

KNIGHTLY NEWS - 10/4/2024

UPCOMING EVENTS

10/7-10	MAP Testing - Math
10/11	6th Grade Community Building Activity
10/15	Student Pictures
10/18	Schools Closed for Students

Resources

[Patapsco Calendar](#)

[Quick Guide to Online Resources](#)

[Secondary Student & Parent Handbook](#)

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

Stay Connected

School Office: 410-313-2848

Student Services: 410-313-2850

Health Room: 410-313-2574

Follow us on X: **@hcpss_PMS** and Instagram: **PatapscoMS**

[Patapsco Middle School Website](#)

6th Grade Mash-up

REMINDER - The 6th Grade Mash-up has been rescheduled to October 11.

We are still looking for parent volunteers to help with the day's activities. Please contact Ms.

Ruly (Kelly) Grace_Kelly@hcpss.org with your information.

Picture Day

Lifetouch Photography will be at Patapsco to photograph students on Tuesday, October 15. Packages can be ordered [online](#). Picture Day ID: **EVT4HJ24Q**

All students will be photographed for yearbook and administrative purposes, but only those submitting a completed order form online will receive a portrait package.

2025 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 Patapsco Knight 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.

Free Parenting Support for Parents/Caregivers!

Learn tools to help your children handle stress and setbacks. Join the nonprofit Parent Encouragement Program's free 8-week online program for parents/caregivers of children preK to 12th grade, in English or Spanish. Learn to support your children’s mental wellness and resiliency and connect with other parents. Complete at least 5 sessions and the evaluation to receive a \$50 gift card. Classes start the week of October 14, register today: tinyurl.com/2w4k2sxp

Bus Evacuation Drill

On October 21st, bus riders will participate in a Bus Evacuation Drill upon arrival to school. Bus evacuation is important for students to practice in order to be prepared for an emergency. See below for the instructions that will be shared with students:

1. To begin the drill, the driver will give the command "EVACUATE BY THE REAR DOOR".
2. Students should leave all loose belongings such as books, backpacks, etc., on the bus.
3. A word of caution: When leaving through the rear door, students should step down from the bus to the pavement. Jumping could cause a fall, resulting in serious injury. Students may sit on the floor at the rear exit and scoot out the door if they prefer.
4. Upon leaving the bus, students will form a line at the front door or a compact group to await further instructions.

Please contact Shannon Motsco (shannon_motsco@hcpss.org) with any questions.

Attendance Information

Research is clear that showing up for school has a huge impact on a student’s academic and social success, starting from kindergarten and continuing through high school. Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school, or even facing social challenges.

- Missing 10% (or about 18 days of a school year) can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- By the 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that can indicate if a student is at risk for dropping out of high school.
- In the 9th grade, regular and high attendance predicts graduation rates better than 8th grade test scores.

Student attendance is a major point of focus for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Starting in the 2023-2024 school year, MSDE lowered the chronic absenteeism rate from 20% to 10%, meaning that at 10%, a student should receive support and interventions to improve their absenteeism.

Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) believes that attendance is key to student success. Maryland's attendance rate represents the average daily attendance rate of students in grades 1-12, including special education students. The state's proficient standard for attendance rate is 94%, and the advanced standard is 96%."

In support of achieving Exemplary Attendance for all students, we are sharing with you a comprehensive approach to attendance supports and interventions.

- If a student has missed 5% of their monthly attendance days (as few as 1-2 days a month), parents/guardians will receive a Care and Concern Phone Call and letter from their school. This step will allow staff members to coordinate with families to determine how the student can be supported for better attendance.
- If a student has missed 10% of their monthly attendance days (this is defined as chronic absenteeism by MSDE), parents/guardians will receive a 10% Chronic Absenteeism Attendance Letter. Parents/guardians and students may be scheduled for an attendance conference. Other interventions and supports may also be used in an effort to assist the student.
- If a student has missed 15% of their monthly attendance days, in addition to the interventions and supports at 5% and 10%, these students may require an attendance support plan. Students may also be referred to the Central Attendance Team.
- If a student has missed 20% of their monthly attendance days, parents/guardians will receive a 20% Emergency Chronic Absenteeism Letter or Habitual Truancy Letter. Students may be referred to Project Attend and/or the State's Attorney's Office for habitual truancy.

With the collaborative effort of HCPSS parents/guardians, staff, and students, we are confident that all students can have successful attendance. This will improve student success in school and future life.

PTA NEWS

Hello and a warm welcome from the Patapsco Middle School PTA! I'm Katie Brewer and I'm excited to be your president for this year. We have a year of exciting and enriching activities in store, but we need your help!

The PTA depends on membership to support our activities, including the ever-popular Fun kNights! Please consider joining today! The QR code below takes you directly to our

membership site where you can quickly and easily join. Membership dues are reasonable and your support makes a world of difference! Scan below to join today!

Important Date:

October Fun kNight - October 25! Stay tuned for more information - we'll need YOUR help to volunteer for this extravaganza! [Sign up to volunteer by clicking here!](#)



Flu Prevention

The Health Department encourages people of all ages to get a seasonal flu shot from a healthcare provider, local pharmacy, retailer or big box store. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school (even virtual school) due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations and deaths. The Howard County Health Department provides a [list](#) of community immunization clinics.

Community Notification - Policy 9400

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.

Intramural/Co-Curricular Programs

Intramurals are incredible extracurricular opportunities to extend knowledge, exercise the mind and body, and develop social skills. Please browse the following intramural offerings and know there may be more coming especially in the second semester.

* As part of our Three R's, we encourage interested students to take the **Responsibility** and contact the program sponsor themselves.*

Please email sponsors with any questions.

See below the exciting Intramurals Patapsco will be offering this school year.

WEngineer

Are you interested in science, math, and engineering? Does designing, prototyping, and building projects fascinate you? If so, WEngineer, a community-based nonprofit, is offering an engaging eight-week engineering academy for aspiring members of the STEM field. The program, Flood Fighters: Fight or Flight?, will cover a wide range of topics, including transportation engineering, weather adaptation, and structural integrity. Students will learn to use the engineering design process and participate in hands-on challenges that will put their knowledge and mechanical skills to the test. Sign up here: tinyurl.com/PMS-Flood

In addition, WEngineer is offering the Flood Fighters: Fight or Flight? academy for no cost. We repeat, it is completely FREE.

So what are you waiting for? Sign up today using the following SignUp Genius:

tinyurl.com/PMS-Flood

Best Regards,

The WEngineer Team

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 24th (first practice) to Tuesday, December 10th (end-of-year celebration). Each season ends with a noncompetitive 5K (Saturday, December 7th) 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. Kelly's room (A4).

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(s), Ms. Grace Kelly (grace_kelly@hcpss.org) or Ms. Tracey Mahanti (tracey_mahanti@hcpss.org).

Young Authors' Contest

The Howard County Literacy Association invites students in grades 6-8 to submit their original poems and/or short stories to the annual writing contest called **The Young Authors' Contest**. Please see the linked [Young Authors' Contest Guidelines](#) for information about the rules and guidelines and the [student presentation](#) for a more detailed explanation. All entries must have a completed [YAC Cover Sheet](#) saved as a PDF. Email/share submissions and cover sheets to elizabeth_shaw@hcpss.org by December 20, 2024. Contact Mrs. Shaw with any questions. All Young Authors' Contest information can be found on the [HCLA website](#).

Howard County Literacy Association welcomes parents as members. Visit the [HCLA Welcome Page](#) for information about joining.

NEWS WORTH REPEATING

Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment & Intimidation Prevention & Responsive Measures

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 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Intimidation (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.

There are times when incidents of peer conflict or code of conduct offenses may occur that may not be bullying, but may need follow up action. If you become aware of something that falls under conflict and/or a code of conduct offense, please notify a school administrator via email or phone call so that they can become aware and follow up as needed.

Lastly, I want to take a moment to specifically lift up cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is bullying using electronic media like computers, cell phones, and game systems. Our digital interconnectedness makes bullying different and more damaging than it's ever been before. It allows hatred and publicly humiliating gossip or photos to be instantly far-reaching and inescapable as electronic media is everywhere. It can NOT simply be ignored. In October 2013, the State of Maryland enacted Grace's Law, making misuse of interactive computer services a criminal offense. Its purpose is to prohibit anyone from using electronic media (computers, tablets, phones, etc.) to maliciously engage in conduct that inflicts serious emotional distress on a minor and/or places that minor in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury. A person who is found guilty of violating this law is subject to imprisonment and/or fines.

While all of this information will be reviewed with students at school, we are asking you to do the same at home. Thank you for your partnership in ensuring all of our students feel a sense of safety and belonging in their school communities! More information can be found on the [HCPSS Stop Bullying website](#). If you have any questions regarding this policy or its implementation, please contact a school administrator.

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.

Update Your 2024-2025 Family File

Family File is now available in [HCPSS Connect](#) for the 2024-25 school year. Parents must complete the Family File every year to ensure HCPSS has the most current information for each child. Updating your information--including email addresses and contact information--and clicking the submit button will ensure that you are receiving the most recent news from Patapsco Middle School. If you've forgotten how to access your Connect account or are new to

the system, you can find all the information here including instructions in English, Chinese, Korean & Spanish as well as a video. Please have this back-to-school necessity completed by the first day of school. Click [here](#) to complete and submit your Family File.

Cell Phone Policy

Under the current HCPSS Policy 8080 middle school “students will not use personal technology devices during non-instructional time, to include but not limited to transition between classes, lunch, recess, or in bathrooms.”

Expectations will be shared with students during the first week of school. If you need to reach your child, please contact our school and we will connect you with them.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found is located outside of the Media Center. We will clean out forgotten items at the **end of every month**. Please emphasize to your student that it is their responsibility to keep track of their belongings, and to check the Lost and Found if they are missing something.

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 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. Please do not send attendance notes to your child's teachers. If you have any questions about your child's attendance, please email pmsabsence@hcpss.org.

If you would like to submit a [Local Discretionary Absence Request 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 Front Office to sign in and receive a pass when arriving late to school. 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 email pmsabsences@hcpss.org, send in a note with your child or call the Front Office to let them know your child will have an early dismissal and provide the name of the authorized adult picking them up.

Donate Clothes

Drop off clothes to our donation bin anytime! This is a great time to clean out the closets before the start of the year. [Here is the information](#) on the donation program.

Community Notices

HCPSS' [Community News and Programs](#) website makes it easy for families to find educational and recreational resources, events and after-school programs beyond the school day by non-profit organizations.”

Community organizations requesting their announcements be shared in school newsletters should visit community-programs.hcpss.org for more information. Questions should be directed to the Public Information Office at publicinfo@hcpss.org