

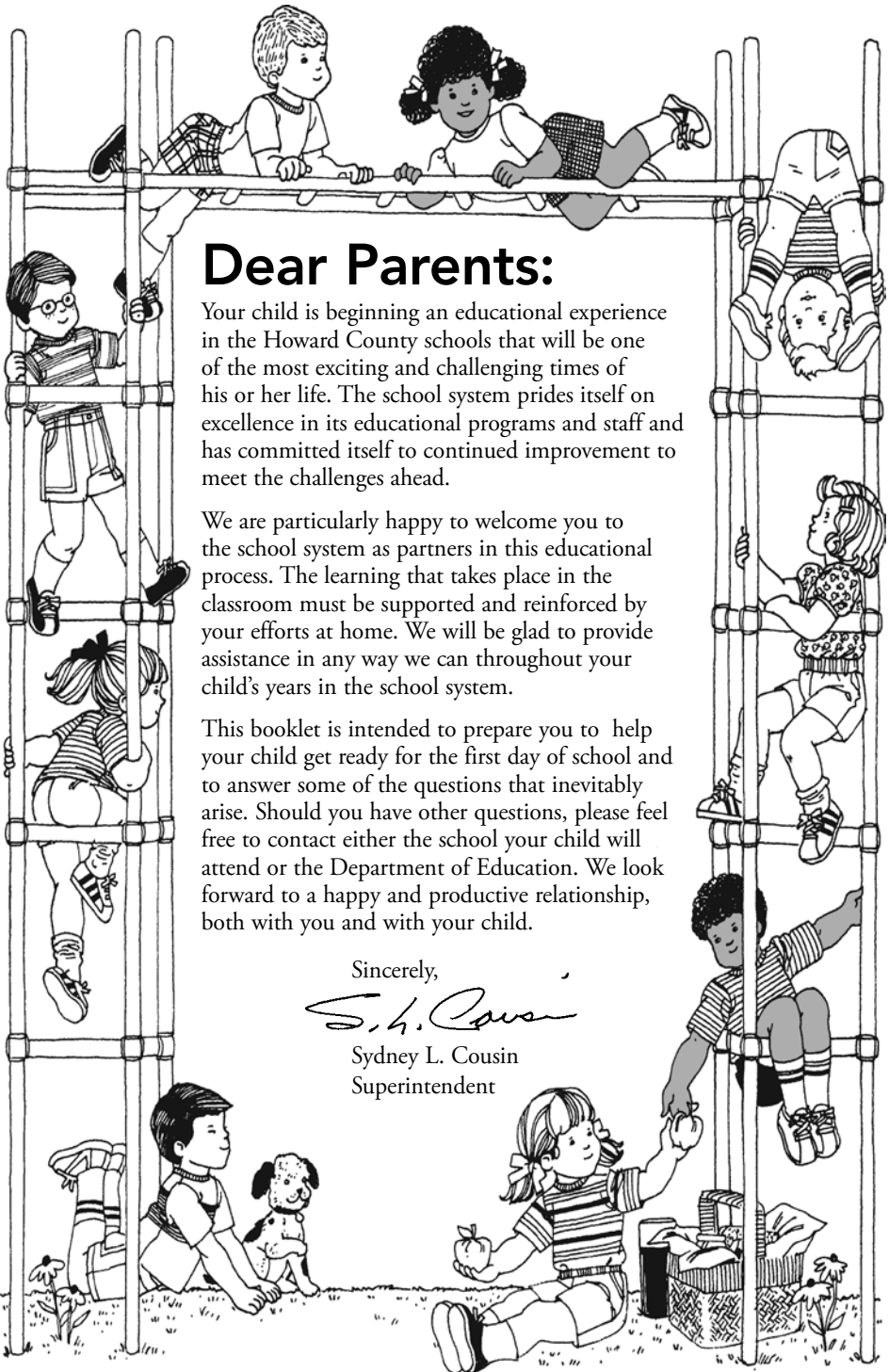
# Off to Kindergarten



**2011-2012 Guide for Parents**

  
**HOWARD COUNTY**  
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

**Path to School Success**



## Dear Parents:

Your child is beginning an educational experience in the Howard County schools that will be one of the most exciting and challenging times of his or her life. The school system prides itself on excellence in its educational programs and staff and has committed itself to continued improvement to meet the challenges ahead.

We are particularly happy to welcome you to the school system as partners in this educational process. The learning that takes place in the classroom must be supported and reinforced by your efforts at home. We will be glad to provide assistance in any way we can throughout your child's years in the school system.

This booklet is intended to prepare you to help your child get ready for the first day of school and to answer some of the questions that inevitably arise. Should you have other questions, please feel free to contact either the school your child will attend or the Department of Education. We look forward to a happy and productive relationship, both with you and with your child.

Sincerely,

Sydney L. Cousin  
Superintendent

# Requirements for Registration

Every child who is five years old by September 1 must be enrolled in a public school kindergarten or alternate program approved by the Maryland State Department of Education. Proof of age is required (birth certificate, hospital or physician certificate, church/baptismal certificate, or passport).

## **Other requirements include:**

- Student registration by custodial parent as defined in Howard County Public School System Policy 9000.
- Parent picture ID and current deed or lease with required signature and address on it.
- One of the following with name and address on it: current cable bill, current non-cellular telephone bill, current gas and electric bill.

**Immunization Form** - Immunizations safeguard the health of your child and the other children attending school. Maryland State immunization regulations require all students to have completed their immunizations in order to attend school. Proof of the completed immunization series must be provided. Required shots include 4 DTP, 3 polio, 2 measles, 1 mumps, 1 rubella, 3 hepatitis B, and 1 varicella (chicken pox). The Maryland Immunization Certificate should be completed with the dates of all vaccines by the health care provider or the health department; a parent's signature is not permitted. Free immunization is available from the Howard County Health Department. Maryland State law, enacted in 2000, targets areas considered at risk for childhood lead poisoning by zip codes. All children in kindergarten who live or have ever lived in the targeted zip codes must show evidence of blood lead testing.

## **The only exceptions are:**

- A medical contraindication (exemptions for specific immunizations) signed by a physician.
- A lost or destroyed record statement signed by a parent. Proof of measles and rubella immunization by a blood test must be presented. Revaccination may be required. For assistance contact the Howard County Health Department.
- A religious exemption statement signed by a parent.
- A homeless student may be temporarily admitted by the school principal.

The School Health Assistant or Nurse assigned to your school can answer questions regarding immunization requirements.

**Physical Examination Form** - State law requires a physical examination for all students who are new to the public school system. The form should be completed by parents and the physician.

**Dental Form** - This form should be completed by the student's dentist.

**Registration Form** - The official registration form for the Howard County Public School System should be completed.

Contact the Pupil Personnel Worker at your child's school if you are in a "special" living arrangement (living with another family, homeless, etc.).

# How You Can Help Your Child

- Encourage a positive attitude toward school, the teacher, and learning.
- Encourage creative abilities by letting your child use scissors, play dough, crayons, blocks, and glue.
- Give many opportunities to follow directions.
- Take trips to zoos, parks, museums, airports, libraries, farms, and other places of interest, and talk about these experiences.
- Provide opportunities to play with other children and to spend some time away from you to develop independence.
- Encourage independence in dressing (tying shoelaces, zipping and buttoning clothes), personal habits, and care of possessions.
- Label all belongings - sweaters, coats, caps, mittens, boots, school boxes, backpacks, etc. with child's first and last name.
- Play board games or use a computer with your child to encourage the use of thinking skills and cooperation.
- Encourage your child to practice printing his or her name using upper and lower case letters appropriately.
- Visit the library regularly and have your child use his or her own library card.
- Teach your child his or her home address and telephone number.
- Play rhyming games and sing songs with your child.
- Read to your child daily (stories, magazines, poems, signs, etc.).
- Encourage imaginative play.
- Complete activities found in the *Countdown to Kindergarten* booklet that you should receive when you register.





# The Kindergarten Program

All Howard County elementary schools provide a full-day kindergarten program. The kindergarten curriculum contains the Maryland State Department of Education's outcomes and core objectives for art, health, language arts, mathematics, music, physical education, science, social studies, and technology. The curriculum integrates all areas of learning as well as emphasizing the thinking skills to enhance learning. After assessing previous knowledge and skills, teachers prepare their units and lessons to meet the children's needs. For more information about the curriculum, please visit [www.hcpss.org/academics](http://www.hcpss.org/academics)

## All children enter kindergarten with:

- A system of attitudes, knowledge and skills.
- Family cultures.
- Varied interests and experiences.
- Personal strengths.
- A desire to understand their world.
- A need to communicate and interact with others.

The kindergarten classroom provides an atmosphere that appreciates diversity and accepts individual contributions. All children can learn and will learn when they see themselves in the curriculum. The kindergarten program welcomes each child and the child's family with enthusiasm and respect. Learning requires commitment and creates change. To design activities that encourage each child to experience success, teachers work with students in a variety of ways. Through flexible grouping and differentiated instruction, teachers address the strengths and needs of each child.

Kindergarten children are eager learners who learn best through experience. A developmentally appropriate kindergarten program develops curiosity, competence, independence, and excitement toward future education. The kindergarten year represents the beginning of formal public education. As the children learn, they see themselves as productive contributors to their world.

# The Health of Your Child

Your young child setting off for school should:

- Get enough rest every night (10-12 hours of sleep).
- Eat a balanced diet, taking time for a complete breakfast – the most important meal of the day.
- Have ample time to dress, eat, and get to school in a relaxed and happy frame of mind.
- Avoid overly stimulating or violent movies, music, video games and television programs, especially prior to bedtime.
- Establish regular toilet habits and know how to use the bathroom properly and independently.
- Know that only food goes into the mouth.
- Learn to wash hands frequently.
- Keep hands away from eyes, ears, nose, and mouth.
- Play outdoors every day that the weather permits.
- Learn to cover mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, or cough or sneeze into an upper sleeve, not his/her hands.
- Carry and use clean tissues when coughing and sneezing and use and dispose of tissues correctly.
- Wear clothes suitable to the weather.
- Have a physical examination including eyes and ears at regular intervals. (The Howard County Health Department can help families to find care.)
- Have regular dental checkups. (If you need a dentist or financial assistance, the school health assistant or the Howard County Health Department may be able to help you.)
- Know the safety cautions for strangers, strange places, strange situations, and strange animals.

## Medications

All medications should be taken by students at home whenever possible.

If it is necessary for medications to be taken by your child in school, a **medication order form completed and signed by the physician and written parent or guardian permission are required.** The school health assistant or nurse can provide you with the proper form.

Medications must be in a clearly labeled container. The original prescription container should accompany all prescription medication to be administered at school. Label information must include the student's name, date of order, medication name, dose, expiration date, directions for administration (time, frequency, route, etc.), and doctor's name. Baggies and unlabeled containers cannot be accepted.

# When to Keep Your Child Home

- chills
- fever\*
- runny nose
- sore throat
- earache
- rash
- severe coughing
- vomiting

\* Children must be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school.

The following health chart gives information about some childhood diseases that may occur during the school year.

Disease	Incubation	Action
<b>Chickenpox</b> Pimples, blisters, and/or crusts in different stages	2-3 weeks	Excluded from school until lesions are scabbed over
<b>Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)</b> Contagious condition, redness and watering of eyes; pus may be present	Acute	Student is excluded until the eye is clear or until released by a physician to return to school
<b>Fifth Disease</b> Bright red cheeks, rash on body, mild cold symptoms	4-20 days	Permitted to return to school after diagnosis by a physician
<b>Head Lice</b> Tiny insects in hair, egg cases (nits) on hair shaft	7-10 days	Permitted to attend school after proper treatment for lice
<b>Measles (Rubeola)</b> Cough, runny eyes and nose, high fever, and extensive rash occurring on the face and body	10-14 days	Permitted to return to school 5 days after disappearance of rash
<b>Ringworm of Scalp</b> Areas of scaly patches of baldness; may begin as small pimples	10-14 days	Excluded from school until under treatment by a physician
<b>Staphylococcal Infection</b> (Staph) including Methicillin resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) skin and soft tissue infections such as impetigo, boils, skin abscesses, occasional invasive disease	Variable and indefinite	May attend school with lesions covered
<b>Streptococcal Infection</b> (Scarlet Fever or Scarletina, Strep Throat) Sore throat, fever, rash on body or extremities	1-3 days	Excluded until released by physician to return to school

These diseases should be reported to the school health assistant/nurse.

# School Personnel

Your relationship with the school will be more effective if you become acquainted with the people who are responsible for your child's welfare.

**Teachers** - Teachers are interested in understanding and helping your child. If you work together, you can help your child embark upon a successful educational experience.

**Principal** - The principal is in charge of your child's school and is responsible for the school's program. The principal and assistant principal will get to know your child and are always ready and willing to help you.

**The Superintendent and Central Office Staff** - They are concerned with students at all the schools and work closely with the school to provide well-trained teachers, suitable materials, and a program of instruction that meets the needs, interests, and abilities of children of different age levels.

**Pupil Personnel Worker** - If your child is frequently absent or late to school or experiences serious problems adjusting to school, the pupil personnel worker will work with you and your child to help solve the problem. These workers also help families find community resources to lend assistance when it is needed.

**School Health Services** - A health assistant is assigned to your school to provide emergency and health care to your child. A cluster nurse is assigned to a cluster of two schools. The nurse and the health assistant work as a team. This registered nurse is available to you and your child to assess health care needs and problems and develop health care plans for the management of the health concern at school.

**School Secretary** - The school secretary is eager to help you when you call or visit the school. He/she will probably be the first to greet you and will help you find the answers to your questions.

**School Psychologist** - A school psychologist is available at each school to consult with parents and teachers regarding child development, behavioral interactions, and individualized instructional strategies. In collaboration with others, school psychologists identify learning strengths and needs of individual children and design specific plans to promote school success. School psychologists also participate on a variety of school-based teams to support the academic and behavioral progress of all students.

**School Counselor** - An elementary school counselor is assigned to your school to serve all students. Working with individual students, small groups of students, whole classes, staff, and parents, counselors help to improve student academic performance and social/emotional development.

**Speech-Language Pathologist** - The speech-language pathologist helps some children develop skills to be successful listeners and speakers.

**ESOL Teacher** - The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher is available to consult with parents and teachers about language development and educational needs of children whose primary language is not English.

**Special Education Teacher** - The special education teacher helps children with disabilities be successful learners using specialized teaching strategies.

# General Information

## Emergency School Closings

On school days when schools are delayed or closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies, information is disseminated to parents over local radio and television stations, and the school system's website, [www.hcpss.org](http://www.hcpss.org). You may also sign up to receive email notifications and text messages of school delays/closings at [www.hcpssnews.com](http://www.hcpssnews.com).

## School Schedules and Parent Conferences

Parent conferences and professional work days for staff are scheduled during the year. During those times, schools may be closed to students for half days or full days. Your school will provide you with detailed conference and schedule information. General school information is also included in newsletters that are sent home regularly. Holidays and days off are noted in the school calendar, which you should receive at the beginning of the school year. The calendar is also available at [www.hcpss.org](http://www.hcpss.org).

## Bus Transportation

Bus transportation is provided for kindergarteners who live more than one mile from their assigned school. Bus schedules are posted the week before school begins at schools, in local newspapers, and at [www.hcpss.org](http://www.hcpss.org). The Pupil Transportation Office encourages parents of kindergarten students to review the information contained in the brochure, *Bus Safety and Your Child*, which should be received during kindergarten registration. For more information, call Pupil Transportation at 410-313-6732.

## School Insurance

Accident insurance is available each year. This insures your child if injured on the way to and from school and while attending school. Information will be sent to you in September.

## Tardiness

A student is tardy if he or she is not in the school/classroom when the day begins.

## Notes for Absence

Maryland Public School Law requires that all students between ages 5 and 16 attend school regularly. A note from home to the school stating the reason for the child's absence is required to determine whether the absence is "excused" or "unexcused." Any absence without a note of explanation or a telephone communication is considered "unexcused." In case of a contagious disease, a doctor's certificate may be requested.

We are looking forward to having your child in kindergarten and hope that he or she will have a healthful, happy, and profitable school year. You are welcome to visit the school, consult with the staff, and participate in a variety of activities.

# Elementary Schools

Atholton	6700 Seneca Dr., Columbia 21046	410-313-6853
Bellows Spring	8125 Old Stockbridge Dr., Ellicott City 21043	410-313-5057
Bollman Bridge	8200 Savage-Guilford Rd., Jessup 20794	410-880-5920
Bryant Woods	5450 Blue Heron Ln., Columbia 21044	410-313-6859
Bushy Park	14601 Carrs Mill Rd., Glenwood 21738	410-313-5500
Centennial Lane	3825 Centennial Ln., Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2800
Clarksville	12041 Rt. 108, Clarksville 21029	410-313-7050
Clemens Crossing	10320 Quarterstaff Rd., Columbia 21044	410-313-6866
Cradlerock	6700 Cradlerock Way, Columbia 21045	410-313-7601
Dayton Oaks	4691 Ten Oaks Rd., Dayton 21036	410-313-1571
Deep Run	6925 Old Waterloo Rd., Elkridge 21075	410-313-5000
Elkridge	7075 Montgomery Rd., Elkridge 21075	410-313-5006
Forest Ridge	9550 Gorman Rd., Laurel 20723	410-880-5950
Fulton	11600 Scaggsville Rd., Fulton 20759	410-880-5957
Gorman Crossing	9999 Winter Sun Rd., Laurel 20723	410-880-5900
Guilford	7335 Oakland Mills Rd., Columbia 21046	410-880-5930
Hammond	8110 Aladdin Dr., Laurel 20723	410-880-5890
Hollifield Station	8701 Stonehouse Dr., Ellicott City 21043	410-313-2550
Ilchester	4981 Ilchester Rd., Ellicott City 21043	410-313-2524
Jeffers Hill	6000 Tamar Dr., Columbia 21045	410-313-6872
Laurel Woods	9250 N. Laurel Rd., Laurel 20723	410-880-5960
Lisbon	15901 Frederick Rd., Woodbine 21797	410-313-5506
Longfellow	5470 Hesperus Dr., Columbia 21044	410-313-6879
Manor Woods	11575 Frederick Rd., Ellicott City 21042	410-313-7165
Northfield	9125 Northfield Rd., Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2806
Phelps Luck	5370 Oldstone Ct., Columbia 21045	410-313-6886
Pointers Run	6600 Trotter Rd., Clarksville 21029	410-313-7142
Rockburn	6145 Montgomery Rd., Elkridge 21075	410-313-5030
Running Brook	5215 W. Running Brook Rd., Columbia 21044	410-313-6893
St. John's Lane	2960 St. John's Ln., Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2813
Stevens Forest	6045 Stevens Forest Rd., Columbia 21045	410-313-6900
Swansfield	5610 Cedar Ln., Columbia 21044	410-313-6907
Talbott Springs	9550 Basket Ring Rd., Columbia 21045	410-313-6915
Thunder Hill	9357 Mellenbrook Rd., Columbia 21045	410-313-6922
Triadelphia Ridge	13400 Triadelphia Rd., Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2560
Veterans	4355 Montgomery Rd., Ellicott City 21043	410-313-1700
Waterloo	5940 Waterloo Rd., Columbia 21045	410-313-5014
Waverly	10220 Wetherburn Rd., Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2819
West Friendship	12500 Frederick Rd., West Friendship 21794	410-313-5512
Worthington	4570 Round Hill Rd., Ellicott City 21043	410-313-2825

The Howard County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, physical or mental disability, age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs. For more information, contact the Equity Assurance Office of the Howard County Public School System at 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, MD 21042 or call 410-313-6654.

## HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

10910 Route 108 • Ellicott City, MD 21042 • 410.313.6600 • [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org)  
Office of School Administration 410-313-6609 or 410-313-6611