

# Back to School Night – Information for Families

Comprehensive information for the 2026-2027 school year may be found at [www.hcpss.org/2026-2027/](http://www.hcpss.org/2026-2027/)

## Howard County Student Code of Conduct

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is committed to providing a safe, engaging and supportive learning environment where all policies are enforced fairly and consistently. HCPSS policies and regulations emphasize instruction and rehabilitation rather than punishment and are designed to foster and reward appropriate behavior and keep students connected to school. We view the code of conduct as a team effort. There are responsibilities for staff, students, families and our community. Let's all do our part to make this year safe and successful for all!

[www.hcpss.org/about-us/student-code-of-conduct/](http://www.hcpss.org/about-us/student-code-of-conduct/)

## School and System News and Information

- Email: School news, HCPSS News, emergency notices
- Text: Priority/emergency notices; additional information as needed
- HCPSS Website: Systemwide news and information resource ([www.hcpss.org](http://www.hcpss.org))
- HCPSS Social Media: <https://news.hcpss.org/follow/>
- School Website: School news, calendar, sports and clubs, staff directory
- Community News and Information: <https://community-programs.hcpss.org/>
- Information on school closings and delays will be posted on the HCPSS website, @HCPSS on X (Twitter), and by email and text. <https://status.hcpss.org/>

## Mental Health Supports

Every HCPSS school has staff available for students who require support throughout the school year to tend to their mental health needs. Students and parents/guardians should not hesitate to reach out to a counselor, liaison, social worker, psychologist or any trusted adult at school to be connected with these available resources.

[www.hcpss.org/supports/mental-health-wellness](http://www.hcpss.org/supports/mental-health-wellness)

## HCPSS Connect:

- Family File: Parent contact information, medical data and contacts, school transportation, data privacy preferences
- Synergy: Report cards, attendance, class schedules, conference scheduling and more
- Canvas: Course homepages, calendar dates/events, assignments and Gradebook, announcements, direct messaging

[www.hcpss.org/connect](http://www.hcpss.org/connect)

## Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMs) Program

Visit [www.hcpss.org/farms](http://www.hcpss.org/farms) and select "Apply Online" to begin the online application process. Qualifying families can receive free or reduced-cost school meals; health insurance; Howard Community College (HCC) tuition; SAT, ACT and AP exam fees; camps, sports, childcare; and many other benefits.

## Online School Lunch Menus

Visit [www.hcpss.org/food-services](http://www.hcpss.org/food-services) for information on breakfast and lunch menus; nutrition information and allergens; payment; the FARMs program application link; and more.

## Student Personal Device Use in School

HCPSS policy requires students to keep personal technology devices away and silenced and ensure they are not a distraction during the student day. Visit [www.hcpss.org/student-personal-device-use/](http://www.hcpss.org/student-personal-device-use/) for more information on the policy, expectations, and consequences when policy violations occur.

### **Report Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment or Intimidation**

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation compromise the school environment and well-being of students. Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment or intimidation of any person on school property, at school-sponsored activities or that has a connection or nexus back to the school setting is prohibited. Report incidents online at <https://stopbullying.hcpss.org/report/bullying> or submit a paper copy of the form which is available in the school counselor's office, media center and health room.

### **Title IX**

HCPSS is committed to providing an educational and work environment free from sexual discrimination. HCPSS prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in its educational programs, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and in the workplace as required by law. Students can report sexual discrimination, harassment or misconduct online. [www.hcpss.org/schools/sexual-discrimination-harassment/](http://www.hcpss.org/schools/sexual-discrimination-harassment/)

### **Health Services**

Health services are provided in each school by registered nurses and health assistants. Services include, but are not limited to, medication administration, first aid, chronic and acute care disease case management and assessment and intervention for illness and injury. [www.hcpss.org/health](http://www.hcpss.org/health)

### **Attendance**

It is extremely important that students attend school as often as possible. The data is clear—student attendance has a direct correlation to academic achievement and future success. Additionally, students who are absent lack interactions with peers and adults in their school, often leading to becoming isolated from the school environment and feeling less connected. That is why it is critically important that we reverse the troubling trend in absenteeism today. Please work with school staff to ensure your child attends school every day.

### **JumpStart Dual Enrollment**

JumpStart is a partnership between HCPSS and Howard Community College that provides expanded options for high school students to gain college credits, explore possible careers or earn an associate degree within a nurturing and inclusive environment. Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to review options for your JumpStart Dual Enrollment courses or email [JumpStart@hcpss.org](mailto:JumpStart@hcpss.org) for a schedule of upcoming drop-in support sessions to learn more about the program and get help signing up. [www.hcpss.org/jumpstart](http://www.hcpss.org/jumpstart)

### **CTE Career Academies**

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Career Academies provide College and Career Ready experiences for high school students with many benefits, including: small learning communities; authentic project-based activities; mentoring by experts in the field; participation in worksite experiences or employment while still in high school; and opportunity to earn industry certifications, credentials and college credit. CTE Career Academy opportunities are available at high schools and the Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC). Discuss with your school counselor or visit <https://www.hcpss.org/academics/career-technical-education/>

### **FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

- Application will become available on October 1, 2026
- Apply fall of senior year for best consideration
- Required by many colleges and scholarship organizations
- Apply online: <https://studentaid.gov/>
- More information about financial aid is available online: <https://www.hcpss.org/college-career-readiness/financial-aid/>