

3. Teach children to cover coughs.

Families are encouraged to teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or to cough into their upper sleeve or the inside of their elbow, not into their hands.

4. Teach the “three foot” rule.

Children should be taught to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.

5. Set a good example.

Children are more likely to practice good hygiene habits if they see their parents and other members of the family doing the same. Be sure to set a good example by washing your hands and covering your coughs.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/germstopper

Howard County Health Department
www.hchealth.org

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
www.dhmf.state.md.us

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.hcpss.org

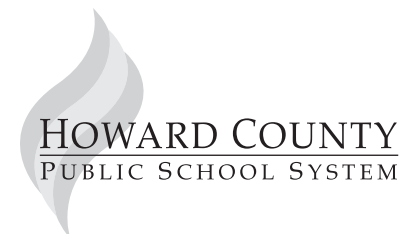
PIO.6.09

Healthy Kids Healthy Schools



The Howard County Public School System is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for our students and staff. Among the many initiatives directed at this goal is the promotion of good hygiene habits to prevent the spread of colds and other communicable diseases.

SAFE Schools



Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools

In support of the Howard County Public School System's goal to provide students and staff with a safe and nurturing school environment, teachers routinely emphasize good hygiene habits with students. The emphasis is on staying healthy and avoiding common colds and other more serious communicable diseases.

One of the most common ways people catch colds and other communicable diseases is by rubbing their nose or their eyes after their hands have been contaminated with a virus. Frequent hand washing is the most important thing people can do to keep from getting sick. Washing destroys germs that may have been picked up from other people, or from contaminated surfaces.

What Schools Are Doing

1. Encouraging students to make hand washing a priority:

- Every time they cough, sneeze or use tissues.
- Before and after eating/drinking.
- Before and after using the bathroom.
- After touching surfaces (desks, doorknobs, money, etc.) or coming in contact with soiled surfaces.

2. Encouraging proper hand washing.

- First wet hands and apply liquid or bar soap.
- Next rub hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue scrubbing for 15-20 seconds. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs.
- Rinse well and dry hands.

3. Encouraging students to cough into a tissue.

It is suggested that tissues be available in all classrooms. Students are reminded to throw away tissues after use and follow with hand washing when possible. If they do not have a tissue, students are instructed to cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve/elbow, not their hands.

4. Having students supplement hand washing by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

The use of hand gel sanitizer does not eliminate the need for thorough hand washing. Students are encouraged to use hand gel sanitizer when soap and water are not available or in addition to hand washing.

5. Having frequently used surfaces cleaned regularly.

Custodial staff of the school system receive annual training that covers all aspects of their jobs including what steps they can take to ensure that frequently used surfaces – such as doorknobs, desk tops, water fountain spouts and faucets – are properly cleaned on a consistent basis.

6. Encouraging individuals who are sick to stay home.

Students or employees with fevers or who think that they may have the flu should remain at home until they are no longer experiencing symptoms and are free of fever for 24 hours.

What Families Can Do

1. Keep sick children home.

After having the flu or flu symptoms, students should not return to school until they no longer have a fever, any vomiting or diarrhea has resolved, and they are generally feeling better and ready to participate in school activities. Families are also encouraged to keep ill students from sports activities, choir, after-school programs or other activities that may involve close contact.

2. Teach children to wash their hands.

Families are encouraged to reinforce the good hygiene habits being taught in school. Teach children to wash their hands with soap and water for 15-20 seconds.
