getting Here:** Parking on school property will be limited to school staff and drivers with disabilities. All other visitors are asked to ride a shuttle from two satellite locations:

**Hollifield Station Elementary** (8701 Stonehouse Drive) and **Crossroads Church of the Nazarene** (2750 Rogers Avenue). Shuttles will begin running at 5:30 PM, and will provide return service at the end of the event.

Also, we ask that you support our efforts to reduce the impact of our event on the surrounding neighborhood by not parking on the road or in our neighbor's driveways. This includes the grass lot across from the school. Thank you!

**Additional Parent Seminar:**

***Hispanic Student Achievement***

5:45 - 6:10pm in classroom E8: Come learn more about the Hispanic Student Achievement Program and meet Ms. Anderson, the Program Liaison, in classroom E8. Ms. Anderson looks forward to meeting families and working with you and your children this school year.

**Schedule for the Evening:** Please see chart below for class times. Please arrive at your child's Period 1 by 6:15 PM for important information.

*We encourage you to write down, make a copy or take a screenshot of your child's schedule; you will only attend their full year and current quarter 1 courses.*

Time	Period
6:00 – 6:15	<b>Arrival for Parents/Guardians</b> PTA and Music Boosters information table in lobby  Locate Period 1 Class
6:15 - 6:27	<b>Period 1 Announcements</b> Welcome Message from PTA, Music Boosters and the Administration
6:27 - 6:35	Period 1
6:39 – 6:47	Period 2
6:51 - 6:59	Period 3
7:03 - 7:11	Period 4
7:15 -- 7:23	Period 5
7:27 - 7:35	Period 6
7:39 - 7:47	Period 7















*Do **not** report to the lunch period on your child's schedule.*

We look forward to seeing you at Back to School Knight. Thank you for your time, support, and commitment to your child's success.

## PTA and Music Boosters

At the Back to School Knight, you will have the opportunity to join our PTA and Music Boosters. Each parent-led organization does so much for our school. We appreciate your membership and donations as they directly support the students and staff at Patapsco Middle School. Please consider joining the [PTA](#) and/or [Music Boosters](#) as we could not do a lot of the exciting initiatives for our kids without these organizations!

## From the PTA

The Patapsco PTA warmly welcomes all our Knights  and families  to the 2025-2026 school year! We have a great year planned, including Fun kNights  (student dances), the Sir Knight Prize Store , and teacher appreciation meals and treats . BUT! We can't make this happen without you ! Please join the PTA today – it's quick and easy by clicking this link  <https://patapscomiddle.givebacks.com/shop>. Membership for a family is only \$35 , and your membership contributions go towards student dances , student rewards , teacher grants , teacher appreciation , and more! Members are welcome to join us at our quarterly meetings  but not required to attend. Thanks for all you do to support our mission, our teachers, and our students! 

## Update Your Family File

**Thank you to families of 462 students who have already completed your Family File.** If you have not already done so, please assist us by completing your Family File ASAP at [hcpss.org/connect](http://hcpss.org/connect). Parents/guardians must verify and/or update emergency information for each child every school year. This is completed online in Family File, which has several new updates. Full [details on updating your Family File](#) are available online.

One exciting new feature is that families now can submit a change of address via Family File, rather than completing a separate form and sending to their school. Full [directions and information for families](#) on this new process can be found online.

## Volunteers Needed: St. Johns Lane Back to School Picnic

The St. Johns Lane ES Volunteer Committee is searching for middle and high school volunteers to help make their Back to School Picnic a blast! In the past, middle and high student volunteers helped their jaguars play games or even dressed up as their mascot, Harry Spotter.

The Back to School Picnic is on the playground at SJLES on 9/5 at 6pm. Volunteers can sign up here. Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4DA9AE2FA6FFC34-50737892-back>

## **MHCAC Back-to-School Newsletter**

The Mental Health Advisory Council (MHCAC) is a group of community members who seek to remove barriers and build awareness for behavioral health support in Howard County for our children and families. HCPSS is an active member of MHCAC. Please click the link below to access their fall newsletter.

[MHCAC Fall Newsletter 2025](#)

## **PREVIOUSLY SHARED**

### **Career Cafe**

Patapsco is excited to host a monthly Career Cafe this year during grade level lunch shifts for our 7th-8th graders to expose students to a variety of careers.

Once a month, an adult from our community is invited to speak with interested students about the responsibilities, rewards/challenges, required skills, and pathway(s) to their job.

[Sign-up here](#) to be part of our directory of parents, guardians, family friends, and/or community members that would be willing to volunteer time once this school year to speak with a group of students while they eat lunch and engage. The speaker would need to be available from 12:00pm - 1:30pm to meet with students.

Feel free to reach out to Patapsco's Career Readiness Advisor with any questions:  
Brett\_Moore@hcpss.org

Thank you for your consideration!

### **Student Schedules**

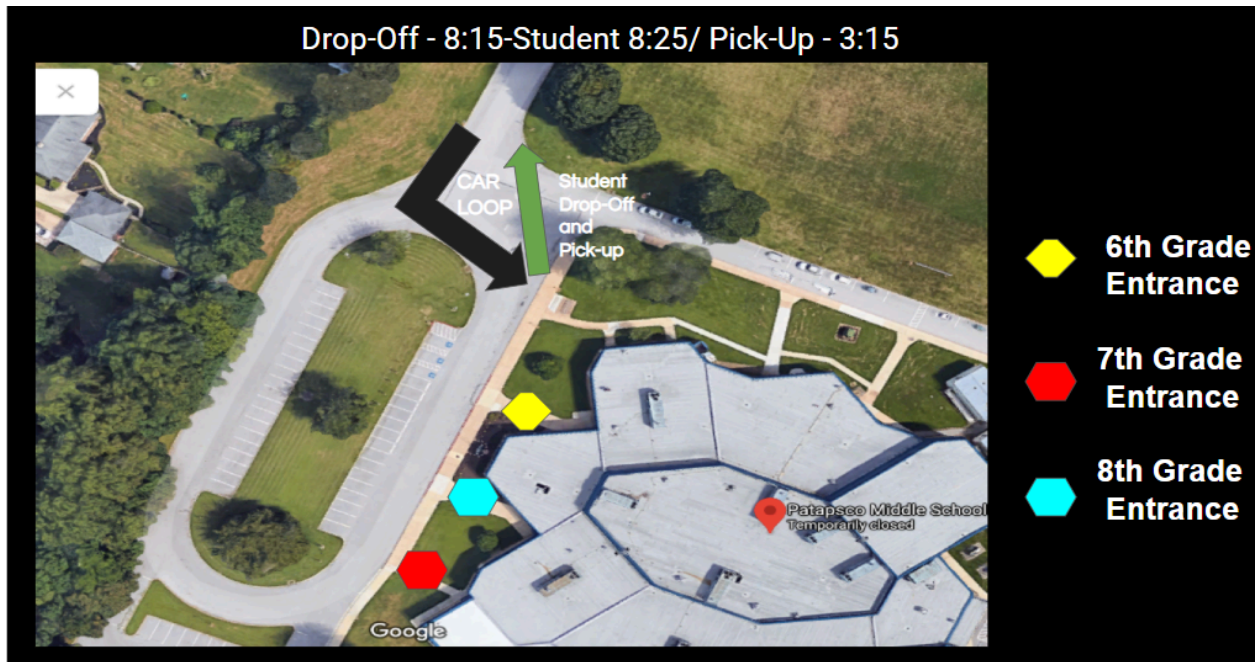
Students and parents/guardians can [log in to HCPSS Connect Synergy](#) to view schedules including courses, teachers, and room numbers. After logging in, select Class Schedule from the left menu.

**\*\*Please note that we are actively monitoring the school schedule. Student schedule changes could occur for class balancing due to shifting enrollment.**

### **Arrival**

School starts at 8:30 and ends at 3:15am. The doors to the building open at 8:20am. Breakfast is available for purchase starting at 8:20am. Students will use the entrance according to their grade level. The entrances will be clearly identifiable. Please see the diagram.

At 8:30am students will report to their Period 1 class. This is a new procedure for this school year. Knight Time will be held after Period 1. We will work with our returning students on adjusting to this change in the schedule.



## Car Line

Drop-off by car:

- Enter school property free of distractions and follow all instructions provided by school staff directing traffic.
- As you enter the campus, wait along the driveway entrance; please do not park or block any lanes of traffic that we need open for buses and emergency vehicles.
- When buses arrive, car traffic will be stopped to allow the buses to enter the bus loop. Please pay close attention so that we can keep everyone safe.
- Follow to the right of the traffic arrows at the entrance to the parking lot and make a loop into the car drop off area. The first car should pull all the way up to the curb at the corner of the exit. Staff will be there directing you to this point.
- Students should exit their car quickly on the right with all of their belongings and follow the arrival path to the school. Staff will be there to direct students.
- Cars should exit in a single line; **do not** pass any cars in the loop. We ask that everyone is patient so that all students and staff are safe.

Pick-up by car:

- The same traffic pattern for drop-off will be used.
- Follow all directions by staff members so that we can keep everyone safe.
- Please do not ask your child to cross the street or go to the grass to be picked up. For the safety of all, students must be picked up from the designated pick up zone.

During drop-off and pick-up, only buses, staff, and county vehicles will be permitted to enter the parking area. We ask for everyone's patience and grace as we normalize our drop-off and pick-up procedures. Please ask for assistance from a staff member if you have any questions.

## **Bus Transportation**

Bus stop locations and times can be found on the [HCPSS Bus Locator](#) page on the HCPSS website.. Also please check this information again to make sure you have accurate arrival time and bus stop. Students who take the bus will need to make sure they are at their bus stop early in case the bus arrives early but be prepared it could also be a few minutes late. We recommend 15 minutes prior to the posted time.

Be patient with bus times for the first two weeks. The traffic patterns in the community may shift again after Labor Day.

## **Lockers**

Students received a print-out with their locker information and instructions on how to open the locker on Monday, August 25. We also sent videos to all students through Canvas on how to open their lockers.

## **Backpacks**

Students will be allowed to carry their backpack with them throughout the day. Students may not bring their backpacks and chromebooks to lunch; they should place their backpacks in their lockers before lunch and retrieve them after lunch.

## **Supplies**

All students should come with their HCPSS assigned, fully-charged Chromebook\*, pencils and pens, a binder with paper. Students can bring in more supplies as the week progresses. Students will be able to use their lockers and backpacks. We will help all students with their lockers throughout the entire week.

*\*6th grade students and students new to the Howard County Public School System will not receive their Chromebooks during the first week of school. We will notify families through School Messenger when the new Chromebooks are distributed.*

Please use the link below to access the student supply lists for each grade level. Whenever possible, families are encouraged to reuse or recycle school supplies from the previous year to save on costs and reduce waste.

[Student Supply List](#)

## **Meals**

Lunch and breakfast are available for all students to purchase. Information about menus, prices, online payment and Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) can be found on the [HCPSS Food & Nutrition](#) website. Please note that LINQ Connect is now used for meal payments. You can find more information [here](#).

## **Cell Phones**



Cell phones should not be seen or heard during the school day. Reminders about the HCPSS Policy 8080-Student Personal Device Use in Schools will be shared with students on the first day of school.

## **From the Health Room**

### **Medications**

The Health Room will be open to accept student medications starting Tuesday, August 19TH, during school day hours. Please remember that all medications require a signed doctor's order and should be dated after July 1st. Prescribed medications need to be in a pharmacy-labeled container. Medication order forms & procedures may be found [here](#).

HCPSS requires a new medication order form each school year, dated on or after July 1st, for all medications, including both prescription and over-the-counter medications (over-the-counter medications must be received by the health room in new, unopened containers and be clearly labeled with the student's name). Please use this [physician-medication-form](#) and this [EpiPen form](#).

For additional assistance, contact our school nurse [Tiffany Ailstock](#).

### **Immunization**

Students entering 7th grade are required to have one MCV4 (meningitis) and one Tdap vaccine prior to the first day of 7th grade. Some students may have already received these immunizations, but the Health Room may not have the updated record. Please contact your child's health care provider and send or fax an updated copy of your child's immunizations to the Health Room. If your student has not received these vaccines, parents should contact their health care provider to make an appointment for your student to obtain the required vaccines. The fax number for the Health Room is 410-313-1741 or you may send an email to [Tiffany Ailstock](#).

## **Safety Protocols for Visitors**

Please be aware of the following procedures for any visitor to a school/office:

- The front door is the only entrance point for all visitors.
- Please ring the bell and look into the camera.
- Be prepared to state your name and purpose for visiting.
- All visitors must walk directly into the front office with a **valid photo I.D.** and sign in using our LobbyGuard system.
- A visitor's sticker will be given to visitors following the above procedures and must be worn and prominently visible.
- Any visitor in the school without a visitor sticker will be escorted directly to the front office by a staff member.

The [Secondary Student & Parent Handbook](#) includes the HCPSS [Student Code of Conduct](#)



## **Forgotten Items**

We are happy to accept lunches, instruments, homework, school projects, keys, or other items as long as they are brought to school before 10:30. All items can be put on the table in the foyer and labeled with student's name and grade. Lunches that are brought in late are taken to the cafeteria and a general announcement is made.

We cannot accept items for delivery to students after this time period, with the exception of emergency situations, as we are committed to minimizing classroom interruptions throughout the school day. We know homework, projects and instruments are important to our students, so we ask for your help in assisting students prepare for the day the night before, or the morning of, to ensure they have everything they need.

## **Student Absences**

If your student has to be absent from school, please submit a note to [pmsabsence@hcpss.org](mailto:pmsabsence@hcpss.org) or send a note in with your child to submit to the Attendance Secretary in the front office.

If your child has been lawfully absent from school and a note has been submitted, they will have the opportunity to make up missed work.

When emailing a note, you will receive an automated message to verify that your email was received.

If you have any questions about your child's attendance, please email [pmsabsence@hcpss.org](mailto:pmsabsence@hcpss.org).

If you would like to submit a [Discretionary Absence Form FILLABLE.pdf](#) form, please fill it out and email it to [pmsabsence@hcpss.org](mailto:pmsabsence@hcpss.org).

Please review the [HCPSS Attendance Policy](#) for further information.

## **Late Arrivals**

Students will report to the Attendance Kiosk to sign in and receive a pass when arriving late to school. Parents may send students in with a note. Students who arrive late due to lawful reasons (i.e. doctor's appointment, etc.) will be considered Tardy Excused.

## **Early Dismissals**

Parents/ Guardians will sign students out from the front office for early dismissals.

Parents/Guardians are to show their **photo ID** upon arrival to confirm their eligibility to pick up the student in the family file.

If you know that your student will have an early dismissal ahead of time, you may send in a note with your child or call the front office to let them know when you will be picking them up and who will be picking them up.

## **2025-2026 HCPSS School Calendar**

For your planning needs, please see the link below to access the HCPSS School Calendar which details dates/holidays for this coming school year, including Winter break, Spring break,

and professional learning days.

[2025-2026 HCPSS School Calendar](#)

### **Rescheduled: Family Academy Kick-off**

*Saturday, Sept. 27, 9 a.m.-noon, Oakland Mills High School, 9410 Kilimanjaro Road, Columbia*

The [district wide event](#) is open to all HCPSS families and will feature an informative session with HCPSS Superintendent Bill Barnes; resource tables hosted by HCPSS offices and local organizations; and information on programs, resources and services available throughout the school year. Childcare and language access will be provided.