

HCMS News

October 30, 2020

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS AND IMPORTANT REMINDERS

FALL BACK-DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS THIS WEEKEND

Remember to turn your clocks back one hour on Sunday, November 1.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Virtual Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled for Monday, November 23 through Wednesday, November 25. You will schedule your Parent/Teacher Conferences in HCPSS Connect. You can access the conference schedule beginning Friday, November 13 through www.hcpss.org/connect. The scheduling window will remain open until Thursday, November 19. The window will then be closed so that teachers will have an appropriate amount of time to prepare for their conferences.

Click on the Conference tab in the left navigation panel and click Parent Conferences. For specific instructions on how to register for a Conference go to: <http://www.hcpss.org/f/connect/synergy-parent-teacher-conference-registration.pdf>.

As a reminder, all students will be dismissed three hours early on November 23 and November 24. Schools will be closed for students on Wednesday, November 25.

EARLY DISMISSAL SCHEDULES

The HCPSS 2020-2021 calendar includes several upcoming 3-hour early dismissal days on: Friday, November 6, Monday, November 23 and Tuesday, November 24. Virtual instruction schedules have been adjusted for these days to provide students with synchronous learning for each class. Please note: Middle school early dismissal days begin at 8:30 a.m., earlier than standard virtual instruction days. [Click here](#) to view the early dismissal schedule for middle school.

UPDATE YOUR FAMILY FILE

Thank you to everyone who has already updated their Family File. We currently have 50% completion! HCPSS uses Family File for parents/guardians to provide emergency information. **Parents/guardians must verify and/or update information annually for each child** and can do so by logging in to [HCPSS Connect](#) and selecting the Family File tab and then clicking on Family File.

Once logged in, parents/guardians will be asked to provide or update the following information:

- Student information
- Parent/guardian contact
- Emergency contacts
- Medical information
- Arrival/dismissal procedures
- Media release (photo approval)
- Data confidentiality
- PTA/PTSA directory

Changes of address may not be made through Family File. If you have recently moved, please contact your child's school as soon as possible.

MLK ESSAY CONTEST

The Howard County Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission is hosting a middle and high school essay contest. The deadline for the essay is October 30 at 5:00 p.m. [View the flier](#) for more information.

DRIVE THROUGH TRICK OR TREATING EVENT

The WLHS Orchestra is hosting a Drive Through Trick or Treating Event for the community on Saturday, October 31 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. [View the flier](#) for more information.

FREE FOOD AND COAT DISTRIBUTION

Celebration Church at Columbia is sponsoring a Free Food and Coat Distribution Event on Saturday, October 31 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. [View the flier](#) for more information.

COVID-19 COMMUNITY TESTING

Howard County General Hospital is bringing testing for COVID-19 to neighborhoods around Howard County. Celebration Church at Columbia will hold a community testing event on Saturday, October 31 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. [View the flier](#) for more information.

UPCOMING DATES

11/03/20 Schools and offices closed, Election Day

11/06/20 Schools close 3 hours early, End of 1st Quarter

11/23/20 - 11/24/20 Schools close 3 hours early, Parent/teacher conferences

11/25/20 Schools closed for students, Parent/teacher conferences

11/26/20 - 11/27/20 Schools and offices closed, Thanksgiving

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPDATE ON SCHOOL MEALS

Free school meals previously due to expire at the end of December, have been extended through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Thus, HCPSS will be able to provide meals at no cost to any HCPSS student, and all children 18 and under, through the entire school year, assuming continued availability of USDA funding.

HCMS ATTENDANCE POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Please email your absence notes/questions to: HCMSabsence@hcpss.org. The email should include the child's name, the date(s) or period(s) (if absence is a partial day) of the absence, and the reason for the absence. The email must be received within 5 days of the absence.

For Discretionary Absences (up to 3 per school year), please complete the [linked form](#) and email it to: HCMSabsence@hcpss.org.

For Religious Observances, please complete the [linked form](#) and email to: HCMSabsence@hcpss.org.

FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS

Harris Teeter Together in Education

Harris Teeter's Together In Education program gives schools a chance to earn funds when you link your VIC card and shop Harris Teeter brands. When you shop Harris Teeter brands, a percentage of your purchase is donated to the school that your VIC card is linked to. There are NO LIMITS to how much a school can earn. Register your VIC card to our SCHOOL ID# 7984.

Clothing to Cash

Please donate to our Clothing to Cash fundraising program! Clothing to Cash is a textile recycling program that donates money to the school for every pound of donated items. Look for the white donation bin at the bottom of the Harper's Choice Middle School parking lot.

Clothing to Cash will accept items in ALL conditions: new with tags, or torn, stained, worn-out knees, shoes with holes or only one shoe, backpacks, old sheets, stuffed animals, and more. What a great way to help our school and clean out your closets! All donations must be bagged and put in the collection bin.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please visit the [Community News and Programs](#) page on the HCPSS website for announcements of upcoming events and programs sponsored by non-profit organizations.