
Important Dates

November 2 - Daylight Savings Time Ends (Fall Back 1 Hour)

November 3 - Quarter 2 Begins

November 7-20 - Parent Teacher Conference Scheduling Window

November 10 - Report Cards Issued

November 11 - Veterans Day (Schools are Open)

November 12 - 3-hour Early Dismissal

November 24 - 3-hour Early Dismissal

Parent Teacher Conferences (in-person)

November 25 - 3-hour Early Dismissal

Parent Teacher Conferences (virtual)

November 26 - Schools Closed for Students

Parent Teacher Conferences (virtual)

November 27 & 28 - Schools & Offices Closed

Patapsco Players - School Play News



On October 10th this school year's production was announced:

Puffs: Or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic

Auditions

Audition Day 1	Audition Day 2	Callbacks
Monday November 17, 2025 3:30-5:30 - Rm. E4	Tuesday November 18, 2025 3:30-5:30 - Rm. E4	Thursday November 20, 2025 3:30-5 - Cafeteria

Please Note:

Students sign up for ONE time slot on the 17th OR 18th. They will not have to stay both days. They are free to leave after their audition OR go home and come back for their audition.

Only students on the callback list will need to stay after school on the 20th. List will be posted the morning of. The end time is 5 pm, however, we appreciate your patience if we do run a little behind.

School Pictures are Ready!

To order, log in to your account on mylifetouch.com or create an account using your student's student ID number. All families can also log on and order a FREE Digital SmileSafe card. Learn more about the SmileSafe program [here](#).

PTA News

Oh what a Night!

Fun Night was a huge success! Thank you to all our volunteers and school staff (especially our wonderful custodial staff) for making it a memorable and fun-filled night. Winter Fun Night is already in the planning stage!

We guac-ed it!

Chipotle fundraiser was also a huge success! With your help, the PTA raised over \$600 to support our grants and family activities. Our next restaurant night will be with Ledo Pizza on December 1!

Run, don't "waddle", to the Turkey Trot!

The annual Turkey Trot is November 24! Please sign up to support our runners by being a course monitor. It's a great way to spend a fall morning and you might even get a

selfie with Ned the Knight! Sign up here -

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F45ABAF29A46-60046786-turkey>

It's sweatshirt season!

Be ready with a snazzy new Patapsco hoodie or sweatpants. The spirit store has everything to get your fall wardrobe ready. Also, the PTA receives proceeds from the sales, so you are helping support our school while looking sharp. Here's the link to the store - [Patapsco spirit wear, Ellicott City, MD, Knights | 1st Place Spiritwear](#)

Carson Scholarship

The Carson Scholars Fund awards \$1,000 college scholarships to students in grades 4-11 who excel academically and are dedicated to serving their communities. An interested student must be nominated by the principal at his/her/their school to be able to compete for a Carson Scholarship. Only one student from each school is able to apply, ensuring that each nominee epitomizes academic excellence. Carson Scholars must have a GPA of 3.75 and display humanitarian qualities through community service. Scholarships are awarded solely on the basis of academic achievement and humanitarian qualities, without regard to financial need, ethnicity, creed or religion. More information can be found on: <https://carsonscholars.org/scholarships/>

If you are interested in being considered for nomination, please complete the [Carson Scholarship Form](#) and send to Mrs. Shurtleff at erin_shurtleff@hcpss.org.

All nomination forms will be due to Mrs. Shurtleff no later than Wednesday, December 3, 2024.

2025-2026 Student Service Learning Credit Hours:

The state of Maryland requires that 75 hours of Student Service Learning (SSL) be completed, as a requirement to obtain a high school diploma. Service Learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful service to the community within curriculum-based learning. Through SSL students apply specific academic skills to “real world” problems to gain a greater understanding of community needs. Additionally, students reflect upon how their service directly impacts others. Student Service Learning is not group organized volunteerism, independent volunteerism, or internships. It is a curriculum presented within the student’s school day. All service learning hours are completed as course work offered through projects developed for each grade level. Each year, 25 service learning hours will be offered to students and awarded by participation in meeting course objectives and completion of the grade level project. In this way, students will obtain their required 75 hours of service at the end of their 8th grade year. Please look for SSL updates in the Knightly News to be informed about

special achievements, deadlines and activities. If you have questions about this program, contact our school SSL Coordinator, Sherri Ross: sherri_ross@hcpss.org.

From our Rainbow Representative

Mental Health Summit - We're excited to invite you to Fostering Hope: Unplugged – "Finding the Energy That Fuels You," hosted by Blossoms of Hope in partnership with The Kahlert Foundation and Howard County Office of the Local Children's Board.

This is a free mental health summit for youth & adults taking place on:

Date: Saturday, November 15th, 2025

Time: 10AM-3PM

Location: The Meeting House | 5885 Robert Oliver PI, Columbia, MD 21045

This summit is designed to provide training, tools, and support to empower adults and students (grades 7-12) to advocate for themselves, their peers, and their families.

****Parents/caregivers: your child does NOT need to be present for you to participate in this event.*

Together, we will:

- *Learn how to identify negative energy sources and how to unplug.*
- *Discover positive energy sources and community resources to plug into.*
- *Build connections that strengthen resilience and well-being across our community.*

You can register via this link: [Fostering Hope Registration](#).

PREVIOUSLY SHARED

'Tis the Season!

Cold and flu season is fast approaching, and fall allergies are here. How can you help?

-Donate tissues! Please consider dropping off a box of tissues in the front office.

-Practice healthy habits - get plenty of sleep, be physically active, drink plenty of fluids, wash your hands often, and eat nutritious foods.

-If you have cold and flu symptoms, stay at home and rest!

Yearbook Intramural

Are you interested in helping create this year's Patapsco Middle Yearbook? If so, join the Yearbook Team! We meet in Trailer 4 (Ms. Salsman's room) on Thursdays from 3:15-4:15 PM starting on 10/23. Please [complete a permission slip](#) and return to Ms.

Salsman or the Front Office as soon as possible. You **MUST** bring a chromebook and charger to meetings!

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).

HC DrugFree Updates

Parenting Classes: Free! On Zoom and open to parents, guardians and grandparents residing in HoCo or with school-age children/grandchildren residing in HoCo.

Evidence-based, interactive prevention program that provides families with the skills and knowledge to reduce the risk that their children will use drugs and alcohol or engage in other dangerous behaviors. The curriculum was written for families with children 9-14 years old, but it is appropriate for K-12 families. Class dates: **November 11, 13, 18, 20 and December 2** from **Noon to 1:30 p.m.** on Zoom. Visit HC DrugFree's website for more information and register at <https://tinyurl.com/GGC-Fall2025>

Teen Advisory Council: Open to Howard County students in grades 8-12. Earn Community Service Hours and make meaningful contributions to the community. Next meeting: **Monday November 3, 2025** from **5:30-7:00pm on Zoom. Earn Community Service Hours.** Register to receive the meeting link:

<https://forms.gle/SgMrjdeo11JpNuuV8> For more information, visit HC DrugFree's website: <https://hcdrugfree.org/teen-advisory-council/>

Free Newsletter: Stay up to date with HC DrugFree's free events offering Community Service Hours to HoCo students, resources, and a variety of substance use and

behavioral health information! Sign up for HC DrugFree's free digital newsletter:
<https://hcdrugfree.org/enews-signup/>

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.

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](#)

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!

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 658 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. 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 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.

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