

West Friendship Elementary School



*12500 Frederick Road
West Friendship, MD 21794
410-313-5512
410-313-5514 (fax)
<http://wfes.hcpss.org/>*

School Hours 9:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

*Ms. Kaye M. Breon, Principal
Mr. Brian Vanisko, Assistant Principal*

My Related Arts Schedule

Day	Time	Related Arts
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

Other Important Times

Band, Strings, Peer Mentor, etc.

ATTENDANCE

When a student is late or absent from school, a note from the parent indicating the date(s) of the absence and the reason should be submitted to the school. In cases of three consecutive days of absence or frequent absence, a doctor's certificate is required. When arriving to school late, **the student, accompanied by a parent/guardian, must report to the office for a late pass before he/she will be admitted to class.** Students who are in school for a minimum of 4 hours will be marked present for a full day. Students who are in school at least 2 hours, but less than 4 hours, will be marked present for a half day

ABSENCES

Parents are required to send a note to school explaining their child's absence when the student returns to school. The note must include the student's name, the date of the absence, and the reason for absence.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Any parent requesting early dismissal or exclusion from special activities for the student should send a note to the office. In cases of early school dismissal, parents are requested to **report to the school office** and complete the "Early Dismissal" log. A staff member will call for the student.

TARDINESS - The following steps will be used for students who are frequently late to school:

1. A letter will be sent to parents indicating a concern.
2. A referral will be made to the pupil personnel worker if improvement is not made.
3. Tardy days will be noted on the report cards.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE/FAMILY TRIPS

A student may lawfully miss **no more than three days** for a purpose determined by a parent/ guardian. Such days may not occur during testing for students in grades 1-5. Parents/Guardians should contact the school office for the appropriate request form or they may visit

www.hcpss.org/aboutus/form_absence_ext.pdf or www.hcpss.org/files/form_absence.pdf.

BALLS, TOYS, AND OTHER TRINKETS

Students are requested to keep balls and other toys at home. This includes trading cards, unless specifically requested by their teachers.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL DAY CARE

Early morning and after school day care is provided at the school by the Howard County Department of Parks and Recreation, if minimum enrollment requirements are met. Hours of operation are 7:00 - 9:15 a.m. and 3:45 - 6:00 p.m. For more information, please contact them at 410-313-7275 or visit

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Recreation-and-Parks/Child-Care/Elementary-School>

BICYCLES

Due to the many buses which must park in the front of the school, the limited parking availability and the limited entrance and road space, it is necessary, in the interest of safety, to prohibit the use of bicycles on school property during the school day.

BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, HARASSMENT, or INTIMIDATION

Howard County Public School system is committed to providing safe school environments as outlined in Policy 1040. In addition, as a result of legislation passed in 2008, the Board of Education developed Policy 1060 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment or Intimidation, which establishes expectations for maintaining a safe and respectful school climate where bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation are not tolerated. Policy 1060 requires compliance with the Maryland Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005 which provides for any student, staff member, parent/guardian or close adult relative of a student to report any incident of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment or intimidation that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored activity or event, on a school bus or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. Reporting forms are available in all HCPSS main offices, school-counseling offices, the media center, and health services office. It can also be found on the HCPSS website. See Policy 1060 for additional information. Visit www.hcpss.org for a reporting form and a copy of the *Student/Parent Handbook*.

BUS GUIDELINES

In an effort to promote safety on our school buses, bus rules will be discussed with students during the first week of school. Please reinforce these safe practices at home. Please be aware that from time to time, transportation officials may place cameras on school buses. A bus video surveillance system may be in operation to help monitor student behavior on Howard County Public School buses. Bus safety is a top priority and bus drivers cannot watch the road and closely monitor students at the same time. The surveillance system will help monitor student behavior and permit the bus driver to concentrate on safe driving. In addition, please be advised that students may not ride buses other than their assigned school bus. Please discuss regular daycare transportation with the front office.

CARE OF BOOKS

Students must be held responsible for books that are either damaged or lost. A charge will be made in either case. We recommend that books borrowed from the Media Center be kept in a special place at home, protected from younger siblings and/or pets. Textbooks borrowed from school should be covered with brown paper or other protective coverings. Carelessness in handling and transporting books, especially on inclement weather days, accounts for many losses to our school collection. Parents are urged to help their children care for books and to see that they are returned on time.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT (BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY #1030)

The Howard County Public School System affirms its position that children have the right to be protected from physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. To this end, the Superintendent will ensure that all instances of suspected abuse and neglect will be reported to the Howard County Department of Social Services and the Howard County Police Department in accordance with the regulations set forth herein ... all staff members are required to report suspected cases of physical abuse, sexual abuse or suspected neglect to the Howard County Department of Social Services.

CLOTHING – STUDENT DRESS CODE - (Board of Education Policy #9210)

It shall be a violation of the Howard County Board of Education Policy #9210 for any student to wear attire that interferes with the educational mission of school, is disruptive to the school environment, provocative, or that could endanger the health or safety of that student or others during school hours and school activities. This includes but is not limited to, attire that: unduly exposes or reveals skins or undergarments, depicts profanity, obscenity, or the use of weapons or violence, depicts gang affiliation, or contains rude, disrespectful or discourteous expressions inconsistent with civil discourse and behavior. Dress and grooming shall meet health and sanitary standards. For the health and comfort of children, we urge parents to see that children leave home in the morning dressed appropriately for expected weather and planned school activities. **Sneakers should be worn to all physical education classes.** We recommend that all clothing which will be removed, such as coats, sweaters, boots, mittens, etc., be clearly and permanently labeled with the child's name.

COMMUNICATIONS

As in all good relationships, effective communication is the key to understanding. Each year our goal is to improve communication between the school and parents, between the school staff and students, and between students. We are committed to the task of good human relations through effective communication. All communication amongst adults and children are to be aligned with HCPSS BOE Civility Policy 1000. Examples of some methods used to maintain communication by teacher and administrators are as follows: phone calls, newsletters, letters, e-mail, student home assignments, and conferences. Newsletters and other important school news will be sent directly to your personal email address. It is your responsibility to update your contact information in HCPSS Connect.

Back to School Night is the traditional beginning of the partnership between parents and teachers. It is an important time to meet the staff members who work with your child and learn about the programs for the year. Please plan to attend. The dates and times will be posted on our website and communicated via *Tiger Tales* our school newsletter. In addition to the regularly scheduled report cards and parent/teacher conferences, parents may request conferences with teachers and/or the administrators. Parents having any questions or concerns regarding their child's program should contact their child's teacher(s) and/or the team leader. The principal and the assistant principal are available to assist and/or to answer other questions about the school and its programs.

Our school is always open to visits from parents; however, parents must call the office and schedule all visits in advance. All parents/visitors must report to the office prior to going into any classroom, sign in and request a guest badge.

Parents should look for and read the school newsletter, *Tiger Tales*, which is updated bi-weekly. This publication contains school news, important dates, as well as PTA information. This communication is emailed to parents via School Messenger and is accessible by visiting <http://wfes.hcpss.org/>. Friday Folders go home at each week's end. They contain notices, schoolwork, and other important communication to keep you informed about your child and school events.

As an integral part of the county's curriculum, students are introduced to communication skills in all academic areas. Staff members are aware that they serve as role models for students, and we encourage parents to reflect positive attitudes about school so that students will mirror that respect for learning.

CONFERENCES

Parents may arrange conferences with teachers whenever a need arises. However, parents are urged to remember that teachers cannot hold conferences during instructional time. Private conversations between parents and teachers in the presence of students detract from the educational program, cause unnecessary disruptions, and are usually unfruitful for the parent because the teacher is unable to give full attention. Please indicate the desire for a conference with a phone call to the office, a note or an email to the teacher.

COUNSELING

The mission of the Howard County Guidance Program is to provide for all students opportunities to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to reach their potential. Key contributions of the elementary counselors are to 1) counsel students individually and in small groups on topics such as confidence building, friendship, communication skills, stress management, study skills and other topics, 2) work with teachers and school personnel to help all children reach their potential, 3) help parents understand developmental issues and communicate more effectively with children, 4) conduct classroom counseling activities with teachers and students, and 5) refer parents and students to public school services and/or community agencies when needed.

CURRICULUM

West Friendship Elementary School follows the prescribed guidelines as established by the Howard County Board of Education for all curriculum areas. Courses of study include Language Arts (Reading, Spelling, Handwriting, and Written Language), Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Health, Art, Physical Education, Vocal Music, Technology, and Media. The core subjects are taught daily. Special subjects (Art, Vocal Music, Physical Education, Technology, and Media) are taught weekly and sometimes more frequently. In addition, students in selected grades may choose to participate in the Band, Strings or Chorus Programs.

DISCIPLINE

At West Friendship Elementary School we believe it is necessary to provide a safe and orderly educational environment in which all students have the opportunity to learn and achieve at their fullest potential. Teachers and administrators are committed to assisting the students in understanding the appropriate behavior for the school environment and are committed to working with students and parents to achieve behaviors that are academically and socially acceptable. It is recognized that an educational environment most conducive to learning can be promoted most successfully through the shared acceptance of responsibility of the school, student and home (parent/guardian).

The Howard County Public School System has adopted a system-wide Code of Conduct. As a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) school we have specified what Respectful, Responsible and Ready to Learn Behavior looks like at school. Our mind set is to shape and reteach behaviors in a positive way while building strong relationships with our students. We use an incentive structure to help motivate students to always try their best. Students can trade in their "Tiger Tickets" weekly for tangible and non-tangible prizes and privileges.

	Respectful	Responsible	Ready to Learn
Hallway	- Silent - Hands to self	- Walk - Stay on second square	- Listen for directions
Lunch	- Talk nicely - Use inside voice - Hands to self	- Clean up your area - Raise your hand for help	- Stay in seat
Recess	- Hands to self - Use and share equipment	- Dress for the weather - Walk - Play safely	- Line up quickly - Listen for directions
Bathroom	- Use quiet voices - Keep it clean	- Wash and dry hands - Be efficient - Use supplies appropriately	- Ask permission at appropriate times
Classroom	- Raise your hand - Listens when others are speaking	- Use materials appropriately - Help keep the classroom clean	- Follow Give Me 5 - Follow directions - Always give your best effort
Bus	- Use an indoor Voice - Use encouraging, polite, kind words - Treat property with care	- Remain seated - Follow Directions the first time given - Keep hands and feet to self	- Arrive to bus on time - Carry materials on/off bus - Enter/exit bus in an orderly fashion

WFES Code of Conduct

DISMISSAL ARRANGEMENTS

Notes are necessary if you want your child to follow a different dismissal arrangement. Advising a student of a dismissal change is not satisfactory. **Notes must be sent to school if you wish for your child to be dismissed to Circle Drive or attend an afterschool activity.** Please **do not email** this information. If our Internet is not working or a teacher has a substitute, your message will not be received in a timely manner. Arrangements via telephone will only be honored in the event of an emergency. Please be advised that students may not ride buses other than their assigned school bus. Exceptions are made for students to go to a daycare provider on a regular basis.

EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS

On certain days school will close early for students due to in-service programs or parent/teacher conferences. On 3-Hour Early Dismissal days West Friendship closes at **12:45 p.m.** These days are identified in the school calendar.

EMERGENCIES

The school requires two kinds of information from all parents: 1) a way to contact the parent immediately if the child becomes ill or injured, and 2) a location to which the child should be sent if there should be an emergency school closing for threatening weather conditions, fire, power failure, etc. For your child's protection and safety, we urge you to comply with our requests for information of this nature. It is important that you keep your emergency contact information up to date in HCPSS Connect. Be sure the following information is current... home, work, and cell phone numbers and at least two persons outside of the immediate family who reside in the general area. It is critical that we are able to contact you at once should an emergency occur.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

There are two reasons for emergency school closing: 1) weather conditions affecting all Howard County Public Schools, and 2) local emergencies which affect only West Friendship Elementary School. In the case of weather conditions causing school closings, parents may have some forewarning by listening to the morning weather reports. During the day, major radio and television stations broadcast news of school closings by county names. **School staff cannot call parents to inform them of the closings.** Children must be dismissed and sent to a predetermined location, their home, or their neighbor's home. You will receive an e-mail from Howard County Public Schools of all school closings. **By no means should the school be called to verify a school closing.** Parents who are unable to be at home

when their child is dismissed early on inclement weather days must inform the school where the child is to go on the “Unscheduled Early Closing of School” section of their child’s Emergency Procedure Information in HCPSS Connect. In the case of a local emergency, which would affect only West Friendship Elementary School (such as power failures, fire, etc.), parents will be notified of our individual school emergency closing. We must have sufficient information from you with alternatives for your child’s safety. We urge you to inform your child of the location to which she/he is to go in an emergency, and discuss the matter with the person who will receive your child in such a circumstance.

EMERGENCY REQUIRING SCHOOL EVACUATION

In the unwelcome event of an extreme emergency or weather problem necessitating the evacuation of the school, there is a plan. The school system has a team of employees trained in multiple regards. They have helped West Friendship develop a contingency plan. Parent roles and cooperation are critical in the safety of our children.

- 1) Please do not call the school. Information about the incident will be broadcast on television and radio.
- 2) Please do not come to the school, unless announced through the media. Parents will go to **Manor Woods Elementary School on Route 144** for information on their children and student release process.
- 3) Please bring your identification with you. Children cannot be released to unknown persons.

FIELD TRIPS

First hand experiences enrich a child’s learning and bring greater meaning to classroom studies. Therefore, children will periodically have opportunities to make visits to places that have educational value. If bus transportation is required, parents will receive an explanatory letter with a detachable permission slip at the bottom. Only those children who have returned signed permission slips will be able to go with their classes on field trips. Sometimes there is a need for parent volunteers to accompany and chaperone the students; however, **chaperones may not take younger children along on the trip.** We also ask that parents not follow buses to attend field trips. This often complicates chaperone/group assignments. **Legal counsel has advised that parents may not transport students to/from field trips.** Students must use the provided trip transportation. *All chaperones must complete the volunteer training program offered face-to-face in September or on-line via our website throughout the year.*

FUND RAISING

All fund raising activities will be recommended by a local committee, the PTA Executive Board representing our community, according to the Board of Education Policy #4020. Parents interested in more information regarding this policy should contact the PTA, principal or assistant principal.

GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM - A Comprehensive Enrichment Program

West Friendship Elementary School provides a Gifted/Talented Program that provides enrichment for students in all grades. For eligible and interested students, this program offers the Enrichment Triad Model and a Mathematics Program for Grades 4 and 5.

Primary Talent Development (PTD)

Kindergarteners and First Graders are provided an opportunity to display and develop their ability to reflect and respond through lessons conducted by the G/T Resource Teacher; which utilize advanced content, higher-order questioning, and complex tasks.

Curriculum Extension Units (CEU’s)

Curriculum Extension Units are content specific units designed to provide enrichment for students who have displayed a need within a content area and language arts. To be selected for Curriculum Extension Units, a variety of data points are used; including, but not limited to, standardized test scores, work samples, writing samples, learning behaviors, participation in talent spotting lessons designed for each unit, student interest self-ranking, and teacher input. The selection for a program is an identification of a group of students who may benefit from the educational experiences provided by the program. Students are taught skills which will enable them to be producers of knowledge. Extension unit products will be shared with the community at the Night of Excellence in the spring.

Instructional Seminars

Instructional Seminars are designed to connect the learner with the kinds of topics, or areas of study, in which he or she may have a sincere interest. These opportunities generally occur outside of curricular instructional time and offer an opportunity for skills in a variety of areas to develop.

Skill development might include written, oral, and visual communication skills, critical and creative thinking skills, research skills, technology skills, and skills in visual and performing arts. Teachers, students, or parents may nominate students to participate in an instructional seminar.

Independent Research Investigations

Those students with a sincere interest and commitment to a project, focusing on a particular topic, may participate in an independent research investigation. The student becomes an actual investigator of real problems adding new knowledge, ideas and/or products to a field of study. The process includes formulating a problem, identifying and using the tool or methods necessary to solve the problem, and communicating results to authentic audiences. Independent Research Projects are more rare at the elementary level because of the commitment required.

Mathematics Program (Grade 4-5)

The Gifted and Talented Mathematics Program is for identified grade four and five students, which provides specialized math instruction. Students are enrolled into G/T Math classes at their grade's normal mathematics instructional time. They receive their full mathematics instruction under the leadership of the resource teacher. Although students receive instruction at an accelerated rate, the major emphasis is on enriching their instruction to a degree not commonly available.

The core of the program is the idea that problem solving, and desire to understand the workings of mathematical ideas, must be the focus of all mathematics instruction. Emphasis is placed on acquiring, explaining, and demonstrating understanding through real and simulated problem solving experiences. Curriculum objectives are a combination of grade fifth, sixth, and seventh grade Common Core Math standards; combined into two years of study. In order to be selected to participate in G/T Math, students must receive an acceptable level of achievement on the CogAT assessment, as well as show learning behaviors and content knowledge exceeding above-grade level material. Students normally enter the program with better than grade level proficiency in math skills and can be expected, by the end of fifth grade, to show mastery of a majority of the skills identified as seventh grade objectives.

HEALTH ROOM PROCEDURES

School health services are provided in accordance with state and local guidelines, regulations and laws. The School Nurse performs all nursing tasks and handles all emergencies. Emergency contact information, changes in health conditions, doctor's name and phone number are to be updated yearly and as needed online through HCPSS Connect.

Injuries are treated using the recommended procedures outlined by the Howard County Health Department and the Health Services Manual. For emergencies, parents will be notified and an ambulance will be called to transport the student to the nearest hospital.

Students who have activity restrictions in Physical Education must provide a parent's note. A physician's note is required for restrictions lasting longer than three days. A Physical Education/Activity Assessment Form is to be completed by the physician for partial restrictions lasting longer than three days. Please contact the School Nurse for a copy of the form.

Please **DO NOT** send children to school if they are ill. Students with a temperature of 100.0 degrees F or higher, with or without symptoms will be sent home. The parent/guardian is to keep the student at home until the temperature has been less than 100.0 degrees F for 24 hours without fever reducing medications. A doctor's note to allow the student to return to school may be required.

For information such as Health Enrollment Forms, Medication Procedures and Forms, Allergy Procedures and Forms, Diabetes, and Communicable Diseases please refer to the Howard County Public School System webpage, <https://www.hcpss.org/health>

HOMEWORK

In order to ensure that each student meets or exceeds rigorous performance and achievement standards, Howard County Public Schools must assist students in maintaining and extending their learning. The appropriate design, use, and evaluation of regular homework assignments are all integral pieces needed to achieve that goal. At West Friendship, homework provides students the opportunity to review and/or practice instruction, prepare for the next day's studies and develop good work habits. We urge students/parents to keep the following in mind:

1. Students should have an understanding of any homework assignment before leaving school. The students should ask the teacher for clarification if necessary.
2. Students should understand WHY the assignment is necessary. Only the student can master the learning. Parents can assist by checking to make sure the homework is completed.
3. Students should have a specific time and place to do homework. TV watching time should be limited. This is where parents are the biggest help.
4. Students and parents should plan wisely when scheduling after school activities.
5. Parents and friends are good resource people to monitor, assist and discuss homework; but the students must do the work after clarification is given.

GRADE LEVEL: HOMEWORK GUIDELINES - APPROXIMATE TIMES/DAYS

K	10 - 15 minutes - called "Home Activity"
1	Monday - Thursday – No more than 20 minutes per night
2	Monday - Thursday – No more than 20 minutes per night
3	Monday - Thursday – No more than 30 minutes per night
4	Monday - Thursday – No more than 40 minutes per night
5	Monday - Thursday – No more than 50 minutes per night

If a student spends more than the anticipated time, parents are encouraged to stop student's work and send a note to the teacher about the difficulty. Homework subjects frequently include spelling and math. Reading, writing and other subject areas may be sent home as well. Students in all grade levels are expected to **do** independent reading at home on a routine basis, which is not included in the above time allotments. Homework is not necessarily pencil and paper tasks.

IMMUNIZATIONS

In Maryland, the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene have required the completion of an immunization form for all school children. This form must be completed and on file in the school office for the student to enter or continue in school. If you have questions, please contact our health room, 410-313-5515.

INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTION TEAM (IIT)

The IIT (Instructional Intervention Team) meets regularly to discuss concerns regarding children. This problem solving committee is not a special education committee. It does lead to the development of good home-school communication and instructional modifications to improve children's achievement. The committee is comprised of classroom teachers, administrator, school nurse, special education representative, pupil personnel worker, school psychologist, and school counselor.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC -- BAND & STRINGS

Students in Grades 4 and 5 may voluntarily elect to study a musical instrument, such as trumpet, clarinet, saxophone, drums or trombone. Elective string classes are provided for students in Grades 3-5. Students will be pulled out of their recess, specials class, or regular academic class approximately two times a week for 30 minutes to attend these elective courses.

INSURANCE

The HCPSS is again offering scholastic accident insurance or 24-hour accident insurance to students. Parents who wish to enroll their child(ren) should complete the application sent home during the first week of school.

LOST AND FOUND

When unidentified belongings are found, they are placed in the Lost and Found. This is an area located in the cafeteria. Periodically, the contents of the Lost and Found are donated to charitable organizations. PLEASE put your child's name on his/her clothing so that it can be returned if it is misplaced.

LUNCH/BREAKFAST

Lunch is available each day in our cafeteria. The present cost is \$2.75, which includes milk. Extra milk may be purchased for 50¢. A menu is available online. The school is not permitted to accept checks for lunch payment. Parents are encouraged to prepay for student meals by setting up an online account at www.myschoolbucks.com. Students also have the option of paying with cash on a daily basis. Each student has been issued a PIN to use when purchasing meals with cash or prepayment. If a student has forgotten their PIN, cashiers can look the PIN up by student name. Applications for free and reduced price lunch will be sent home the first day of school, and can be obtained from the school office throughout the year. Reduced price lunches are 40¢. Breakfast may be purchased before school. The cost is \$2.00 or .30¢ for qualifying students.

MEDIA CENTER

The goal of the media center is to provide all users, both students and teachers, with an enriched learning environment containing a wide variety and range of materials that invite intellectual growth, and aid all students in acquiring the skills needed to take full advantage of media center resources. Books must be signed out. Children will be responsible for replacing or paying for damaged or lost books. Parents are asked to assist children in caring for and returning borrowed items on time.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

If you drive to school during the school day, please observe the signs restricting areas for parking and be courteous to staff members who are outside directing students and buses. Also, please do not use the fire department parking lot or park in front of dumpster areas. **Bus areas must remain free for the loading and unloading of students.** Please remind your child to use the sidewalk at all times and to look carefully when crossing the parking lot. **Parents picking up or dropping off students should use the small circle driveway between the school and Route 144.** There is a designated no parking area in this circle. Please do not pull into that area. This specified area is to remain clear for children who are exiting/entering vehicles. If you are using our student pick up and drop off (Circle Drive), you are expected to be patient and line up using the car entrance closest to the old firehouse. Pulling into the main drive, backing up, and parking is not what is safest for students and staff and is an uncivil behavior. Thank you in advance for your cooperation! Special activities often create parking overflow. Please do not park along Route 144 as your vehicle may be ticketed. Parking is permitted on neighboring side streets, however, parking is limited to only one side of these streets. This is important to allow emergency equipment access to these neighborhoods. Please park on the side facing Route 144, and be considerate when parking in these areas.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Personal Property brought into school, on school grounds, or to school-sponsored events such as a field trip or on a school bus shall be the responsibility of the student. The school provides a desk to assist students in the care of textbooks and educational materials. An area is provided in each classroom for musical instruments. Students and their parents are urged to give careful consideration to items brought, or left at the school. Items of significant sentimental and/or monetary value are strongly discouraged. School staff shall not accept responsibility for student personal property, on behalf of the school or Howard County Public Schools.

PETS

For the safety and welfare of each student, **pets are not permitted on school property.** We must comply with this procedure due to the increased number of allergies. Every attempt to locate the owners of stray animals will be made prior to calling the Howard County Department of Animal Control.

PICTURES

Individual student pictures will be taken by our school photographer in the fall. Group/class and individual spring portraits will be taken in early spring. Detailed information will be sent home via the students. Funds made from the picture sales will be used for student activities and materials.

PTA

The general body of the PTA meets several times yearly. The schedule for meetings will be noted in the newsletters along with other PTA information. All parents are encouraged to contribute their talents and skills to the various activities of this association. The 2019-2020 PTA Officers are as follows:

President	Mrs. Amy Grutzik
First Vice President	Mrs. Phuong Dam
Second Vice President	Mrs. Rachel Butler
Treasurer	Mrs. Heather Campbell
Recording Secretary	Mrs. Lyndall Jordan
Corresponding Secretary	TBD
PTA Council Delegate	Ms. Joanna Ramos-Romero
PTA Council Delegate	TBD

REPORT CARDS AND MARKING PERIODS

There are four marking periods during the school year. In addition, Interim Reports are provided mid-way in each quarter. Parents are invited to come to the school to confer with teachers in November and February. To facilitate this, school closes early on certain school days. Parents may schedule an appointment time via HCPSS Connect. Report cards will be sent home with children at the end of the first three marking periods, and they will be mailed to parents at the end of the school year in June. Please see calendar for specific dates.

SAFETY

Cafeteria

1. A child will be required to adhere to established rules pertaining to behavior, voice level, cleanliness, and other responsibilities that might arise in moving through the cafeteria line, entering and leaving the cafeteria, and moving to the tables.
2. A child who cannot function in the cafeteria in a reasonable manner may be asked to eat lunch in a different location.

Playground

1. The playground equipment is located on the school grounds specifically for the recreational enjoyment of the children. Staff on duty frequently review the safety regulations governing the use of such equipment and have the authority to remove children from an activity if they feel the activity may be potentially dangerous to the child or others. Children should learn to play together without increasing the possibility of injury through inappropriate contact or inappropriate use of equipment.
2. During wet weather, outdoor play may be restricted to the hard surface areas. Rules for playing on these surfaced areas are more confining because of necessity. It is hoped that all children will give their utmost consideration to their peers and the staff on duty at this time.
3. Children are not permitted to leave school grounds during the school day except upon written consent of the parents and for reasons of health.

SCHOOL HOURS

Hours of attendance are 9:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. The school building opens at 9:05 a.m. and students must be seated in their classes by 9:15 a.m. **Students will not be permitted into the building before 9:05 a.m.** This does mean that if a student is dropped off prior to 9:05 a.m., they will be waiting outside, unsupervised, until staff report to their assigned duty. Howard County Recreation & Parks does offer a before school program here at WFES. The phone number is 410-313-7275 and the web site is <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Recreation-and-Parks/Child-Care/Elementary-School>. Feel free to contact them for more information. Thank you for your understanding.

School dismisses at 3:45 p.m. At the end of the school day children are required to leave the building promptly and not return unless there is an emergency, or they are attending a supervised school function. Parents are reminded to pick up their children promptly at the end of the day. Classrooms are not accessible prior to 9:05 a.m., or after 4:30 p.m.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

The SIT (School Improvement Team) is comprised of representatives from West Friendship staff and parents. It meets quarterly to review school data (attendance, discipline, State testing program, etc.) and make decisions towards continuous improvement for West Friendship. It develops the School Improvement Plan that guides the school program annually. Information on the School Improvement Plan is published in the school newsletter and website.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The special education program provides special services and instruction for students to meet the unique needs of a child with disabilities, such as:

• Autism	• Deaf-blindness	• Deafness
• Developmental delay	• Emotional disturbance	• Hearing impairment
• Intellectual Disability	• Multiple disabilities	• Orthopedic impairment
• Other health impairment	• Specific learning disability	• Speech or language impairment
• Traumatic brain injury	• Visual impairment	

Once it is determined that a student qualifies to receive special education services, they will be provided specialized instruction to support their individualized goals and objectives in the least restrictive environment. Inclusive education is valued at West Friendship. Each grade level team has service providers on the team of teachers to provide the needed support to students.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Birthdays are very special. Parents may send non-food items for children's birthday treats such as books or stickers. All children in the class or team must be considered. Each student's birthday will be announced during the morning announcements and he/she will receive a birthday pencil. **Party invitations cannot be distributed at school** as this can lead to hurt feelings of students who may not be included on the guest list!

Halloween is celebrated with costumes, parades, and games. Costumes recommended are book characters, not violent or frightening characters. Play weapons are not permitted. Safety is essential. Alternate activities are provided for students who do not wish to participate.

Our PTA sponsors Cultural Arts Assemblies throughout the year, bringing artists and performers to enrich our students' education.

Special programs are planned at the end of the year for our fifth grade students and our kindergarten students as they are promoted into a new phase of their school experience.

STUDENT USE OF CELL PHONES/WATCH PHONES

Students are not permitted to use cell phones/watch phones during the school day or while on the school bus. If a student needs to contact a parent, they may come to the school office and get permission to use a school telephone. Students, who carry cell phones/watch phones, must keep them turned off and inside of their backpacks while at school and during the bus rides to and from school. In addition, please be advised that neither West Friendship Elementary, nor the Howard County Public School System is responsible for the loss or damage of student property. Parents are asked to remind their children of these guidelines and support the school in enforcing the rules.

TELEPHONES

Parents are requested to inform their children that school telephones are only be used to call home for emergencies. Please be sure to keep telephone numbers up-to-date in HCPSS Connect. If there is an emergency situation at home, which requires that a student be notified, **parents are requested to give the message to the office staff**. The message will be given to the child without having to interrupt the class lesson in progress.

TESTING

Testing of students is an integral part of the school program. It supplies necessary evaluative information about the needs and progress of individual students. Testing occurs on a regular basis in all subject areas. We will notify parents when our testing dates are scheduled. We urge you to **avoid scheduling appointments during testing**. It may have a negative effect on your child's test scores to interrupt the testing schedule. Some tests cannot be made-up if students are absent during the administration. Parents will always be notified in advance of the testing.

VISITATION

Parents are invited to visit our school; however, the instruction of the students is the primary purpose of the school and no other activity should interfere with this basic purpose. For the protection of the children and staff, **all visitors must report to the school office before going to any other area of the building, including outside recess.** Visitors must sign-in with a driver's license or state issued identification card in order to obtain a badge from the office. Visitors who are not listed on a student's emergency procedure form, must have written permission from the student's parent in order to visit/volunteer in our school. **Anyone wishing to tour the school or visit a class must call the school and prearrange a visit.**

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

West Friendship Elementary School is very fortunate to have many parents and community members volunteer their time and skills to the enhancement of our educational program. We rely heavily on the services provided by our volunteers, and we greatly appreciate every minute of their time. **All volunteers must complete the on-line volunteer training prior to volunteering in the school. This includes chaperoning field trips. This training must be done every year.** You may access this training by visiting <http://www.hcpss.org/parents/volunteer-information/>.

We have set our goals high -- the optimum level of achievement for each student. Our volunteers play an integral role in reaching this goal. Many parents work with small groups to review and reinforce skills. Others prepare materials, for example, administrative tasks. All of these services are necessary to maintain a smooth operating system and to insure our students' academic growth.

The amount of time volunteers donate varies greatly. Some are able to spend six to eight hours weekly in the school; others can give only a minimal amount of time weekly. Some come on a sporadic, rather than regular basis, and some are not able to work in the school at all, but choose to work at home due to family or work responsibilities. We do request that volunteers **not bring younger children** with them to school when they are volunteering. **All volunteers must sign-in at the office and obtain a badge before going to any other part of the building. Your state issued identification is required to sign-in.** Please consider the volunteer program as a possibility for yourself.

WELLNESS POLICY

The Board of Education has a wellness policy that restricts the sale or distribution of high-fat, high-sugar snacks and drinks during the school day. In this spirit, WFES encourages parents/guardians to send non-food items for children's birthday treats, such as pencils, books or stickers. Each student's birthday will continue to be announced during the morning announcements and he/she will receive a birthday pencil. There are two major special gatherings during the year, Halloween and Valentine's Day. Room parents and teachers will send home specific information for each event.

WITHDRAWAL

Parents who must withdraw their child(ren) from school should contact the school office. Office staff will instruct parents on how to proceed with the process.