April 21, 2023

Upcoming Dates

Friday, April 21
Professional Learning Day – Schools Closed for Students

Wednesday, April 26
Orioles Day – Wear Orioles Gear or Orange/Black

Thursday, April 27
Kindergarten Presentation by the Howard County Library, “Stories Galore” – 10 to 11am

Friday, April 28
Grade 2 Field Trip, 9:30am to 2:45pm

Friday, April 28
Battle of the Books at Merriweather Post Pavilion

Saturday, May 6
PTA Plant Sale Pickup Day (Extra Plants Available for On-Site Purchase) 10am - 12pm

May 7 – May 13
Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week

Thursday, May 11
Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day -- Wear Green to Show Your Support!

Tuesday, May 16
Howard County Library Visit WFES to Present Summer Reading Program to Students

Wednesday, May 17
Field Day!!!

Thursday, May 18
Kindergarten Field Trip; 9:45am – 1pm

Friday, May 19
Schools Closed for Students – Professional Learning/Articulation Day

Wednesday, May 24
Grade 5 Simulated Congressional Hearings

Wednesday, May 24
Support Our Fifth Grade Students SCH – Wear Red, White & Blue

Friday, May 26
Mini Tiger Beach Celebration – Wear Beachy/Hawaiian Attire

School News

Important Transportation Information for ALL families

Español | 中文 | 한국어

Per Board of Education Policy 5200 Student Transportation, families whose students are eligible for bus transportation are required to register through HCPSS Connect Synergy to receive bus service for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year. This new registration process will take place annually to help the HCPSS Office of Student Transportation plan for more accurate student ridership and to make routes more efficient.

Registration for 2023-2024 bus service is open now through June 1.

Please note, families who reside in non-transportation areas are not eligible for bus transportation and do not need to take any action. Find the new non-transportation areas for your school online. Additionally, students who receive transportation as part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan do not need to register.

Register Now

Families who need assistance with the registration process or have an incoming kindergarten student should reach out to their child’s school. Please contact the West Friendship Elementary front office staff at 410-313-5512.

Bus routes for the 2023-2024 school year, along with specific school start times, will be finalized in August, prior to the start of school.
Spring MCAP Testing Grades 3, 4, and 5

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that states administer annual state assessments to all students in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and once in high school.

West Friendship students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will take the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) in both ELA and Math. The MCAP provides information to educators, parents, and the public on student progress towards proficiency on the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. For more information, please visit https://www.hcps.org/academics/testing/mcap/.

The MCAP assessment window is Tuesday, April 11 - Friday, May 26. Specific testing dates are below for each grade level. Please make every effort to have your child attend school on testing days and to refrain from scheduling any appointments during these times to minimize missing instruction due to make-up testing. There is no need to study for the MCAP. To prepare, have your child get a good night’s sleep, eat a healthy breakfast, and arrive for school on time.

**Grade 3**
- ELA May 1 at 10:20am to 12:30pm
- ELA May 2 at 10:20am to 12:30pm
- ELA May 3 at 10:20am to 12:30pm
- ELA May 4 at 10:20am to 12:30pm

**Grade 4**
- MATH April 28 at 1:30pm to 3:40pm
- ELA May 8 at 10:20am to 12:30pm
- ELA May 9 at 10:20am to 12:30pm
- ELA May 10 at 10:20am to 12:30pm
- ELA May 11 at 10:20am to 12:30pm

**Grade 5**
- ELA April 24 at 10:20am to 12:30pm
- ELA April 25 at 10:20am to 12:30pm
- ELA April 26 at 10:20am to 12:30pm
- ELA April 27 at 10:20am to 12:30pm

**Indicators of Educational Equity Survey**

As part of our school improvement process, we are asking families to provide input about their equity priorities at our school. Please use the link below to complete the HCPSS Indicators of Educational Equity Survey by May 5, 2023. Your voice is important for the process of school improvement, and we truly hope every family will complete this survey. We will use your input, along with other school data, to refine our school improvement plan for next year.

This survey is anonymous and available in multiple languages. If you have children at more than one school, please complete one survey per school.

- English survey
- Spanish survey
- Chinese survey
- Chin survey
- Korean survey

Your input is extremely important to us, and we appreciate you taking your time to assist us. If you have any questions, please contact WFES Principal, Ms. Kaye Breon at kaye_breon@hcpss.org.
Take Our Children to Work Day – April 27th
The fourth Thursday in April of each year has been designated as Take Our Children to Work Day. The program was created as an educational experience for children. It provides an opportunity for children to become more aware of their parents’ work and encourages them to think about their futures.

If you choose to have your child participate, you must send an email to wfesabsence@hcpss.org sharing the reason for your child’s absence. This email must be received prior to Thursday, April 27, 2023. A student in our school system that participates in this program will be considered as on a field trip and will not be marked absent for the day.

WFES Supports Oakland Mills High School Food Pantry: May 1st - May 11th
This year, WFES will be collecting goods to benefit the OMHS Food Pantry. In a typical month, the OMHS Food Pantry serves between 70 and 80 families (amounting to close to 400 people). While the OMHS Food Pantry receives a monthly food allocation from the Howard County Food Bank, the pantry is supported primarily through donations.

The Oakland Mills HS Food Pantry serves the Oakland Mills community and beyond. Families are not required to have a student at OMHS to access the Food Pantry. The OMHS Food Pantry distributes non-perishable foods, produce, and bread once per month to families in need.

Please ensure that donated goods are in sealed packages and have not expired. For specific donation items, please visit: WFES Supports OMHS Food Pantry. Items will be collected at WFES beginning Monday, May 1st.

WFES Student Artwork at the Columbia Mall
The 2023 K-12 Student Art Exhibit at the Columbia Mall is here! Our WFES art panel features work by 33 students, Kindergarten through 5th grade (see list below). It is located downstairs in the alcove outside the former Lord & Taylor department store. The exhibit will be on display through April 30th.

The students listed below have their artwork featured in the exhibit:
Kindergarten:  Chance A, Rosie B, Eliza K, Matthew K, Shane B, Norah D
Third:  Alice W, Zaydaan M, Leo G, Annie W
Fourth:  Brenna S, Sam D, Walter O, Vivienne G, Violeta F, Owen S
Fifth:  Magnolia T, Emme H, Eva K, Reyah F, Abby H
We are proud of our students’ hard work in art this year! We hope you get a chance to see the exhibit!

PETS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY REMINDER
Families, please remember that the HCPSS policy is that pets are not allowed on school property when students are present. Service animals are exempt from this policy. However, therapy and emotional support animals are not permitted in HCPSS buildings. Please see School System policy for complete details. Circular NO. 19 FY23 Animals on School System Property

Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

HCPSS Student & Parent Handbook
Click HERE for the county’s 2022-23 handbook
Last Day of School for 2022-2023 School Year
As of Wednesday, March 29, HCPSS has used one inclement weather day this school year. As such, the last day of school for students in full-day Pre-K through grade 12 is now scheduled to be Wednesday, June 14. The last day for half-day Pre-K/RECC students is currently Friday, June 9.

The two final weeks for the 2022-2023 school year are as follows:

- Monday, June 5 - Regular school day
- Tuesday, June 6 - Regular school day
- Wednesday, June 7 - Schools dismiss three hours early (Professional Work Day)
- Thursday, June 8 - Regular school day
- Friday, June 9 - Regular school day (Last day for half-day Pre-K/RECC students)
- Monday, June 12 - Schools dismiss three hours early (Professional Work Day)
- Tuesday, June 13 - Schools dismiss three hours early (Professional Learning Day)
- Wednesday, June 14 - Schools dismiss three hours early (Professional Work Day - Last scheduled day for full-day Pre-K-12 students and 10-month staff)

The complete HCPSS academic calendar is available online. This information is subject to change, pending any additional inclement weather.

Report Bullying
Policy 1060 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation specifically establishes expectations for maintaining a safe and respectful school climate and workplace, where bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation are not tolerated. This policy also provides standards for identifying and preventing bullying, cyberbullying, harassing, or intimidating behavior. Additionally, the policy outlines measures to support students and employees who are either engaging in or are victims of bullying behavior.

The HCPSS Student Code of Conduct, by which all HCPSS students are expected to abide, also specifically addresses bullying.

The HCPSS Bullying Reporting Form – which can be completed online or on paper (available in the main school office, school counseling office, and media center) – allows students, staff, and family members to easily and confidentially report incidents of bullying to their school administrators.

Kindergarten and New HCPSS Student Registration
Registration for 2023-2023 Kindergarten continues! Parents/Guardians of children who will be five years old as of September 1, 2023, must enroll their children in kindergarten for the 2023-2024 school year. Registering for school is an online process.

Gather Documentation

Road to Kindergarten Workshop Slideshow
Getting Ready for Kindergarten
Begin Registration

Parents/Guardians without access to a computer should contact Teachers’ Secretary, Mrs. Colleen Green at 410-313-5512 for assistance in completing the registration process.

Early Admission for Kindergarten and First Grade
Applications for early admission to kindergarten and first grade are now being accepted. Applicants must submit all application materials for early admission to kindergarten and first grade by April 30 and May 31, 2023, respectively.

HCPSS Rainbow Conference - Register Now!
The HCPSS Rainbow Conference will be held on Saturday, May 6th from 9am - 5pm. The conference will be hybrid with opportunities for both virtual and in-person participation. For more information scan the QR code on the Rainbow Conference Flier or access this link.
Community Event: *Our Turn to Talk*

Join us at Centennial High School on **Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at 6:00-8:00pm** for a viewing and panel discussion of *Our Turn to Talk*, a film that features teens sharing the impact of social media, sexual identity, gender identity, racism, and the pandemic on their mental health. The film is sponsored by National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Howard County, the Howard County Public School System, Horizon Foundation, One Voice, Active Minds, and the Howard County Health Department. Families and staff may access the [trailer](#) and [registration form](#) for more information.

The event will feature the following panelists:

- Jennifer Marshall (Executive Producer, Principle Pictures)
- Peace Williams (WLHS student, Active Minds member)
- Stephanie Reid (Youth and Family Support Services, [Howard County Health Department](#))
- Ivan Croft (Instructional Facilitator for Psychological Services, [Howard County Public School System](#))
- Oliver Song (President, Howard County Association of Student Councils)

**Spring Before/After School Classes**

Attached is our [Spring 2023 Before/After School Classes flier for West Friendship ES](#), which markets our Spring 2023 Howard County Recreation & Parks Before/After School classes for students at WFES. These classes provide fun, structured, educational, and enriching activities for West Friendship ES students, benefiting both the child(ren) and parents!

*Chaperones * Visitors * Volunteers (Must complete if you have not already done so this year!)*

If you plan to visit school for any events between now and the end of the year, please give this your attention. According to Howard County Board of Education Policy, all volunteers must complete two required volunteer trainings. Please take time to complete the required trainings now so you will be ready when these opportunities present themselves. You must review the trainings, print the documentation for each training, and send them to school at least 5 days prior to volunteering or chaperoning a trip. You may email them directly to Penny Smith at [penny_smith@hcpss.org](mailto:penny_smith@hcpss.org).

- [Child Abuse Training](#) please review then complete the [Child Abuse Certificate](#)
- [Confidentiality Training](#) please review then complete the [Confidentiality Certificate](#)

**Pre-Kindergarten Programs**

The [Bushy Park Regional Early Childhood Center (RECC) prekindergarten programs](#) are preparing for classes for the upcoming **2023-24 school year**. These classes include children with and without disabilities. The program’s focus is helping all children develop communication, literacy, math, problem solving, motor, and social skills. Parents of children who will be 3-years old by September 1st may apply. Applications will be available and accepted in mid-February.

In alignment with [Maryland’s Blueprint for the Future](#), **new applications for students turning 4 by September 1 will not be available or accepted**. The Howard County Public School System continues to offer a prekindergarten program for income eligible children who will be four years old by September 1. For additional information contact the school or visit: [https://www.hcpss.org/schools/pre-k-programs/](https://www.hcpss.org/schools/pre-k-programs/)

HCPSS is committed to providing instruction based on the statewide Early Learning Standards which are in alignment with Kindergarten Readiness. The fees listed in the application will be collected monthly, regardless of the learning model determined by HCPSS throughout the upcoming school year (virtual, hybrid, in person, or class quarantine). If you have additional questions, please contact Roseann Kleinschmidt at (410) 313-5500.
Important Notice for Those with Medical Assistance:
Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, Medical Assistance has been automatically renewed since March 2020. **AUTOMATIC RENEWALS WILL STOP AS OF APRIL 30, 2023.** Please call the Health Dept Insurance Line at 410-313-5845 to check your status. They will set up an appointment for you if needed.

Howard County Family Resources
Please consider signing up to receive monthly newsletters from the Howard County Office of Children and Families. Attached you will find the [April 2023 issue of Parent Pages.](#)

Summer Activities for Children
These summer programs offer children a variety of educational and recreational opportunities during the summer to learn, meet new friends and have fun:

- HCPSS BSAP Summer Institute
- HCPSS GT Summer Institute
- Howard County Public Library System
- Howard County Recreation and Parks
- Howard Community College Kids on Campus

When Your Child is Absent from School
Now that our year is well underway, we would like to remind our families about our attendance procedures. If your child is going to be absent from school, or if you need to provide a note to excuse your child’s absence from a previous day, please use our school absence inbox by emailing wifesabsence@hcpss.org. You may also send a note the day your child returns to school. Your message must include your child’s first and last name, the date of absence, and the reason for absence. Please do not email CANVAS or the teacher regarding absences. We are required to have a reason for the absence in order to code absences as excused in alignment with [HCPSS Policy 9010: Attendance.](#)

PTA News & Events

Nominating Committee Seeking Volunteers
The PTA is planning for next year and looking to fill Executive Board positions and Committee Chair positions. If you are interested in getting more involved in the PTA, please contact Kathyrn Calton at kathryn.calton@gmail.com, Penny Smith at penny_smith@hcpss.org, or Lindsay Waxler, at wfeswaxler@gmail.com.

PTA Plant Sale
Pickup for the PTA Plant Sale will be held on the school blacktop on **Saturday, May 6, from 10AM to 12PM.** A limited amount of extra annual plants and hanging baskets will be available for purchase that day. Please email kathryn.calton@gmail.com with any questions. Volunteers are needed to help sort plants. Let Kathryn know if you are available to help!

PTA General Assembly Meeting
Our next and final (for this school year) PTA General Assembly meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 31, at 7PM.** The meeting will be held in the school’s Media Center. We will be voting for the PTA Executive Board for the next school year. Please consider volunteering for a position. Details will be forthcoming.

Save the Date!
Our **end-of-year block party is scheduled for Friday, June 9.** Want to volunteer and help make this a successful and fun event for the school? Please email kathryn.calton@gmail.com.
Community News and Events
HCPSS Community News and Programs Site
The 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.hcps.org for more information. Questions should be directed to the Public Information Office at publicinfo@hcpss.org.

Know What’s Happening in Howard County
Sign up for HC DrugFree’s newsletter at https://hcdrugfree.org/enews-signup/ or follow us on social media to get updates on events as well as information to keep your family safe and informed: Facebook Twitter Instagram LinkedIn

Medication & Sharps Disposal Event
Free. The next safe and convenient drive-thru medication & sharps disposal event will be held on Saturday, April 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Wilde Lake Village Center Parking lot near the Swim Center. HC DrugFree accepts prescription and over-the-counter medications, sharps (needles, syringes, EpiPens, etc.), vapes, inhalers, veterinary medication and more. Medication will be guarded/transported by Howard County Police. We need Teen and Adult, and medically trained adult volunteers! Groups encouraged to volunteer. Learn more or sign up to volunteer at https://hcdrugfree.org/drug-take-back-day-1/ Members of HC DrugFree’s Teen Advisory Council (TAC) can earn community service hours for volunteering. If your student is interested in joining TAC, please visit https://hcdrugfree.org/teen-advisory-council/ to learn more and download an application.

Free Parenting Classes (open to grandparents too)
Free. Guiding Good Choices is an 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. Howard County parents, guardians and grandparents will learn how to encourage your child to adopt healthy attitudes and behaviors, how to communicate more effectively, how to build a relationship of trust, and much more! Classes will be held on Tuesdays, May 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. via Zoom. Learn more or register: https://hcdrugfree.org/2023/02/guiding-good-choices-free-classes-for-parents-2/

Be Kind to Your Mind Be Kind to Others
Kindness Grows Here is a Maryland non-profit with a mission of cultivating kindness in communities starting with kids. Kindness Grows Here is holding its first ever Howard County event and we are hoping for a great turnout. Please see this link for details. (FREE: Be Kind to Your Mind...Be Kind to Others Tickets, Sat, May 20, 2023 at 12:00 PM | Eventbrite)