March 10, 2023

Upcoming Dates

Sunday, March 12  
Daylight Savings Time Begins (Spring Forward)

Wednesday, March 15  
Schools Close 3-Hours Early (12:45pm) – Professional Wellness Day

Wednesday, March 15  
Spirit “Wild About Reading” Day – Wear something with an animal on it or animal print.

Sunday, March 19  
PTA Read-a-thon Final Day

Friday, March 24  
School Spirit “Maryland Day” – Wear Red, Yellow, and Black

Friday, March 24  
PTA Sponsored Cultural Arts Assembly – Spectacular Science: Fire & Ice
  9:30 to 10:15 – Grades 3, 4, & 5
  10:30 to 11:15 – Kdgn, Grades 1 & 2

Monday, March 27  
PTA Restaurant Event at Walker’s Tap and Table

Friday, March 31  
Schools Close 3-Hours Early (12:45pm) – End of 3rd Marking Period

Mon., Apr. 3 – Mon., Apr. 10  
Schools Closed – Spring Break

Tuesday, April 11  
Schools Reopen

From Our Administrators

Dear West Friendship Community,

Thank you to everyone who sent me well wishes and positive thoughts during my medical leave. I especially thank my substitute, Ms. Lauren Slattery, Assistant Principal Mr. Brian Vanisko, and everyone who helped during my absence. It is great to be back to work and wonderful seeing my students and staff!

It is hard to believe, but spring is just around the corner! This weekend, we will set our clocks forward for daylight savings time. The first day of spring is fast approaching, and the end of the month brings the promise of spring break for our students.

Did you know that March is National Reading Month? To celebrate, we will be having Mystery Readers during the week of March 20th - March 24th. We would love for you to come visit the classroom and share an age-appropriate story with your child’s class. Please look for the signup links in the body of this newsletter.

We have begun the online registration process for kindergarten students and other new to Howard County students for the 2023-2024 school year! It is recommended that you work on a laptop or desktop to complete registration. Cell phone registration is not recommended. For details about registration and enrollment, please visit https://www.hcps.org/enroll/. For additional assistance you may contact our Front Office at 410-313-5512 or email colleen_green@hcpss.org or penny_smith@hcpss.org.

Please remember that we cannot dismiss students to family members/guardians after 3:30pm. Our students are transitioning at the end of the day and dismissal time is very busy. Our office staff must keep open communication with classrooms. We thank you for your understanding.

Yours in Education,

Kaye Breon
Principal
During Women’s History Month, we celebrate the countless women who have fought tirelessly and courageously for equality, justice, and opportunity in our Nation. We also reaffirm our commitment to advancing rights and opportunities for women and girls in the United States and around the world. We are mindful that we are building on the legacy of both recognized trailblazers and unsung heroines who have guided the course of American history and continue to shape its future.

**Excerpt from President Joseph R. Biden’s Proclamation on Women’s History Month, 2023**

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**School News**

**Kindergarten and New HCPSS Student Registration**

**Registration for 2023-2024 Kindergarten kicked off last week.** 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.

- [Road to Kindergarten Workshop Slideshow](#)
- [Getting Ready for Kindergarten](#)
- [Gather Documentation](#)
- [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.

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**2023-2024 Yearbooks Are Now on Sale**

It is not too early to order your 2023–2024 West Friendship Elementary School yearbook! The **deadline for ordering is April 14th.** To make sure your child will have a yearbook when books are delivered at the end of the school year, you must order through our school photographer. Books will NOT be available for purchase after the deadline of April 14th. Do not delay, order today! **Books are $20.00.**

Please view this flyer for directions to order online (your student should be bringing home a paper copy next week). Click HERE to begin your order. Please reach out to Penny Smith@hcpss.org with any questions.

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**Mystery Reader March**

Did you know that March is National Reading Month? To celebrate, we will be having Mystery Readers during the week of March 20th - March 24th. We would love for a parent to come into the classroom and share an age-appropriate story with your child’s class.

Do you need help finding a book to read? No problem! There will be several author options available for you to choose from on the sign-up page.

To volunteer, please sign up below by **March 13th:**

- Kindergarten Mystery Reader Sign Up
- 1st Grade Mystery Reader Sign Up
- 2nd Grade Mystery Reader Sign Up
- 3rd Grade Mystery Reader Sign Up
- 4th Grade Mystery Reader Sign Up
- 5th Grade Mystery Reader Sign Up

If you have not already completed your required volunteer trainings, please do so before your scheduled date. Thank you in advance for helping to make our students excited about reading! Please contact Mrs. Schnebly if you have any questions.
* Chaperones * Visitors * Volunteers
There are opportunities for parents to volunteer at school and/or chaperone field trips. 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.
  - [Child Abuse Training](#) please review then complete the [Child Abuse Certificate](#)
  - [Confidentiality Training](#) please review then complete the [Confidentiality Certificate](#)

Lunch/Recess Update
The Office of School Safety and Security and Risk Management, in collaboration with School Management and Instructional Leadership, reviewed county wide practices regarding school visits and it has been determined that parents are no longer able to attend recess. Parents can continue to eat lunch with their child(ren) if they complete the following:

1. Go to the [HCPSS website](#) to review information about the school system volunteer process.
2. Review the “Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures Online Training” PowerPoint.
3. Sign the [Certificate of Completion](#) for the “Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures Online Training” form and provide it to the school when signing in.
4. Review the "Confidentiality Training for Volunteers" PowerPoint.
5. Sign the [Confidentiality Agreement](#) and provide it to the school when signing in.
6. Sign in at the front office using the Lobby Guard sign-in system (a valid photo I.D. must be provided).

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

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.

March Mindfulness Calendar
Action for Happiness is an organization whose mission is to inspire people to “take action” to be happier and kinder, together. Use this [calendar](#) at home with your family to live mindfully each day.

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 March issue of Parent Pages.

Social Media: What Parents Need to Know
HCPSS, partnering with The Council of Elders of the Black Community of Howard County, is hosting its final Community Academy of the year on Saturday, March 11 from 9am - 10:30am, virtually. The topic is Social Media: What Parents Need to Know. Learn about the most popular social media sites used by our children and effective practices for keeping them safe online. Members of the Howard County Police Department will discuss crimes associated with social media. Flyer included. Please register at: https://bit.ly/safesocmed23

Inclement Weather Reminders & Asynchronous Students Days
Students, families, staff, and community members will be notified of inclement weather notifications via:
- HCPSS Status website
- HCPSS homepage
- HCPSS News email and text message alerts
- Twitter - @hcpss
- HCPSS Information Hotline, 410-313-6666

Asynchronous Student Days are as follows:
- Code Purple – Asynchronous Student Day; Buildings Open
- Code Pink – Asynchronous Student Day; Buildings Closed

Elementary school students access asynchronous tasks distributed by teachers or via the HCPSS website.
* * * March Asynchronous Learning Packets went home with students on 2/24/2023. * * *

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

Important Health & Safety Message
All HCPSS students and staff must stay home if they are experiencing symptom(s) associated with any communicable disease. Families, students, and staff should perform daily health checks and stay home if they have symptoms of a communicable disease, including the seasonal flu, COVID-19, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Families are encouraged to take advantage of flu and COVID vaccines and boosters. Always feel free to email our School Nurse, Elizabeth_Collora@hcpss.org with any questions.

When Your Child is Absent from School
Now that your 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. 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 & Events

West Friendship Elementary PTA Read-a-thon

Our Read-a-thon started on Thursday March 2, 2023. Please check student backpacks for instructions on how to activate your reader's personal page. This is where you will be able to view and record their progress. We encourage you to activate your reader’s account today by clicking on this link https://www.read-a-thon.com/readers/r/cPABYZ/1 and following the simple instructions. We've chosen Read-a-thon because it will not take much of your time, gives your child a reason to read, and helps in the development of stronger reading skills. We hope EVERYONE participates.

WFES PTA Restaurant Fundraisers

Walker's Tap and Table Fundraiser

Walker’s Tap & Table is located at 2465 MD-Route 97, Glenwood, MD
Have a delicious meal at Walker’s Tap and Table on Monday, March 27th and support the WFES PTA!

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 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/ to get updates on events as well as information to keep your family safe and informed.

In Our Own Voice * March 16 * 5 - 6pm * 7115 Columbia Gateway Dr. * Columbia, MD

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) presentations change attitudes, assumptions and ideas about people with mental health conditions. In Our Own Voice provides a personal perspective, as leaders with lived experience talk openly about what it’s like to have a mental health condition. The United Way Family Center in Columbia will join NAMI Howard County to co-host the program during Mindful March. Please register now as space is limited.

The Essence of Us Workshop Series

Saturdays: Feb. 11, March 11, April 15, and May 13, 10-11 a.m., virtual and in-person workshops
The Council of Elders of the Black Community of Howard County and the HCPSS Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion have partnered to present "The Essence of Us: Chronicling the African American Experience," a workshop series geared toward middle and high school students that will provide a better understanding of African American history and how it is written. Workshops will be held both, virtually and in-person. Participants will receive an email with details upon registering online.