



**December 2, 2022**

## Upcoming Dates

**December 5 – 9**

**Inclusive Schools Spirit Week**

**Wednesday, December 7**

**PTA General Assembly Meeting – 7:00pm**

**Monday, December 12**

**Toys for Tots Collection Deadline**

**Wednesday, December 14**

**3-Hour Early Dismissal for Students – Professional Work & Wellness Day**

**Wednesday, December 21**

**Kindergarten Field Trip to Glenwood Library – AM**

**Friday, December 23**

**School Spirit “Pajama Day”**

**Friday, December 23**

**School-wide Tiger Celebration – 2:40 to 3:35pm**

**December 24 – January 2**

**Winter Break – Schools Closed**

**January 3, 2023**

**Schools Reopen**

## From Our Administrators

Dear West Friendship Families,

We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving break! I was happy to spend quality time with my family. I certainly hope that you were able to do the same with yours. It was great to see our school filled with parents during American Education Week, the Scholastic Book Fair, and Parent/Teacher Conferences. Students love seeing their parents involved at school. It is good for them to see their families interested in their education.

This is the time of year when we think of the many reasons we have to be grateful. Personally, I am grateful to be part of such a kind and caring community. Thank you to everyone who has already dropped off a toy in our Toys for Tots box. We have secured one filled box and placed a new box in the hallway by the office. I look forward to seeing this box fill in the coming week. The deadline for our Toys for Tots Program is Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>.

As we continue to move through the month of December, please be sure to monitor your children for any symptoms of illness. Please call our Health Room with any questions. This helps us to continue to keep our school healthy!

In addition, the weather has gotten colder. Students go outdoors if the temperature is 20 degrees or higher with the wind chill. Please dress your child in a coat, hat, and gloves to assist them with being warm when we are outside. We ask that you label your children’s belongings so that we can easily return them if lost.

Sincerely,

Kaye Breon  
Principal

# School News & Information

## CogAT Assessment for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grades

This year, the Howard County Public School System will be administering the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) to all students in grades 3 and 5. The CogAT is a group-administered abilities test that measures students' reasoning abilities, which they develop through in-school and out-of-school experiences. It is not designed to test a student's academic achievement, but their potential.

The test is made of three batteries – Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal. Each battery takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. The CogAT helps educators understand a student's cognitive strengths and weaknesses and assists with adapting instruction to meet the needs and abilities of each student.

All students in Grades 3 and 5 will participate in the testing. The CogAT will be administered on the following dates. No special preparation is required. Just send your child to school on time and ready to learn as you do daily.

- 3rd Grade ~ December 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>
- 5th Grade ~ December 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>

Please contact Brian Vanisko at [brian\\_vanisko@hcpss.org](mailto:brian_vanisko@hcpss.org) with any questions.

## Cafeteria Update

We wanted to make you aware that the school lunch program will begin offering the purchase of “snacks” as of Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. A snack is an item that students can purchase that is beyond the cost of the school lunch. Snack items can include, Rice Krispie Treats, Soft Pretzels, and/or Baked Cookies. The cost of the items ranges from 50 cents to \$1.00. At this time, we will be offering snack purchase to grades 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully, as we move into 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, and as routines become more established, we will open it up for kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

Snack Purchase Process:

1. If a student has money on their lunch account, they will be allowed to purchase snack.
2. A student can bring money from home to purchase snack.
3. If a student has an outstanding balance on their lunch account, they will not be allowed to purchase snack.

Available items:

Milk	\$ .50
Plain Water 8 oz.	.75
Side Kicks	.75
Fresh Baked Cookie	.50
Fresh Fruit	.75
Fresh Vegetable	.75
Soft Pretzels WG	.75
Rice Krispies Treat	1.00

Please talk with your child about purchasing snack. We will not be able to monitor who should and should not purchase snack, therefore it is important that your child know if you want them to participate.

## Inclusive Schools Week and December School Spirit Fun!

Inclusive Schools Week is celebrated annually around the country. This year we will be participating in Inclusive Schools Week from December 5-9. This entire week is to celebrate and promote acceptance and inclusion of the diverse population we have at West Friendship Elementary School. We also hope this week will encourage conversations about how we can be more accepting and appreciative of those who are different from us.

We will continue to celebrate School Spirit throughout the month of December. We hope you will join us in school fun!

## Federal Impact Aid Forms Due December 12

Parents/guardians who work on a federal property in Maryland and/or are a member of a uniformed service can qualify HCPSS to receive federal funding by [completing the Impact Aid form online by December 12](#). Impact Aid supplements the HCPSS operating budget to enhance the teaching and learning that takes place in Howard County classrooms.

## Family Read the Rainbow Book Club

Registration for the next FAMILY Read the Rainbow book club is now open.

This virtual book club will feature the title, *When Aidan Became a Brother* written by Kyle Lukoff and illustrated by Kaylani Juanita and will take place on Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm. Both Kyle and Kaylani will be present at the meeting! Kyle will do a read-aloud of his book and Kaylani will talk a little about what it was like to illustrate Kyle's story. Both will answer questions from the audience.

This is a FREE LGBTQIA+ focused book club and open to ALL (families, students, parents, staff, and community). The first 50 families who register will receive a free copy of *When Aidan Became a Brother* mailed to their home. Learn more about [the book and this author/illustrator team](#).

[Digital advertisement](#)

[Link to our website to register for the club](#)

## Inclement Weather & Asynchronous Days

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) now allows local school systems to repurpose inclement weather days as asynchronous school days. At the discretion of the superintendent, HCPSS will use up to three inclement weather asynchronous days during the 2022-2023 school year. One of two additional codes will be instituted to reflect the decision to transition to an asynchronous instruction day:

- Code Purple Asynchronous Student Day - School buildings and Office buildings open for staff only
- Code Pink Asynchronous Student Day - School buildings and Office buildings closed

On these Code Purple and Code Pink days, HCPSS curriculum resources for secondary students will be delivered within the Canvas learning management system. Resources will be available for all subjects and courses two hours after the start of the regular school day.



The 2022 holiday season marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program! The basic mission of the program is to collect **new, unwrapped toys**, and distribute those toys to less fortunate children (up to age 12) at Christmas. West Friendship ES will be a toy drop location this year! Please consider

donating a **new, unwrapped toy** to our toy drop box beginning **November 14<sup>th</sup> through December 12<sup>th</sup>**. Thank you for your consideration.

## Health Room Reminders

- **Please keep all sick children at home.** Any student with a temperature of 100 should be kept at home for 24 hours past the last fever (without medications).
- Encourage your child to wash their hands frequently to reduce the spread of germs.
- Stay home while sick and limit contact with others.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve or tissue.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap & warm water.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if washing is not available.
- Avoid touching your nose, eyes, and mouth.

Always feel free to email our School Nurse, [Elizabeth.Collora@hcpss.org](mailto:Elizabeth.Collora@hcpss.org) with any questions.

## 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 [December issue Parent Pages](#).

## School-Based Mental Health Services

Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is expanding its school-based mental health services. Previously available in 45 schools across the county, these services will be available at all HCPSS schools by the end of the first semester of the 2022-23 school year. The services, including therapy provided at school buildings during the instructional day, are provided by HCPSS' school-based student services teams in collaboration with community mental health agencies. For more information please click on the following link:

<https://news.hcpss.org/news-posts/2022/10/hcpss-to-expand-school-based-mental-health-services-for-students/>

## HCPSS School Messages

All parents/guardians are in our system to receive HCPSS and school emails. Please do not attempt to create a new account with your child's 2022-2023 school. Additionally, unsubscribing from any HCPSS or school messages will block you from receiving all messages from the district and your child's school. **Please do not unsubscribe. To opt in to receive text messages** from HCPSS you must text "YES" to 67587.

## HCPSS Student & Parent Handbook

Click [HERE](#) for the county's 2022-23 handbook

## When Your Child is Absent from School

### Attendance Procedures

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 [wfesabsence@hcpss.org](mailto:wfesabsence@hcpss.org). You may also send in 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

### Gift of Thanks Program

As the holiday season approaches, the WFES PTA will continue our traditional **Gift of Thanks** program for staff gift giving. This program provides a convenient way for families and individuals to express their gratitude to the West Friendship Elementary staff that teach and nurture our children. Your contributions are combined and converted into gift cards of the staff members choosing. Participation is not mandatory. The intent of this program is to simplify holiday gift giving for families and to allow the staff flexibility.

Here is how the program works:

- Choose how much you would like to give the staff member(s). Any amount in \$1 increments is appropriate.
- Payment is by credit card only.
- Each staff member will receive a certificate informing them of the total combined amount of gift card dollars contributed to them.

Each contributing family is recognized on the certificate by name only, not the amount given. Amounts will be kept confidential. The PTA will ensure that each staff member receives a minimum of \$10.

If you would like to contribute to the staff holiday gift card program, you may use this list and pay by credit or debit card: <https://fspta-00016198.memberhub.com/store?limit=21&live=true>

The deadline to contribute to this easy and loved gift giving program is Friday, December 9 at 5:00pm! For the staff to receive their gift cards prior to winter break, this will be a firm deadline. Becoming a member of the PTA supports the programs and events that enhance your child's experience at school. The PTA also supports the needs of our teachers and shows them our appreciation! Joining does not require any further commitment, although we always welcome volunteers to help with our various events. PTA membership must be renewed each year. Please consider joining today!

<https://mywfespta.weebly.com/supportus-992913.html>

## 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.hcpss.org](http://community-programs.hcpss.org) for more information. Questions should be directed to the Public Information Office at [publicinfo@hcpss.org](mailto:publicinfo@hcpss.org).

### Know What's Happening in Howard County

Sign up for HC DrugFree's newsletter at <https://hcdrugfree.org/enews-signup/> to get updates on events as well as information to keep your family safe and informed.