March 17, 2023

Upcoming Dates

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
Friday, April 14  Gr. 4 Field Trip, 9:30am to 3:00p
Tuesday, April 18  Reports Available Via Synergy
Friday, April 21  Professional Learning Day – Schools Closed for Students
Friday, April 28  Battle of the Books at Merriweather Post Pavilion

March is Women’s History Month

Top: Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, Jovita Idar, Maya Angelou
Middle: Gerda Lerner, Gloria Steinem, Winona La Duke, Lillian Hellman
Bottom: Betty Soskin, Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, Marjory Stoneman Douglas

Please visit the following link for more interesting facts and details about women who have made many valuable contributions to our Nation, [https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/topic/women-heroes](https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/topic/women-heroes)

March is National Reading Month

The month of March is a time to celebrate reading and encourage everyone to spend more time reading! Get into the reading habit and start a family tradition! At least once or twice a week, turn off your TVs and streaming devices and grab a book, a magazine, or your e-reader for a family reading night! You can even download an audiobook or podcast! The goal: to celebrate reading!
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.

2022-23 Yearbooks Are Now on Sale

It is not too early to order your 2022–2023 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.

Spring Portraits

Spring portrait packages were sent home with students last week. Please read below for important information:

* Every student that attended school on February 14th was photographed and should receive a portrait package. These were NOT PRE-PURCHASED. Families can decide what they want to purchase, based on the price sheet included in the packages. Please remit payment or pay online for what they keep and return the remaining photos to school. All payments/packages should be returned by this Friday, March 17th.
* Monday, March 20th.*

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, benefitting both the child(ren) and parents!

* 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
- Confidentiality Training

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](https://www.hcpss.org) 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](https://www.hcpss.org/schools/pre-k-early-childhood-program/), 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-early-childhood-program/](https://www.hcpss.org/schools/pre-k-early-childhood-program/)

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](https://www.hcpss.org/) 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.

HCPSS Student & Parent Handbook
Click [HERE](https://www.hcpss.org/schools) for the county's 2022-23 handbook

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](https://www.hcpss.org/schools).
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 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 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

There's still time to report your minutes and raise funds for Read-A-Thon!

WFES students have read 63,979 minutes as of Friday morning! We need a total of 75,000 minutes for Mr. Vanisko to wear a MYSTERY COSTUME to school! There will also be prizes awarded to top readers in each grade as well as for the top fundraiser. Students who read at least 200 minutes will be entered into a raffle. Students who raise at least $25 also will be entered into a raffle.

Remember: Read-a-Thon ends on Sunday March 19th
You can still activate your account and participate in the WFES Read-a-thon. Just click on this link [https://www.read-a-thon.com/readers/r/cPABYZ/1](https://www.read-a-thon.com/readers/r/cPABYZ/1) and follow the simple instructions. We have 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 27** and support the WFES PTA!

**Community News and Events**

**HCPSS Community News and Programs Site**
The HCPSS [Community News and Programs](https://www.hcpss.org) 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](https://community-programs.hcpss.org) for more information. Questions should be directed to the Public Information Office at [publicinfo@hcpss.org](mailto:publicinfo@hcpss.org).

**Embrace, Encourage, and Engage: Family and Caregiver Access to Child and Youth Mental Health Resources**
**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 is 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.

**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 is accepting 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 are in need of 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/](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/](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 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/](https://hcdrugfree.org/2023/02/guiding-good-choices-free-classes-for-parents-2/)
**8th–12th Grade Teen Advisory Council**
Free. HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council is open to all Howard County students in grades 8 through 12. This is a great opportunity to help prepare younger students for success in high school while allowing older students to develop their leadership and mentoring skills. The registration form is available at [https://hcdrugfree.org/teen-advisory-council/](https://hcdrugfree.org/teen-advisory-council/) and community service hours are available. Email your registration form to admin@hcdrugfree.org or mail a hard copy to the office. Meetings are on Zoom from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. To register for the Monday, April 17 meeting or any upcoming meeting, click on the TAC registration link next to the meeting date [https://hcdrugfree.org/teen-advisory-council/](https://hcdrugfree.org/teen-advisory-council/).

**Know What’s Happening in Howard County**
Sign up for HC DrugFree’s newsletter at [https://hcdrugfree.org/enews-signup/](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

**WFES Girl Scout Cluster Father Daughter Dance**

The WFES Girl Scout's Father Daughter Dance is back! Please join us at our first

**SWEETHEART DANCE**

MARCH 24th 6:30-8:30pm
Mount View Middle School
DJ, Dancing, Pizza, Dessert, Crafts, Photo Booth, Balloons, Flowers, Cash 50/50 Raffle
One parent is welcome with their daughter(s).

SIGN UP HERE:
[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f44aba62aa0fbc70-meandmy?useFullSite=true#](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f44aba62aa0fbc70-meandmy?useFullSite=true#)
OR CONTACT
mbz0hfl@gmail.com

**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're 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](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/be-kind-to-your-mind-be-kind-to-others-tickets-187292879507))