



Off to Kindergarten

A guide for parents

2021–2022





Kindergarten Registration Requirements

Children must be 5 years old by September 1 in order to enroll in kindergarten. Every child who is 5 years old by September 1 must be enrolled in a kindergarten or alternate program approved by the Maryland State Department of Education or have an approved waiver. Children who turn 5 between September 2 and October 13 may be eligible for early admission. Please visit www.hcpss.org/enroll/early-admission/ for more information.

Document Checklist for Registration

Documents required at time of registration:

- Parent picture ID: driver's license, passport, MVA identification or other legal form of photographic identification.
- Signed original, current lease or deed with your address, valid dates, signatures.
- Current utility bill with name and address (non-cellular telephone, gas and electric, water, cable bill) issued within the previous 45 days of registration.
- Student's evidence of birth (birth certificate, passport/visa, physician's certificate, baptismal or church certification, hospital certificate, parent/s affidavit or birth registration.)
- Proof of parental relationship, custody, or guardianship. If applicable, bring legal proof of custody (court order).
- Student's current proof of immunizations signed by physician.
- Student's most recent grade report, transcript, report card from last school attended at time of withdrawal, if applicable.
- Documentation of Special Education (IEP), 504, Psychological Report, or related services.
- Any additional paperwork that may be necessary due to special living arrangements or circumstances.



Families who require interpreter services can contact the following call center lines for assistance:

Centro de Llamadas – 410-313-1591

전화 문의 센터 – 410-313-1592

电话服务中心 – 410-313-5920

Biakchawnkhawhnak Hmun – 410-313-5968

All other registration questions can be answered by calling the International Student Registration Center at 410-313-1525 or 410-313-7102.

Refer to www.hcpss.org/enroll/ for more information.



Letter to Parents

Dear Kindergarten Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Howard County Public School System. Your child is about to take the first steps on a journey that leads to high school graduation and continues to a bright future. We are excited to partner with you in providing your child with an excellent education in a nurturing and supportive learning environment. On behalf of your child's new teachers, school staff, and the entire school system, we welcome you and look forward to getting to know you and your child.

Kindergarten is an exciting year of exploration and discovery. Your child will learn to read, solve problems, and investigate the world of science and social studies. Teachers and staff members welcome your questions about classroom expectations and school procedures, as well as your child's readiness in reading, mathematics, science and technology, health and physical education, and the arts. HCPSS believes the best learning outcomes occur when teachers and parents work as a team to provide challenging and engaging learning experiences. This partnership helps children enjoy the process of learning as they gain new skills and confidence, and establishes a strong foundation for success throughout the school years and beyond.

This booklet provides resources and information to help you and your child prepare for kindergarten. Please feel free to contact your child's school or the Howard County Department of Education with any questions or concerns. We look forward to joining you and your child on a wonderful adventure of learning, discovery and growth.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent





What is Kindergarten?

Kindergarten is a place for your child to learn and grow in a safe and nurturing environment. Students develop a curiosity for learning in a setting that promotes positive social and emotional development. Your child will learn to share ideas and communicate effectively while making friends and interacting with others through various instructional experiences. Students will develop a strong foundation for self-regulation as they engage in a rigorous academic curriculum. Nurturing the whole child will lay the groundwork for future success in school and in life.

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 classroom provides an atmosphere that appreciates diversity and accepts individual contributions. All children learn best when they see themselves in the curriculum. Teachers work with students in a variety of ways and design activities that encourage each child to experience success. Through flexible grouping and differentiated instruction, teachers address the strengths and needs of each child.



The Kindergarten Program

All Howard County elementary schools provide a full-day kindergarten program. Students are actively engaged in hands-on learning experiences that incorporate the following curriculum areas:

- Art
- English/language arts
- Health
- Mathematics
- Media
- Music
- Physical education
- Science
- Social studies
- Technology

Teachers use a variety of strategies as part of large and small group instruction to implement the Maryland College and Career-Ready Kindergarten Standards. The curriculum integrates all areas of learning while emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Teachers work collaboratively to develop rigorous and engaging lessons that challenge and inspire young learners. For more information about the curriculum, please visit www.hcpss.org/academics/what-your-child-will-learn-guides/.



What Does *Ready For Kindergarten* Mean?

Kindergarten readiness encompasses the knowledge, skills and behaviors that enable children to participate and succeed when they begin school, which then sets the stage for future learning and overall success. There are many different skills and behaviors that your child learns during the preschool years that help him/her to be ready for success in kindergarten. These skills and behaviors are categorized into learning domains, all of which are taught and assessed in school. This is just a sampling of those skills:

- **Language and Literacy**

Talking and listening to adults and other children. Speaking clearly. Retelling or answering questions about stories. Identifying some letters, letter sounds and rhyming words. Recognizing/writing name.

- **Mathematics**

Counting. Comparing amounts of objects. Understanding numbers and their value. Sorting things by color, shape or size. Solving problems. Recognizing shapes and their properties.

- **Physical Well-Being and Motor Development**

Running, jumping, climbing and playing ball. Buttoning a shirt or zipping a jacket. Using scissors. Drawing. Writing numbers and letters. Practicing safe and healthy behaviors.

- **Scientific Thinking**

Using senses to observe things. Making predictions. Asking questions. Recognizing cause and effect.

- **Social Foundations**

Getting along with others. Following rules, routines and multi-step directions. Recognizing and dealing with emotions. Taking risks. Being persistent. Staying on task.

- **Social Studies**

Learning about self and family. Cooperating with others. Understanding roles and responsibilities. Decision making. Exploring the community.

- **The Arts**

Playing, dancing and moving creatively. Experimenting with different tools, props and materials.

Prior to kindergarten there are many things parents can do to support their child's transition to school. From making sure appropriate documentation is gathered, to playing and reading with and listening to their child, the year before kindergarten is a great opportunity to develop school readiness!

Check out readiness resources at www.hcpss.org/enroll/kindergarten/ and review *The Year before Kindergarten* timeline at the bottom of the page. In addition, there will be activities offered at your assigned school to support the transition to kindergarten.



How to Help Your Child

Children should be engaged in activities that prepare them for the kindergarten experience. You should work with your child at a pace that is comfortable for them. All activities should be fun yet purposeful. Here are a few things you can do with your child to support learning at home:

- Encourage a positive attitude toward school and learning.
- Provide opportunities for use of multisensory materials such as wet glue, paint, play dough, shaving cream and sand.
- Encourage pretend/dramatic play, which is a wonderful way for children to use their imagination and apply skills they are learning.
- Provide materials for drawing pictures and coloring. Encourage your child to explain drawings and tell stories with pictures.
- Provide opportunities for cutting and pasting different materials such as paper, yarn and/or ribbon.
- Let your child practice following multi-step directions.
- Engage in purposeful conversation when taking trips to a variety of places. Even simple errands or quick stops can spark conversations that help your child build expressive language skills and enrich vocabulary. For example, libraries,

grocery stores, zoos, airports, farms, parks, construction sites and restaurants are full of new things to see and talk about.

- Provide opportunities for your child to develop independence. It is important to foster these skills prior to the start of school. Opportunities for practice may include:
 - Dressing, zipping, buttoning and/or snapping clothing.
 - Tying shoe laces.
 - Packing and unpacking a backpack.
 - Opening containers (e.g., juice boxes/bags, yogurt and fruit cups, lunch containers).
 - Playing with other children away from home or independently in a social setting.
- Play different types of games with your child to promote turn-taking and allow them opportunities to both win and lose. Card games, board games and games with spinners are important learning experiences for kindergarteners. These types of games teach cooperation, math and language skills, and promote critical thinking.
- Be sure your child is aware of their full name, parents' names, home address, telephone number, and birth date.

- Encourage your child to hold a pencil and practice printing their name using uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Play rhyming games, read nursery rhymes and sing songs with your child.
- Read to your child daily. Ask questions about the stories. Point out interesting pictures, words and patterns.
- Support the transition to kindergarten.
 - Visit your elementary school.
 - Play on the kindergarten playground.
 - Find opportunities for group experiences.
 - Visit your local library for interactive programs: www.hclibrary.org.
 - Check with your school's PTA for upcoming events.
 - Shop for school supplies together.
 - Read books about kindergarten. A link to a sample book list from the Howard County Library System can be found at: www.hclibrary.org/new-a-main/parents/.
- Review K Family and Community resources information at <https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/34447>

Visit the HCPSS website for more information about school readiness.



General Information

Accident Insurance

The school system does not carry medical insurance for accidents that occur at school, including non-sport related injuries, such as trips and falls, physical education injuries, and recess/playground injuries. Parents are encouraged to enroll students in the accident insurance program. All students are eligible and will receive written information on coverage and costs during the first week of school. Coverage may be obtained throughout the school year via online enrollment.

Before and After School Care

Elementary schools have different opening and closing times that can be viewed here: www.hcpss.org/schools/opening-and-closing-times/. If you need before or after care, each school hosts a child care program in their building. Two agencies serve the Howard County Public School System: Columbia Association and Howard County Recreation and Parks. Contact your child's school or refer to www.hcpss.org/schools/before-and-after-school-care/ for more information. Spaces fill quickly, so register early to ensure availability.

Emergency Closing

All parents/guardians must complete a Family File emergency form via HCPSS Connect, which can be found online at www.hcpss.org/connect/.

The purpose of the form is to identify persons to be contacted in case of an emergency regarding the student if parents/guardians are unable to be reached. **It is imperative that this form be completed in a timely manner.** In times of emergencies/school closings, information will be shared with the community through the following:

- www.hcpss.org
- HCPSS News email and text message alerts
- HCPSS Information Hotline 410-313-6666
- Twitter: @hcpss
- Facebook: hocoschools
- HCPSS cable TV: Comcast 95/Verizon 42

Notes for Absence

By state law, children must attend school from ages 5 to 17. A signed note from a parent/guardian must be submitted to the school within two school days of the student's return, indicating the date and reason for absence to determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused. A doctor's note is required in cases of long-term absence due to illness.

Reporting Student Progress

There are four marking periods in a school year. Student work will be sent home regularly to demonstrate your child's progress in the classroom. Interim/progress reports are issued mid-quarter and reflect individual student progress.

Report cards are issued at the end of every marking period. This document records student grades, attendance, and other information. Parent/teacher conferences are held two times a year.

Safe Schools

All elementary schools have controlled entry. Once allowed into the school, all visitors must report to the front office and sign in through the automated visitor management system. A driver's license is required to verify visitors' identities. The automated visitor management system creates a sticker badge that must be worn at all times while in the school building.

School Calendar

Holidays and days off are noted in the school calendar, which you will receive at the beginning of the school year. The calendar is also available at www.hcpss.org/calendar/.

School Lunches

HCPSS students have the option of buying or packing a lunch. Information about menus, paying for student meals, nutrition and allergen concerns, meal pricing as well as Free and Reduced Meal applications can be viewed at www.hcpss.org/food-services/.

Parent Conferences and School Schedules

Parent conferences and work days for staff are scheduled throughout the year. During those times, schools may be closed to students for half or full days. Your school will communicate detailed conference and schedule information.

School Supply Lists

School supply lists for the upcoming school year can be viewed at www.hcpss.org/schools/school-supply-lists/. Supply lists are updated each spring for the following school year. Please contact your child's school for additional information.

Tardy/Early Dismissal

A student is tardy/late if he or she is not in the school/classroom when the bell rings. Students need to be signed in by a parent/guardian if they are tardy. A note should also be submitted to request early dismissal or exclusion from activities (e.g., physical education). The HCPSS Student Handbook provides additional details.

Transportation

Bus transportation is provided for elementary students who live more than one mile from their assigned school. Use the School Locator and School Transportation to find your child's bus route schedule at www.hcpss.org. The Pupil Transportation Office encourages parents of kindergarten students to review the information contained in the brochure, *A Guide to Bus Safety and Your Child*, which should be received during kindergarten registration. All kindergarten students should follow their normal transportation schedule beginning on the very first day of school and it is strongly recommended that all students are supervised by an adult or older sibling. This is important in order to establish positive routines.



The Health of Your Child

All forms and HCPSS health resources can be found at www.hcpss.org/health/. Mental and physical health impacts a child's ability to be successful in school. This is especially true for our youngest learners. It is important to keep the lines of communication open between home and school. You can help your child reach their full potential by promoting healthy behaviors and establishing consistent routines. Your kindergartener should:

- Get 10–12 hours of sleep each night and have a set bedtime. Recognize that your child may be exhausted at the end of the school day, especially during the first month of school.
- Avoid overly stimulating or violent movies, music, video games and television programs, especially prior to bedtime.
- Have time for a complete breakfast, the most important meal of the day. Eating a balanced diet is important for growing bodies.
- Have ample time to dress, eat and get to school in a relaxed frame of mind.
- Know how to use the bathroom properly and independently.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Keep hands away from eyes, ears, nose and mouth.
- Know that only food goes into the mouth.
- Learn to cover mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing. Students should also be mindful to cough and sneeze into an upper sleeve, not into his or her hands.
- Wear suitable clothes for the weather. Students go outside for recess every day, weather permitting. See *Weather Guidelines/Recess* for details: www.hcpss.org/about-us/handbook/wellness/#weather-guidelines.
- Know the safety precautions for strangers, strange places, strange situations or strange animals.
- Have a physical examination including eyes and ears at regular intervals. Have regular dental checkups. The Howard County Health Department can help families find care at www.hchealth.org.

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 completed and signed by the physician medication order form and written parent/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 will not be accepted.

Cough drops and other over-the-counter medications may not be sent to school with your child. Sunscreen may not be applied at school. If you have any questions, please contact the school health assistant for more information.

Allergies

Maryland law requires schools to designate a table in the cafeteria as "peanut/tree nut-free." Parents are encouraged to inquire about these accommodations with the school health assistant when registering their child. Depending upon the daily lunch schedule, your child's school may have a designated snack time in the classroom. Students are encouraged to bring foods that do not pose a potential risk for food allergic students.

When to Keep your Child Home

It is important to note that children who are not feeling well should stay home from school. Other students and staff are put at risk when your child comes to school sick. Your child **should not** come to school if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Chills
- Severe coughing
- Fever*
- Earache
- Sore throat
- Rash
- Vomiting

*Children must be fever-free, without the use of fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.

The following health chart gives information about some childhood diseases/conditions that may occur during the school year. These conditions should be reported to the school health assistant/nurse and your child's teacher. A signed note from a parent/guardian must be submitted to the school within two school days of the student's return, indicating the date and reason for absence to determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused. A doctor's note is required in cases of long-term absence due to illness.

Condition/Disease	Incubation	Action
Chicken Pox Pimples, blisters, crusts in different stages	2–3 weeks	Excluded from school until lesions are scabbed over.
Conjunctivitis 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.
Fifth Disease Bright red cheeks, rash on body, mild cold symptoms.	4–20 days	Permitted to return to school after diagnosis by a physician.
Head Lice Tiny insects in hair, egg cases (nits) on hair shafts.	7–10 days	Permitted to attend school after proper treatment for lice.
Diarrhea Loose stool; Gastrointestinal infection in which dehydration may occur.	2–5 days	May return to school if symptom-free for 24 hours.
Measles (Rubeola) Cough, runny eyes, 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.
Ringworm of Scalp Areas of scaly patches of baldness; may begin as small pimples.	10–14 days	Excluded from school until under treatment by a physician.
Staphylococcal Infection (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.
Streptococcal Infection (Scarlet fever or Scarletina, Strep throat) Sore throat, fever, or rash on body or extremities.	1–3 days	Excluded until released by physician to return to school.



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.

The Superintendent and Department of Education Staff

The Superintendent and central office staff are concerned with students at all of the schools and work closely with schools to provide well-trained teachers, suitable materials, and a program of instruction that meets the needs, interests, and abilities of children at all age levels.

School Administration

The principal and assistant principal are in charge of your child's school and are responsible for the school's program. They are instructional leaders and building managers who supervise all staff and oversee all school functions.

Front Office Staff

The school secretaries are eager to help you when you call or visit the school. They will be the first person to greet you and will help you find the answers to your questions. School secretaries are responsible for registration, data entry, school communications, and serve as a support to both staff and families.

School Health Services

The cluster nurse, a registered nurse assigned to a cluster of two schools, trains and supervises the school-based health assistant. The health assistant manages the day-to-day operations of the health room: administer medication and first aid, observe and document student health concerns, communicate necessary medical information to school staff, parents/guardians and the school nurse while maintaining confidentiality.

School Counselor

The 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.

General Education Teacher

The classroom teacher provides students with a rigorous academic curriculum based on Maryland College and Career-Ready Kindergarten Standards. Additionally, teachers work with families to support the development of the whole child in order to ensure a successful educational experience. Paraeducators support instruction across classrooms and supervise students during lunch and recess.

Special Education Teacher

The special education teacher uses specialized teaching strategies to help children with disabilities.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Teacher

The ESOL teacher provides English language development instruction for English learners. The ESOL curriculum merges content and language development. Students develop their language and literacy skills while acquiring content knowledge.

School Psychologist

The school psychologist is available at each school to consult with parents and teachers regarding child development, behavioral interactions, and individualized instructional strategies. School psychologists can identify learning strengths and needs of individual children and design specific plans to promote school success.

Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW)

Pupil Personnel Services works with school staffs, students, parents and community members in the identification and prevention of problems that can adversely impact educational success. The PPW also helps families find community resources to assist as needed.

Additional Teaching Staff and Related Services

Other teaching and related staff may include a physical education teacher, music teacher, art teacher, technology teacher, media specialist, reading specialist, gifted and talented teacher, alternative education teacher, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, math support staff, reading support staff, paraeducator, and cafeteria staff.

Staff members vary from school to school. Please refer to your school's website to learn more about teaching staff in your school or contact your child's school if you need more information.





**We look forward to having your child in kindergarten.
It is our hope that all kindergarten students will have an exciting and productive school year.**

For details about each elementary school visit www.hcpss.org/schools/elementary-schools/.
Feel free to contact your school with any questions or concerns.

School	Address	Phone
Atholton	6700 Seneca Drive, Columbia 21046	410-313-6853
Bellows Spring	8125 Old Stockbridge Drive, Ellicott City 21043	410-313-5057
Bollman Bridge	8200 Savage-Guilford Road, Savage 20763	410-880-5920
Bryant Woods	5450 Blue Heron Lane, Columbia 21044	410-313-6859
Bushy Park	14601 Carrs Mill Road, Glenwood 21738	410-313-5500
Centennial Lane	3825 Centennial Lane, Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2800
Clarksville	12041 Clarksville Pike, Clarksville 21029	410-313-7050
Clemens Crossing	10320 Quarterstaff Road, Columbia 21044	410-313-6866
Cradlerock	6700 Cradlerock Way, Columbia 21045	410-313-7610
Dayton Oaks	4691 Ten Oaks Road, Dayton 21036	410-313-1571
Deep Run	6925 Old Waterloo Road, Elkridge 21075	410-313-5000
Ducketts Lane	6201 Ducketts Lane, Elkridge 21075	410-313-5050
Elkridge	7075 Montgomery Road, Elkridge 21075	410-313-5006
Forest Ridge	9550 Gorman Road, Laurel 20723	410-880-5950
Fulton	11600 Scaggsville Road, Fulton 20759	410-880-5957
Gorman Crossing	9999 Winter Sun Road, Laurel 20723	410-880-5900
Guilford	7335 Oakland Mills Road, Columbia 21046	410-880-5930
Hammond	8110 Aladdin Drive, Laurel 20723	410-880-5890
Hanover Hills	7030 Banbury Drive, Hanover 21076	410-313-8066
Hollifield Station	8701 Stonehouse Drive, Ellicott City 21043	410-313-2550
Ilchester	4981 Ilchester Road, Ellicott City 21043	410-313-2524
Jeffers Hill	6001 Tamar Drive, Columbia 21045	410-313-6872
Laurel Woods	9250 N. Laurel Road, Laurel 20723	410-880-5960
Lisbon	15901 Frederick Road, Woodbine 21797	410-313-5506
Longfellow	5470 Hesperus Drive, Columbia 21044	410-313-6879
Manor Woods	11575 Frederick Road, Ellicott City 21042	410-313-7165
Northfield	9125 Northfield Road, Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2806
Phelps Luck	5370 Oldstone Court, Columbia 21045	410-313-6886
Pointers Run	6600 Trotter Road, Clarksville 21029	410-313-7142
Rockburn	6145 Montgomery Road, Elkridge 21075	410-313-5030
Running Brook	5215 W. Running Brook Road, Columbia 21044	410-313-6893
St. John's Lane	2960 St. John's Lane, Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2813
Stevens Forest	6045 Stevens Forest Road, Columbia 21045	410-313-6900
Swansfield	5610 Cedar Lane, Columbia 21044	410-313-6907
Talbott Springs	9550 Basket Ring Road, Columbia 21045	410-313-6915
Thunder Hill	9357 Mellenbrook Road, Columbia 21045	410-313-6922
Triadelphia Ridge	13400 Triadelphia Road, Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2560
Veterans	4355 Montgomery Road, Ellicott City 21043	410-313-1700
Waterloo	5940 Waterloo Road, Columbia 21045	410-313-5014
Waverly	10220 Wetherburn Road, Ellicott City 21042	410-313-2819
West Friendship	12500 Frederick Road, West Friendship 21794	410-313-5512
Worthington	4570 Round Hill Road, Ellicott City 21043	410-313-2825

Opening and closing times vary from school to school. Please visit www.hcpss.org/schools/opening-and-closing-times/ to check the hours of your assigned school.



10910 Clarksville Pike • Ellicott City, MD 21042 • www.hcpss.org

The Howard County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy/Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Manager of Equity Assurance, Howard County Public School System, 10910 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042, 410-313-6654 (phone), 410-313-1645 (fax). For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit <http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.