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### **Important Dates**

September 27 - HCPSS Family Academy Kickoff

September 30 - MAP Testing (ELA)

Last day to withdraw from a full year high school  
credited course without penalty

October 1 - MAP Testing (ELA)

October 2 - Schools and Offices Closed

October 7 - MAP Testing (Math)

October 8 - MAP Testing (Math)

October 10 - 6th Grade Mash-Up

October 15 - PTA Chipotle Fundraiser

October 17 - Schools Closed for Students

October 20 - Schools and Offices Closed

October 24 - Schoolwide Picture Day

PTA Fun Knight 7-9pm

October 31 - 3-Hour Early Dismissal

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### **MAP Testing**

All students in grades 6-8 will take the Measured Academic Progress (MAP) assessment during the Fall testing window. Grades 6-8 will be taking MAP on 9/30 and 10/1 for ELA & 10/7 and 10/8 for Math. Arriving on time to school on testing days is very important, however, if your child is absent, makeups will be offered within the testing window. Please note that there is no need for your child to study for the MAP assessment. As usual, please make sure they are well rested and eat their normal breakfast the day of testing.

The data from the MAP assessment will help schools and teachers measure your student's academic progress. The MAP test does not affect grades, and the difficulty adjusts depending on how your child responds. To learn more about the MAP assessment, please visit:

<https://www.nwea.org/the-map-suite/common-questions-families/>

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Mash-Up

Attention 6<sup>th</sup> grade families! On the afternoon of October 10th, the sixth graders will participate in a series of team-building activities known collectively as the "6th Grade Mash-Up" and we could use your help. If you are interested and available in volunteering to help, please complete the Google form [here](#).

## Flu Vaccine Clinics

HCPSS Health Services will not be able to offer Flu Clinics at schools this year, however, we are doing our best to share information for staff and students on ways to still get flu vaccines! A [list of Howard County Health Department Flu Vaccine Clinics](#) is available on the Patapsco Middle School website.

## Hispanic Heritage Month Events

### Hispanic Heritage Festival

The Hispanic Heritage Festival will take place October 4 from 5pm to 9pm at Color Burst Park in Columbia. It is sponsored by La Alianza Latina Commission and HoCo Office of Human Rights and Equity. Come and enjoy a variety of food, music, arts, and vendors! Registration is free, highly recommended to register but not required. For more information or to register, see our [website](#).

### Hispanic Heritage Month Resource Fair

HCPSS will be hosting a resource fair to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month on Wednesday, October 8 from 6pm-8:30pm at Deep Run Elementary School. Consulates for Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador as well as local agencies and non-profit organizations will offer resources and information in Spanish to you and your family. Enjoy Traditional Hispanic Appetizers and Artistic Performances. Please see this [flyer](#) for more information.

## From our Rainbow Representative

**Thursday, October 9th** - *LGBTQIA Back to School Bingo* is open for [registration](#). You can learn more about this event, sponsored by our partners at the LGBTQIA+ Commission and supported by our Office of Human Rights and Equity and Harriet Tubman Cultural Center, on our [website](#). You can also take a look at this [flyer](#).

**Wednesday, October 22nd** - Shake Shack Donation Day! Stop by anytime on this day to the Shake Shack at the Mall in Columbia and enter DONATE in the kiosk, shackapp, or in online ordering and HCPSS Pride will receive 25% of your purchase! At the register mention Donation Day or use this [flyer](#).

## **PREVIOUSLY SHARED**

### **HCPSS Policy 9400 Notification**

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 a tiered system of supports to address student behaviors and keep students safe and free of harm
2. to minimize the practice of exclusion from the classroom environment
3. to minimize the use 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 the expectation of the Board that HCPSS employees will be knowledgeable of and implement proactive positive behavior interventions in an effort to reduce the need for exclusion or physical restraint.

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.

### **From the PTA**

#### **Knock Knock? Who's There? Spirit Wear!**

The Patapsco Middle School Spirit Wear Store is open and currently running a back to school sale - 25% off all items! The store has everything a Knight needs, including clothing, accessories, and fun items. Clothing comes in adult sizes too, so parents can show off their middle school pride! The PTA receives proceeds from the sales, so you are helping support our school while looking super stylish. Here's the link to the store - <https://1stplace.sale/43932>

**Guac On! PTA Restaurant Night at Chipotle on October 15!**

Visit Chipotle on Route 40 between 4pm and 8pm on October 15 and mention Patapsco PTA. When you do, Chipotle will donate 25% of proceeds to the Patapsco PTA. If ordering online, use code PXMRV6Y.

### **Be an advocate. Join PTA today!**

The PTA stands with our kids and teachers. Help us continue our advocacy and family fun activities by joining or donating. It's quick and easy by clicking this link

<https://patapscomiddle.givebacks.com/shop>.

### **Recreational Sports Resources**

Do you have an interest in participating in recreational sports or instructional leagues outside of school? Please click on the link below for some local opportunities. If you have questions, please use the contact information listed on the website:

[Howard County community organizations available for recreational sports](#)

¿Tienes interés en participar en deportes recreativos o ligas formativas fuera de la escuela? Haz clic en el enlace a continuación para ver algunas oportunidades locales. Si tienes preguntas, utiliza la información de contacto que se encuentra en el sitio web.

[Organizaciones comunitarias del Condado de Howard disponibles para deportes recreativos](#)

### **Mt. Hebron's Annual Football Pancake Breakfast**

**Please join us on Saturday, October 11th from 7:30am - 10:30am** for breakfast in front of the school as we kick off an exciting day of Homecoming events celebrating our Viking Football, Marching Band, Cheer, and Lancer Programs.

**Tickets** will be \$8 in advance, or \$10 at the door. Children 5 and under are free.

[Here](#) is the link to purchase tickets in advance. Please be sure to put your name in the *Purchase Notes* section.

**Also, We Need Your Help!** If you are interested in volunteering to help out with this event, please see the [Sign Up Genius link](#).

If you are interested in helping out, but can't donate your time, we will graciously accept financial donations as this is an extremely important fundraiser for the football program.

Donation checks should be made out to **MHHS - Football Program**.

For information or questions please contact Joe Armstead at [joedaddy59@gmail.com](mailto:joedaddy59@gmail.com) or Kristin Duda at [kristinduda1@hotmail.com](mailto:kristinduda1@hotmail.com).

Thank you for your support of Mt. Hebron's Football Program! **GO VIKINGS!!!**

### **Note from the Nurse**

As we enter flu season, this is a reminder that good hand washing and covering sneezes and coughs with tissues and sleeves are essential steps to preventing the

spread of "germs." Also, remember that despite concerns about school attendance, your children's health (and the health of all others at school) is MOST important. For this reason, we ask you to please:

- Inform the school to let us know if your child is absent with a contagious illness such as strep throat, the flu, COVID, etc. Please provide any documentation from your physician about the diagnosis and release to return to school. (Ear and sinus infections, while often a reason for keeping a child home, are usually NOT contagious.)
  - Keep your child home if he/she has a fever OF 100 OR HIGHER. A fever indicates that your child has an infection that could be passed to other students. If you give your child Motrin or Tylenol, the fever will, of course, disappear, but he/she will still be contagious to others. Children must be fever-free for 24 hours (WITHOUT MEDICATION) before returning to school!
  - Encourage your children to wash their hands properly, with soap and water, frequently throughout the day, especially after using the restroom, being in public places, and before eating. Handwashing is one of the easiest ways to keep germs at bay!
  - If the doctor prescribes medication for your child, please make sure he/she takes it as directed-which means the right amount at the right time and without missing doses.
- Thank you very much for helping keep all our students healthy!

## **Heart & Sole**

Heart and Sole (Girls on the Run program for 6th - 8th graders) helps girls (this includes any female-identifying and non-binary young people) unleash their potential by focusing on five key things: body, brain, heart, spirit, and connection. Participants work on setting goals geared toward physical, emotional, and relational health, and actualize those goals through exercise, community building, and connection.

The fall season runs from Tuesday, September 30th (first practice) to Tuesday, December 9th (end-of-year celebration). Each season ends with a noncompetitive 5K (Saturday, December 6th) where participants celebrate who they are, how far they have come, and where they want to go. The program will run after school on Tuesdays from 3:15 pm to 5:15 pm and will meet in Ms. Ruly's room (E8).

Participants must register through Girls on the Run of Central Maryland and can do so using the following link - [Heart & Sole Registration](#)

If you have any questions/concerns about the program, registration process/fees (financial assistance is available!!), or anything else, please contact the intramural sponsor: Grace Ruly ([grace\\_ruly@hcpss.org](mailto:grace_ruly@hcpss.org)).

## **PTA and Music Boosters**

Please consider joining 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!

## **Update Your Family File**

**Thank you to families of 601 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.

## **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](#)

## **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!

## **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](#) were shared with students on the first day of school.

## 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.