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Tiger Tales

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Web Site: <http://wfes.hcpss.org/>
School Hours: 9:15 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

September 24, 2021

Mark Your Calendars

- Monday, September 27** PTA Budget Meeting (Virtual) – 7:00pm
- Tuesday, September 28** School Picture Day (Individual Photos for Yearbook)
- Saturday, October 9** WFES PTA Sponsored Community Yard Sale
- Wednesday, October 13** PTA Chipotle Fundraiser – 4:00 to 8:00pm
- Wednesday, October 13** PTA General Assembly Meeting – 6:00pm
- Friday, October 15** No School for Students – Professional Work Day

School News

Good News

West Friendship Elementary received HEPA filters this week! The filters were delivered to each classroom and are already in use!

Fall School Picture Day is next Tuesday, September 28th

Our school photographer will be at WFES taking individual student photographs on **Tuesday, September 28th**. **ALL** students will be photographed at that time, as these are the photos that will be published in our school yearbook. Photo envelopes were sent home with all students on Tuesday, September 21st. If you wish to purchase photos, please send your payment envelope in by September 28th. **You may also make an online purchase by visiting <http://www.strawbridge.net> and entering code FM367429.** You can view the portrait packages available [HERE](#). Purchasing school pictures benefits our school, as it is a fundraiser. Take care of some upcoming holiday gift giving needs with school photos, and support our school at the same time!!!

Flu Vaccine Clinic

West Friendship Elementary will be holding a flu vaccine clinic for all students on **Wednesday October 13th**. Additional details will be sent out in the upcoming weeks, including a link to the online consent form. Please contact our nurse at elizabeth_collora@hcpss.org with any questions.

Yearbooks

A very limited supply of 2020-2021 Yearbooks are available. The cost is \$20. You may purchase with cash or checks payable to WFES. Please contact Penny_Smith@hcpss.org if you would like to purchase a copy. First come, first served.

Update on Instructional Supports, During Quarantine

Beginning the week of September 27, the HCPSS Evening School program will offer virtual grade-level academic support sessions for eligible elementary and middle school students who must quarantine or who are struggling academically. These sessions will be available on Google Meet each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 6-8 p.m., and consist of parallel small group sessions in elementary English and math; and middle school English, math, science and social studies. Parents are encouraged to attend with their child.

Schools will contact the families of students designated as eligible to participate. Parents also may request that their child participate by contacting the school principal.

These sessions build on the existing cadre of supports for quarantining students, which include grade-level materials packets for elementary students, assignments and instructional materials posted on teachers' Canvas pages for all levels, and the availability of weekly virtual check-in sessions. Comprehensive information about the instructional supports available are provided on the [HCPSS Students in Quarantine website](#).

Listen and Learn Sessions

This is a unique opportunity for students in our school communities. Students are invited to participate in our Area "Listen and Learn" Session facilitated by the students of Howard County Association of Student Councils (HCASC). Please see the attached flyer for complete details and to RSVP. [Flyer](#)

National Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15th to October 15th is celebrated each year as National Hispanic Heritage Month. When people celebrate Hispanic American Heritage Month, they often just focus on Mexico. But Hispanic and Latin Americans come from many different nations. In fact, September 15th was designated as the starting day of Hispanic Heritage Month because it is the Independence Day of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Similarly, Mexico, Chile, and Belize celebrate their Independence Days on September 16th, September 18th, and September 21st. Each of these nations has its own unique culture and traditions, and immigrants from these countries have and continue to add value to, and enhance the evolving culture of this county. Please join us as we highlight and celebrate the tremendous contributions and impact of our Hispanic/Latinx community.

Attention Parents!

As we head into Week 4 of the 21-22 school year, we would like to remind parents to please do your best to limit doctor appointments and early dismissals during the school week. It is important for your student(s) to maintain a routine each day, which includes being present for the entire school day. We would also like to remind parents to help your child(ren) get into the habit of making sure they have their lunch, water bottle, Chromebook with charger, and musical instrument (if they play one) on a daily basis. We are trying to limit the amount of drop-offs during the school day. Thank you for partnering with us to establish consistent attendance habits and school preparedness early in the school year.

Mask Policy

We continue to remind our students, regularly, about wearing their masks properly. We are reminding them that their mask should cover their nose and mouth. In addition, students must wear their mask on the school bus. Please check to be sure your child has a mask each day before leaving home. It is a good idea to place an extra mask in their backpack. We just want to keep everyone safe.

Daily COVID-19 Self-Screenings

All parents/guardians are to perform a [COVID-19 health check](#) every day before your student leaves home. Students are not to come to school if they are experiencing any [symptom\(s\) associated with COVID-19 or other communicable disease](#).

Absence Email Reminder

- Excuses for absences from school are required by Maryland law. **Please do not send your child's absent note through Canvas.** All absent notes must be emailed to WFESabsence@hcpss.org and **include student name, date of the absence, and the reason for the absence.** You may attach any documentation from medical professionals, if needed. If this information is not included, the note will not be accepted. This email goes directly to our Attendance Secretary. Thank you in advance for adhering to our absence reporting procedures. **This email is used to report absences only.**
- Please do not send changes to transportation to this email address, as we will not see the changes. Any time there is a change in transportation, and any time your child has an after school activity, you must send a hard copy note to school with your child. Do not send an email, as it may not be seen if there is a substitute in your child's classroom.

Dismissal Arrangements

- All students will be sent home their usual way unless they have a hard copy note with alternate arrangements, signed by their parent/guardian. Please do not expect a child to relay this important information. This often causes confusion. Do not send an email, as it may not be seen if there is a substitute in your child's classroom.
- Students will not be permitted to ride any bus other than the bus which they are assigned. Students have assigned seats on the bus, and seating is limited.

Text Message Access

HCPSS and WFES often communicate important information that we need parents to know immediately via text messages. If you receive our texts, then you do not need to do anything else! If you do not, we highly recommend that you opt-in. Here are the instructions on how to opt-in to text messaging...

- Text the word "YES" to 67587 from the wireless device you wish to receive texts on.
- You will receive an "opt in" message from HCPSS sent from SchoolMessenger.
- Text Y and hit send.
- You will now begin receiving text alerts from WFES and HCPSS.
- [Click here for additional details & troubleshooting](#)
- Please have a close relative, family friend, and daycare provider sign up for HCPSSNews alerts. This is a helpful safeguard on unexpected early dismissal days. Community members or any non-HCPSS can sign up to receive messages [by visiting this sign-up page](#).

Student/Parent Handbook

The 2021-2022 [Student and Parent Handbook](#) is now available on the HCPSS website. This resource is helpful for navigating the school year and includes information about HCPSS practices, policies and services available to support and enrich learning. A printed version of the handbook is no longer provided.

Procedures for Visitors and Volunteers

We are excited that we can once again allow visitors and volunteers into the building. Teachers are planning their volunteer needs and will reach out to you in the coming weeks. Parents are asked to please read and complete the following procedures now, so you can be ready when volunteer opportunities become available.

- Parents & visitors entering the school for a brief visit to pick up or drop off their child, or for other reasons, are not required to show proof of vaccination or testing. They are, however, required to be masked regardless of their vaccination status.
- Parents are not permitted to eat lunch in the school cafeteria with students at this time.
- Parents who are [conducting classroom visits or observations](#) must provide proof of vaccination status or a negative COVID-19 test (within seven days of the current date) to school administration when they check in at the front office.
- Visitors should [perform a COVID-19 health check](#) every day before coming to an HCPSS building and should stay home if they are experiencing any symptom(s) associated with any communicable disease.
- Please be prepared, sometime after October 4 all volunteers entering HCPSS schools to interact with or support students must provide proof of vaccination status or a negative COVID-19 test (within 7 days of the current date) to school administration when they check in at the front office.
- Volunteers must be masked regardless of their vaccination status. Volunteers may be able to access the free weekly testing offered within school and office buildings, subject to availability of tests. Volunteers should [perform a COVID-19 health check](#) every day before coming to an HCPSS building and should stay home if they are experiencing any symptom(s) associated with any communicable disease.
- Additionally, all [volunteers must complete a Confidentiality Training Course](#) about protecting the privacy of our students, staff, and schools, and the [Child Abuse and Neglect Training](#) about reporting any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to Howard County Department of Social Services.

Family and Student Support News from our School Counselor

Check out [Elementary School Counselor Newsletter - Issue 1](#) for information and resources about student well-being. You can access this newsletter and past editions through my Canvas Course entitled, West Friendship Elementary School Counseling located on your child's Canvas dashboard. If I can be of assistance to you or your child(ren), I can be reached through email leslie_schnebly@hcpss.org or by phone 410-313-5512.

A Word from our School Psychologist

September is **Suicide Prevention Month**. Social emotional well-being is essential as we transition into a new school year, which for many has presented new challenges, anxiety, and emotional distress. As we recognize these challenges, it is important that we continue to educate ourselves and empower our school communities to engage in prevention efforts. Below are resources for you to share with students, staff, and families.

Informational Resources:

- [National Suicide Prevention Week Resources](#) (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention)
 - [Self Care Strategies for Resilience](#)
 - [Simple Actions You Can Take To Help Prevent Suicide](#)
 - [2021 National Suicide Prevention Week Toolkit](#)
 - [Social Media Resources](#)
- [Promote National Suicide Prevention Month](#) (Suicide Prevention Lifeline)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
 - [Risks of Suicide](#)
 - [It's Okay to Talk About Suicide](#)
- [Extreme Risk Protection Order \(ERPO\) Informational Toolkit](#) (Maryland.gov)

Crisis Resources:

- Grassroots 24 Hour Crisis Hotline/ Mobile Crisis Team – 410-531-6677
- Text NAMI to 741-741 to be connected to a free, trained crisis counselor on the Crisis Text Line.
- [The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://www.suicidalink.com/) - 1-800-273-8255

For additional information, visit the [HCPSS Mental Health and Wellness webpage](#).

BSAP Saturday Math Academy

The HCPSS Black Student Achievement Program Saturday Math Academy Fall Session is approaching! This year, the BSAP Saturday Math Academy will offer a virtual enrichment program for Howard County Public School System students in all levels of math for grades 3-12. Registration will take place online September 25 from 9:00 a.m.- until capacity is reached. Class space is limited. Families can register by accessing the [HCPSS Connect Website](#). For more information, please visit: <https://news.hcpss.org/news-posts/2021/09/bsap-saturday-math-academy-virtual-fall-2021-program/>

- [BSAP SMA Fall 2021 Flyer \(English\)](#)
- [BSAP SMA Fall 2021 Flyer \(Spanish\)](#)

Information and Application for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS)

Yes, school lunch and breakfast are free for all students this school year. However, FARMS eligibility provides so much more than just free or reduced meals. You could be eligible for discounts for summer school, SAT, recreation programs, Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and internet programs. Please visit <https://www.hcpss.org/food-services/farms/> to see the numerous opportunities that students may qualify to receive. You may apply online or request a paper application from the school office by calling, 410-313-5512. If you have additional questions regarding the FARMS program, please review the [FAQ Section](#) or email <mailto:foodsvc@hcpss.org>.

PTA Information

PTA Budget

The budget meeting scheduled for las week is RESCHEDULED for September 27 at 7:00pm. This meeting will be for PTA members in good standing (Membership dues paid for this year! Join now! See below for "Join the PTA"!). The meeting will be virtual. Dial in info will be provided at a later date. Please review the proposed budget in advance by following this link. Thank you for your support!

https://mywfespta.weebly.com/treasurersreport.html?fbclid=IwAR02fZF_BCI4_HPIAp3MI09cr-YWS0Rrpb4Ryb1Yt1SeXQ4Vd2pglSDXhgo

Join the PTA

Becoming a member of the PTA does not mean you must volunteer. It simply means that you are donating to help enhance the school experience for our students. The PTA funds school-wide presentations, family fun events, teacher appreciation activities, and additional items needed by the teachers for their lessons and classrooms. Join now, so that you will be on record as a member in good standing so you can vote at the September 27th PTA Budget Meeting.

Current Family Membership is \$15, but you must act fast! Family Membership dues will increase to \$25, effective October 1st. Join the PTA by visiting the following link:

https://westfriendship.memberhub.com/store/items/113487?fbclid=IwAR27qCNyWKQQ26k_JAz2COW-aW6KFu7xSw-Bm2ST1llhXWc1V2et-gWsY

PTA Yard Sale

Start cleaning out those closets & pull out the storage bins! We are so excited to host the FIRST EVER, WFES PTA Sponsored Community Yard Sale!

Spaces are limited, so don't miss out! The best part? You're directly supporting the amazing initiatives the PTA plans throughout the year while earning yourself some extra dollars as well!

[https://westfriendship.memberhub.com/store?category=Community Yard Sale](https://westfriendship.memberhub.com/store?category=Community+Yard+Sale) and see flyer for more details! (if needed, click on Community Yard Sale on the left menu).

[WFES PTA Community Yard Sale Flyer](#)

Community Information

Marriotts Ridge HS PTSA Little Caesars Pizza Kits

Why does the mushroom always get invited to pizza parties?

Because he's such a fungi!

Please place an order today -- the Marriotts Ridge HS PTSA really needs your support!

Little Caesars Pizza Kits - Go to bit.ly/MRHS-Pizza

Orders are delivered right to your doorstep via FedEx.

Girl Scouts

Open House for all parents of girls in grades K-5 interested in **Girl Scouts** at West Friendship Elementary. New troops are forming now! Information will be provided and registration will occur during this event. Please bring your daughter and come learn about all that Girl Scouts at West Friendship has to offer! Meet us on Wednesday September 29th in the Cafeteria at 6:45 PM. Questions? Contact Margaret at 410-926-2961.

Clothing Giveaway Sponsored by Grace Community Church

Clothing Giveaway for ALL Family Members! All clothing is FREE!

Saturday, October 16, 2021, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

North Laurel Community Center, 9411 Whiskey Bottom Road, Laurel, MD 20723 * 410-313-0390