

HCMS News

April 9, 2021

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS AND IMPORTANT REMINDERS

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

We look forward to welcoming our final group of hybrid students back to the building during the week of April 12. As a reminder, Grades 7 and 8 Cohort A students will return on Monday, April 12 and Grades 7 and 8 Cohort B students will return on Thursday, April 15.

Quarter 4 will begin on Thursday, April 15. To view your child's Quarter 4 schedule, please use your parent credentials to log in to [HCPSS Connect](#). Select Class Schedule from the left column and then select Q4. Please remind your child to check the [Google Meet codes](#) for their Q4 class schedule.

HEALTH CHECK REMINDER

To ensure students are healthy enough to attend in-person instruction, parents/guardians are to perform a symptom check every day before the student leaves home. A student

having any of the following symptoms should not be sent to school and may continue to access their classrooms virtually if they are well enough to do so:

1 of the following: New onset cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing; New loss of taste or smell;

OR

2 of the following: Fever over 100.4 or chills within the past 24 hours; Fatigue; Muscle or body aches; Headache; Sore throat; Congestion or runny nose; Chills or shaking chills; Nausea or vomiting; Diarrhea.

Additionally, students who have been in close contact (within less than 6 feet for a cumulative time of more than 15 minutes over the past 24 hours with or without a mask) with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected of having COVID-19 (exhibiting COVID- like illness and has not tested negative after exhibiting symptoms) should not enter any HCPSS building.

Parent/guardians will assess their children for symptoms of COVID-19 illness and refrain from sending/transporting them to school until after they have been symptom-free at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms, have no fever for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication, and have continued improvement of symptoms and /or medical consult with their primary care physician.

FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

Attention 8th Grade Parents...

The Howard County Health Department is conducting Hearing and Vision Screenings for 8th grade students. You should have received an email with information to sign your student up if interested. If you have any questions please contact the school nurse, Susan Casey at 410-313-6934.

CLOTHING TO CASH RECYCLING PROGRAM

March numbers are in...we collected **1,456 pounds** of clothes and shoes! We earned **\$145.60** for school programs. Thanks for your support!

Spring is a great time to clean out your closets and help a good cause! HCMS participates in the Clothing to Cash fundraising program. Clothing to Cash is a textile recycling program that donates money to our school for every pound of donated items.

[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! Please be sure donated items are clean and dry. All donations must be bagged and put in the white collection bin at the bottom of the parking lot.

HCASC MEETING

The next Howard County Association of Student Councils meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, April 14 from 7-8:30 p.m. All middle and high school students interested in getting involved in student leadership and service are invited to the monthly HCASC meetings. Students should [pre-register](#) to receive the meeting link. For more information, please email cindy_drummond@hcpss.org.

UPCOMING DATES

04/14/2021 End of Quarter 3

04/22/2021 Report cards issued

05/13/2021 Schools closed for students, Professional Learning Day

05/31/2021 Schools and offices closed, Memorial Day

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

STAYING CONNECTED

As students return to the building, we continue to focus on ensuring the safety and wellness of our students not only in their daily activities, but also in the event of an emergency. It is important for all HCMS families to complete their Family File in [HCPSS Connect](#) so we have updated contact information and so families receive all school communications.

HCMS and HCPSS frequently send updated information to parents/guardians via email and text. Please be sure that your [Family File is up-to-date](#) and that you have opted into text messages to ensure you receive all messages. To opt into texts, text “yes” to 67587 from the cell phone listed in your Family File. If you need assistance updating your Family File, please contact our front office at 410-313-6929.

CHROMEBOOK CARE WEBPAGE

There is a webpage for students, [Chromebook Care](#), which includes tips on caring for and transporting Chromebooks, as well as student mobile technology support and additional resources. [Click here](#) for information about the Technology Support Centers.

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Featuring answers to hundreds of FAQs, HCPSS' [Help Site](#) provides a wealth of information about the Bridge to Normalized Instruction Hybrid Instructional Model, health and safety, transportation, technology, and more. The site is organized by category and can be searched by keyword, making it easy to navigate to the information you need. New FAQs are continually being added and we encourage you to visit the site regularly.

HYBRID LEARNING RESOURCE

A new [resource document](#) summarizes all major aspects of the school system's planned transition to hybrid in-person and concurrent virtual instruction that begins on March 1. The document is intended to serve as a reference for both families and staff.

UPDATE YOUR FAMILY FILE

We still need many families to complete their Family File for the 2020-2021 school year. We have begun calling families who have not yet completed Family File to offer assistance. If you have questions on how to complete the Family File, please call the school at 410-313-6929.

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.

HCMS ATTENDANCE POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Need to report an absence? Please email your absence notes/questions to:

HCMSabsence@hcpss.org. **The email should include the student's name, the parent'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.

PTA BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED

The HCMS PTA needs you! We are seeking volunteers to fill several vacant board member positions and to assist our PTA President Mrs. Headlam. Be involved with your child's school and let your voice be heard as we plan for an engaging school year. The PTA is a rewarding way to meet other parents/guardians in our school community and a way for you to make a difference in your child's middle school experience!

A FULL BOARD IS NEEDED to continue the amazing work of our PTA, which supports our students while building community and pride in our school. Unfortunately, without a full board, the PTA will not be able to continue all the programs we currently provide. Please consider joining the HCMS PTA Board!

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact our HCMS PTA President at ingrid.headlam@gmail.com or call the front office at 410-313-6929.

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.

Harper's Choice Middle School | 5450 Beaverkill Road Columbia, MD 21044 | 410-313-6929 | hcms.hcpss.org