

HMS Bulletin

September 1, 2023



From the Principal's Desk

We have had a wonderful first week at HMS!! Students have opened lockers, navigated the hallways, made it to class on time, and talked to new friends all while learning a little science, math, English, social studies, PE, health, FACS, music, technology, art, language, and so much more. Every student also attended a presentation on the Student Code of Conduct and Howard County Policies. I am attaching a link to the presentation, the full Student Code of Conduct, and a signature page. Please review the presentation with your student(s), sign the page, and have students return it to their advisory teacher by Wednesday, September 6, 2023. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

[Student Policies SY 23-24 Family Copy](#)

[Policy Signature Page](#)

A few reminders regarding Arrival and Dismissal

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to improve our drop-off and pick up procedures. Please partner with us and adhere to the following reminders:

Safety and courtesy will be maximized if all drivers follow these procedures!

- Utilize the Middle School lane (left side) when picking up and dropping off unless you have both a middle school and elementary student.
- Allow the school bus to turn into the lower lot if you are waiting in line. Please do not block the bus from entering into the lower lot.
- Please stay in your vehicle at all times. Exiting the car can create unsafe conditions for everyone.
- Students should have their books and instruments with them inside the car. This allows them to exit the car quickly.
- Students should exit and allow staff to direct them to the sidewalk. No student should run between cars.

Updated Dismissal Procedures

At 3:25 p.m., students who walk, ride their bikes, or get picked up by car will be dismissed first. Students waiting for their parents will line up alongside the left lane in the car loop. Students who ride a bus will remain in their period 7 class. As each bus arrives, we will call for students that ride that bus via the PA system and have them exit to their assigned bus.

Partner with us by:

- Having students review their bus route number. They do not need the actual bus number. We are calling the buses by the route number that is identified in the bus locator.
- Remind students that it is important to listen to the announcements and come out of the building when the bus is called. This will help students to not miss their bus.
- When the bus is called, go directly to the bus and not hang out with friends. This will help students to not miss their bus.

Please contact us at school if you have any questions or concerns regarding the arrival or dismissal process.

Take care,

Ms. Lisa J. Smith, Principal

Ms. Mel Thompson, Assistant Principal

IMPORTANT DATES

September 4: Labor Day schools closed

September 7: Back to School Night (6:00pm)

September 15: Schools/ Offices Closed (Rosh Hashanah)

September 25: Schools/Offices Closed

September 26: Parent Outreach Event (*topic TBD*)

September 28: Student pictures (information coming soon)

October 6: 6th grade field trip to Terrapin Adventures

October 9: Professional Learning Day - School Closed for Students

October 20: Professional Work Day - School Closed for Students

October 31: End of 1st marking period - Schools close 3 hours early

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

A special shout out to the HMS PTA, Maynard Spedden and Farmers Insurance Team!

On behalf of HMS Staff, we want to say thank you to the HMS PTA for the awesome breakfast you provided for us on August 22nd. And, thank you to Maynard Spedden and Farmers Insurance Team for the generous lunch you provided us on August 25th. All of the information you provided was helpful and appreciated.

We are looking forward to a great year and we appreciate each of you!



Family File

Parent/Guardians can now access and complete their Family File for the 2023-24 school year. The Family File must be completed every year to ensure HCPSS has the most current information for each child. Please complete this task as soon as possible.

HCPSS uses Family File for parents/guardians to complete emergency information. Parents/guardians must verify and/or update information 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 verify or update the following information: Student Information, Parent/Guardian Contact, Emergency Contact, Medical Information, Arrival/Dismissal Procedures, Photo Approval, Data Confidentiality, and PTA/PTSA Directory information.

Updating your information, including EMAIL addresses and contact information, and pushing the SUBMIT button will ensure that you are receiving the most recent news from HMS, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, it will ensure that we can reach you in the event of an urgent situation with your child. Please Go to [HCPSS Connect](#) to check off this back-to-school necessity.

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.

Resources on how to access Family File may be found online here: [Resources](#). Parents who have forgotten their login credentials may click the "Forgot Password" link on the sign in page. If you need additional assistance, please fill out this [Connect Help Form](#).

Be Sure You're Receiving Emails and Texts

HCPSS uses both text messages and email to communicate important and time-sensitive information, including bus delays and emergency closings. Parents/guardians are automatically enrolled for email notification; however all users [must opt in one time to receive texts](#) by texting "yes" to 67587 from the mobile number listed in their Family File. If you are not receiving HCPSS or school emails/texts, please contact your school's front office.

2023-2024 School Meals

HCPSS no longer will use Nutrislice for school menus or MySchoolBucks for meal payments. **LINQ Connect** is a secure, online portal that allows families to view breakfast and lunch menus, make online meal payments, monitor their child's account, schedule automatic recurring payments, set up low balance alerts, submit a Free and Reduced Meals program application, and more. [Details and information](#).

Many HCPSS families are eligible to participate in the Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARMs) program, which provides children with a wide range of benefits. Families are urged to check their eligibility and complete a FARMs application as soon as possible. Families must submit a new application every school year. [Details on the Free and Reduced Meals program](#), including a link to apply, are available online.

[Ho Co Free and Reduced Meals Application.pdf](#)

Pronouns available in Synergy

Pronouns for students are now available in Synergy. Students can make the choice of what to show, if at all, by going into Canvas to make their selection. Instructions can be found [here](#).

Welcome from the Music Department!

Dear Hammond Middle School Families,

Welcome back to school! The HMS music department has undergone significant changes in 2023. Together, our new music team of Mr. McIntyre, Mrs. Pretzello, and Mr. Ritzes look forward to guiding your students' journey of musicianship this year.

This year, we are offering three band classes, three orchestra classes, and two choir classes. These are academic courses that meet during the school day, and perform at concerts and special events several times a year.

We hope that all interested students will join a music ensemble - even if they have never played an instrument or sung in chorus before! Talk to your child's guidance counselor if your child is not in a music ensemble and would like to join. [Check out our new Music Department Website](#) to learn more.

The music department team can't wait to partner with families to provide engaging, meaningful experiences and functional, appropriate equipment for our students. We have lots of ideas, and we want to hear your ideas for the music department! We will be holding a Music Family Info Night immediately following BTSN presentations, at 7pm on Thursday, September 7.

Are you already a Hammond Middle Music Family who would like to be more involved in growing our program? Fill out our [Volunteer Interest Survey!](#)

Please reach out if you have any questions, or even just to say hi! We look forward to getting to know all Hammond students and families!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Natalie Pretzello - Director of Bands - natalie_pretzello@hcpss.org

Mr. Ryan James Ritzes - Director of Choirs - General Music Teacher
- ryan_ritzes@hcpss.org

Mr. William McIntyre - Director of Orchestras - william_mcintyre@hcpss.org

REMINDERS

Cell Phones & Electronic Devices

Cell phone use is a popular topic among middle school students. Policy 8080 states:

Middle Schools – Students:

Students will not use personal technology devices during non-instructional time, including but not limited to transition between classes, lunch, recess, or in bathrooms.

All cell phones must be silenced and put away upon entering the building. Students may carry their phones, but they must be silent and they may not be used during the day. We recommend that students place cell phones in their lockers in order to minimize the temptation to have them out during the school day. We also have a student phone in the front office that students

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

Black Student Achievement Program (BSAP) Saturday Math Academy Fall 2023 Program

Registration for HCPSS' BSAP Saturday Math Academy will offer an [in-person enrichment program](#) for HCPSS students in all levels of math for grades 3 through 12 based on course availability. Registration will take place online Saturday, September 16, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. until capacity is reached. Class space is limited.

HCPSS, Bright Minds Foundation and Prepare for Success Join WBAL's Stuff the Bus Event

HCPSS, Bright Minds Foundation and Prepare for Success this summer joined WBAL for its [annual Stuff the Bus event](#) to collect school supply donations for Howard County students.

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

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