

HMS Bulletin

September 27, 2024



Dear HMS Families,

I hope this message finds you well. As we are halfway through Quarter 1 and making our way to Quarter 2, I want to take a moment to discuss a meaningful change to our school's expectations regarding backpacks and lockers.

Starting November 1, 2024, we will no longer allow backpacks to be carried around all day. Students must leave backpacks in their lockers until dismissal time. This decision has been made with student and staff safety in mind. While we understand that backpacks can be convenient for carrying books, computers, and supplies, eliminating them will help create a safer environment for everyone.

Here are a few reasons for this change:

1. **Safety and Security:** Requiring all bags to remain in lockers allows us to monitor things that may be brought to school that should not be. It also helps us respond more quickly in case of an emergency.
2. **Clutter-Free Environment:** Without backpacks, our hallways and classrooms will be less cluttered, making it easier for everyone to navigate the school safely.

3. Focus on Learning: By limiting personal items, we hope to encourage a focus on education and interaction and minimize distractions during school hours.

We understand that this may be an adjustment for students. We are using quarter 1 to get all lockers in working condition. We have had a few additional lockers delivered so all students can be assigned their own locker. We have designated locker times for students to get the things they need for a few classes at a time. Students will only need to bring their computers to the classes using them for instruction. If a computer is not required for class, it should remain in the locker. We encourage students to learn their locker combination, unpack their bookbag, organize their belongings, and practice opening your locker.

Safety is our top priority, and we appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we implement this school-wide expectation. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Ms. Smith & Ms. Thompson

HMS Administration

Tik Tok Game

The new TikTok game has made an appearance at HMS. Essentially, students are collecting tabs, or "dreads," as the students refer to them, off of each other's backpacks (*see the example in the picture below*). The goal is to take the tabs off another person's bag, put them on your bag's zipper, and collect the most tabs.

This game has resulted in some disruption and unsafe behaviors at HMS. This is not a game for school and that if an adult witnesses the game taking place in the building, it would result in an automatic Incident Report (IR) and consequence.

Please help us reinforce this expectation at HMS so that our students can focus on their academics and not the tab count on their backpacks. We appreciate your partnership.



IMPORTANT DATES

October 2: 6th Grade Mash Up

October 3: Rosh Hashanah -Schools & Offices Closed

October 18: Professional Work Day - Schools Closed for Students

October 29: HMS Flu Clinic

October 30: End of 1st Marking Period

October 31: Professional Work and Development Day - Schools Closed for Students

November 5: Election Day - Schools & Offices Closed

November 8: Report Cards Issued

November 13: HMS Hearing/Vision Clinic

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

HMS FLU AND COVID VACCINE CLINIC – REGISTER BY Tuesday, October 15th

Each year, the Howard County Public School System partners with the Maryland Partnership for Prevention to bring flu immunizations into our schools for students. This year, they will also be offering the latest Covid vaccine if it is available at the time of the clinics. The clinic at HMS will be held on Tues, October 29th during school hours. If you would like your child to be vaccinated against the flu and/or Covid at this clinic, please register at this link:

<https://www.marylandvax.org/appointment/en/reg/6012552769>

You are not required to provide your child's insurance information. If you have any concerns about the new Covid vaccine, you are advised to speak with your child's pediatrician.

****Registration for the HMS Flu/Covid Vaccine Clinic closes on October 15th to allow our health room staff time to review and prepare the consents and make sure enough vaccine is ordered. **If you wish to cancel your child's appointment after then, please contact the school nurse, Christina Toler (christina_toler@hcpss.org).** If you have any questions, please call your school's health room at 410-880-5836.

Hammond Middle School After School Intramurals

Now offering...**HMS After-School Sign Language Club!** Our goal is to have fun while learning basic signs, fingerspelling and communicating with the Deaf community.

Dates: October 10th – December 19th, Weekly on Thursdays

Time: 3:20pm to 4:20pm

The following weeks: Oct. 31st, Nov 28th (*Will not be held due to Early Closing/Holiday*)

****Students may bring a snack****

Note: If the Student's Family File isn't updated they will not be allowed to stay after school for intramurals.

[Sign Language Club Permission Slip.pdf](#)



The Bee is back! All students are welcome to participate in the Hammond Middle School Spelling Bee. Interested students and their families are invited to attend HCLS Bumble Bee & Spelling Bee information session. Link to register: <https://howardcounty.librarycalendar.com/event/2025-hcls-spelling-bee-bumble-bee-information-session-online-272318>

Students will be able to register for the Hammond Middle School Spelling Bee on Monday, October 7th. Location and date of the HMS Spelling Bee TBA.

Update Your Family File (73% Completed)

All families must update their emergency contact information annually. While we recognize many of you may not have any changes, you must transition through each screen and click submit at the end for this task to be completed.

The completion of the Family File is essential to your student's participation in field trips, dances, and other fun activities throughout the year. We want HMS to be the first middle school to have 100% of its families complete this important task, so visit [HCPSS Connect](#) today and click submit on the final screen!

Once logged in, you will be asked to update or provide the following information:

- Student Information
- Parent/Guardian Contact
- Emergency Contacts
- Medical Information
- Arrival/Dismissal Procedures and Transportation Options
- Photo Approval
- Data Confidentiality
- Student Creative Work Approval
- PTA/PTSA Directory

If you are having trouble completing the Family File online please submit a hard copy found here: [Family File Worksheet.pdf](#)

[FAMILY FILE USER GUIDE \(ENGLISH\)](#)

[FAMILY FILE USER GUIDE \(SPANISH\)](#)

[FAMILY FILE USER GUIDE \(KOREAN\)](#)

HCPSS Emergency Notification Process & Sources

In emergency situations (*including inclement weather*), information will be shared with the community through a number of platforms.

The HCPSS emergency [notification sources](#) are:

- [HCPSS Status website](#)
- [HCPSS homepage](#)
- [HCPSS community email/text alert](#)
- [X / Twitter](#)
- HCPSS Information Hotline (410-313-6666)

HCPSS does not use schools-out.com, e-schoolnews.com or local news stations for any notifications. *Only the sources listed above* should be used to confirm emergency information.

Office of Human Rights & Equity's Contests & Awards - Annual MLK Contests

This year, we have several exciting opportunities for students to engage with Dr. King's vision of equality, justice, and community service. Additionally, all the awards come with cash prizes.

The contests include:

Oratory Contest: Open to Middle and High School students, this contest challenges participants to express their understanding of Dr. King's message through the art of speech.

Essay Contest: Also, for Middle and High School students, this competition invites students to articulate their thoughts and reflections on Dr. King's impact and teachings in essay form.

Poster Contest: Open to Elementary, Middle, and High School students, participants can visually express their interpretation of Dr. King's dream through creative poster designs.

Additionally, we are hosting a Living the Dream Award Contest for individuals and organizations that have significantly contributed to making Howard County a better place, embodying the principles that Dr. King championed. We believe that these contests not only honor Dr. King's legacy but also inspire our students to think critically about their roles in serving the community.

For more information, including deadlines and submission guidelines, please visit <https://bit.ly/2025MLKContests>

BSAP College and Career Opportunities Night, Nov. 7

HCPSS' [Black Student Achievement Program](#) (BSAP) invites all students in grades 8-12 and their families to learn about HCPSS pathways, network with working professionals and explore post-secondary opportunities. This event will highlight colleges and universities, community organizations as well as local businesses.

Career Academy Info Sessions

Tuesday, Nov. 12 and Wednesday, Dec. 11, 6:15-7:30 p.m., Applications and Research Lab

Current 8-11 grade students and their parents/guardians are invited to attend [in-person information sessions](#) on HCPSS career academies. Participants will learn how Career and Technical Education career academies provide high school students with opportunities to earn college credit, scholarships, and industry-recognized credentials, participate in worksite and mentorship experiences, and become creative problem solvers.

REMINDERS

Complete and/or Renew Your FARMS Application by October 31

HCPSS participates in the Free and Reduced-price Meals (FARMS) program. [Qualification](#)

[Links to an external site.](#) is based on family size and income, and enrollment is confidential.

Participation in FARMS qualifies students for a wide range of opportunities and resources beyond breakfast and lunch, including free college applications, free or reduced JumpStart tuition, discounted internet through the Comcast Internet Essentials program, and more.

Families must submit a new application every school year by Oct.

31. During the first 30 school days, students with FARMS eligibility from the prior school year will continue to receive benefits. Any student whose family has not filled out an application by the 30th school day will have their status changed to full pay until a new application is received.

Parents/guardians are highly encouraged to fill out the applications as soon as possible. It is very important that applications are filled out accurately and completely. Families can:

- [Apply onlineLinks to an external site.](#)
- Apply by mail: Paper applications can be picked up in the Food and Nutrition Service Office (5451 Beaverkill Rd, Columbia, MD 21044). Applications can be returned to your child’s school or mailed to: HCPSS Food & Nutrition Service Office, 10910 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

If you have questions regarding the program, please visit www.hcpss.org/FARMSLinks to an external site. or call Food and Nutrition Services at 410-313-6743.

*****Health Room News*****

Please perform daily health checks and keep sick children at home:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore Throat
- Body Aches
- Abdominal Cramps
- Diarrhea
- Nausea/Vomiting

If your child requires medication (prescription or over the counter) during the 2024-2025 school year, your child's health care provider must complete a [medication form](#) and/or an [Epi-Pen Care](#) form. All prescribed medications must be in properly labeled containers that include the following information:

- Student name
- Medication name
- Dose to be given
- Time & Frequency of medication
- Prescriber's name & signature
- Date of medication order

Pharmacy labels will usually contain this information. Over-the-counter medications should be in new, unopened containers labeled with the student's name.

Feel free to contact our health team with any questions: christina_toler@hcpss.org karisma_rencher@hcpss.org

Breakfast & Lunch Meal Price Information & Payment

To access your child's meal account, view menus for breakfast and lunch, and more please click [here](#) for more information on HCPSS Food Services. Breakfast for students is \$2.00, and lunch is \$3.30.

Reporting your child's absence

Need to report an absence? Please email your absence notes/questions to: HMSabsence@hcpss.org or send in a signed parent/guardian note. 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. Requests for changes to attendance submitted after the 5 day deadline may not be honored. Please Note: Absences are unexcused until an email or note is received.

HMS AFTERSCHOOL INTRAMURALS

****Note: If the Student's Family File isn't updated they will not be allowed to stay after school for intramurals.****

Chess Club: [Chess Club Permission Slip.pdf](#)

Drama Club: [After-School Drama Permission Slip.pdf](#)

Dungeons and Dragons Club: [Dungeons and Dragons Club Permission Slip.pdf](#)

School Sign Language Club: [Sign Language Club Permission Slip.pdf](#)

STAY CONNECTED

Families may find it useful to bookmark the following web-pages where information will be continually updated and posted:

- [HMS Website](#)
- [HMS Twitter](#)
- [HMS Instagram](#)
- [HCPSS Website](#)
- [HCPSS News site](#)
- [HCPSS Help site](#)

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

HCPSS Marching Band Showcase, Oct. 16 & 21

HCPSS will host its annual [Marching Band Showcase](#) Oct. 16 at Reservoir High School and Oct. 21 at Oakland Mills High School. Different marching bands will perform at each event. The Showcase is free and open to the public. A \$5 donation per person is suggested.

FREE Cold Weather Gear!

Coats - Hats - Gloves - Scarves
All Sizes & Ages, Infant to Adult

Saturday, October 19th 10am-12pm

North Laurel Community Center
9411 Whiskey Bottom Road, Laurel, MD 20723

[FREE Cold Weather Gear.pdf](#)

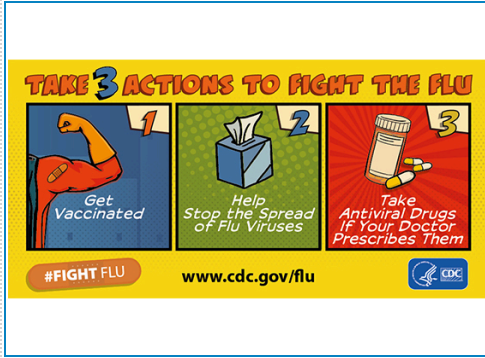
[FREE Cold Weather Gear Spanish.pdf](#)

Seasonal Flu Clinics

The best way to protect yourself and your family is to get your seasonal flu vaccine.

Seasonal Flu Clinics are open to all - with or without insurance. Flu shots only.

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/health/seasonal-flu>



[Seasonal Flu | Howard County](#)

www.howardcountymd.gov

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

Hammond Middle School | 8100 Aladdin Drive, Laurel, MD 20723 | (410) 880-5830 | hms.hcpss.org

