

# Homestead~Wakefield Elementary Parent~Student Handbook 2018~2019



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#### Non-discrimination Statement

The Harford County Public School system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or age in employment or programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding HCPS non-discrimination policies: Laurie Namey 410-809-6065

Welcome to Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School! This handbook brief serves to provide a general overview of school procedures, certain legal requirements, Board of Education policies, and administrative procedures. The following excerpts do not contain all laws, policies, or procedures in their entirety and should not be relied on as such. Students and parents should familiarize themselves with the full handbook, available online at [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org) and in the printed Parent/Student Handbook calendars distributed at the beginning of the school year. Items listed in this handbook are subject to change without notice.

I hope that your child enjoys a rich and rewarding educational experience. I know that you will join me in pledging to keep the home-school connection strong throughout the year. Should you ever have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,  
**Chris Cook**  
 Principal  
[chris.cook@hcps.org](mailto:chris.cook@hcps.org)

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## **ALCOHOL, METAL DETECTORS & SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS**

Based upon reasonable suspicion, students can be asked to submit to an alcohol odor detecting device or metal detector during the school day or at after school events on school property. Some schools may have video surveillance cameras. Some buses operated or contracted by HCPS may have both video surveillance cameras and audio recording equipment to monitor student safety and behavior. Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information. [Back](#)

## **ATTENDANCE**

Daily attendance is required to receive credit for courses. A student is required to bring a written note from their parent/guardian giving reason for any absences.

### **During a normal operating scheduled day:**

<b>If a student is...</b>	<b>They are counted...</b>
In attendance for 4 or more hours	Present for full day
In attendance for 2, but less than 4 hours	Present for half day
Absent less than 2 hours in the morning	Tardy
Absent less than 2 hours before dismissal	Early dismissal

### **During a delayed opening or early dismissal:**

<b>If a student is...</b>	<b>They are counted...</b>
Absent no more than 30 minutes	Present for full day
In attendance for at least 2 hours	Present for half day
Absent less than 30 minutes in the morning	Tardy
Absent less than 30 minutes before dismissal	Early dismissal

Students scheduled for a partial day are counted present based on the amount of time they are scheduled. Example: A student scheduled for a two-hour block of time will be counted present for a full day if in attendance for that entire block of time. The student is absent if they are not present for that entire block of time. A student is present for one-half day if in attendance for one hour.

In order to receive the Perfect Attendance Award at the end of the school year, a child must be enrolled in a Harford County school the entire year and be present each day. During our *Paws to Celebrate* assemblies, we will recognize and honor students that are in school every day, never late and never leave early. A child is eligible for any/all time periods that he/she meets the criteria.

### **Lawful Absences**

Lawful absences include death in the immediate family; illness of the student, which may require a physician's certificate from the parent/guardian; court summons; hazardous weather conditions; work approved by the school, the school system, or the State Department of Education and accepted by the local superintendent, school principal, or their designees; observance of a major religious holiday; state emergency; suspension; lack of authorized transportation, not including authorized transportation denied for disciplinary reasons; other emergency which, in the judgment of the superintendent or designee, constitutes sufficient cause for absence from school.

### **Unlawful Absences**

Absences, including partial absences, for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed to be unlawful. Students who meet/exceed five days of unlawful absence in a quarter must be referred to the pupil personnel worker.

### Tardiness

Tardiness occurs when a student arrives up to two hours late. Students arriving with less than two hours remaining in the school day would be considered absent the full day.

### Standard for Regular Attendance

The standard for regular attendance is the minimal requirement for student attendance in order to permit continuity in the instructional program. The standard states that students shall miss no more than four total days per quarter, whether lawful or unlawful. The actions taken when the standard is not met should reflect a continuum of consequences for increasing absenteeism. School officials may waive these actions when they are aware of circumstances beyond the student's control such as documented chronic illnesses, etc. In addition, students who receive services under an IEP or 504 plan may not necessarily be subject to the consequences for failing to meet the standard.

Beginning with the fifth absence and/or tardiness, the parent will be notified in writing. Continued absence and/or tardiness of the student will result in the initiation of one or more of the following actions: conference with the parent, student, and principal or designee; referral to student services team and/or pupil personnel worker for appropriate intervention; probationary time period verbal agreement; written contract; after-school detention; Saturday school (non-teaching day attendance); removal of school privileges; restriction of extracurricular activities; in-school suspension (due process procedures followed); referral to Student Services for possible outside referral to court for violation of the compulsory attendance law or to Juvenile Services for intake services.

### Make-up Work Procedures

Make-up work will not be given to students for unlawful absences. If a student is lawfully absent for five days or less, it is the responsibility of the student and/or guardian to request missed assignments. Students will be given the number of days equal to the number of days absent to turn in make-up work. If available, assignments may be provided prior to a lawful absence if requested by a parent/guardian at least five days in advance, and with approval by the principal/designee. Submission of make-up work provided in advance is required upon student's return to school, unless extenuating circumstances have been documented.

If a student is lawfully absent for six days or more, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to request to arrange for make-up work. The teacher will provide make-up work in a method of their choice and will collect and correct the work. A reasonable timeline for the completion of work will be established. The student will be accountable for all assigned make-up work.

All make-up work will be graded in accordance with the regular grading policy as long as it is completed within the established timeline. Students permitted to enroll in the Alternative Education Program as a result of a long-term suspension do not have the option to receive make-up work from the home school.

### Vacations

Parents may have limitations on when vacations can be arranged; however, it is preferred that vacations are scheduled when school is not in session. Written requests must be made at least ten days in advance of the potential absence and will be reviewed, along with relevant information, by the Principal to determine if it will be lawful. The Principal can approve up to five days in one year as a lawful absence. Vacations that are more than five days but less than ten are forwarded (along with relevant information) to the Executive Director of Elementary School Performance for review.

Vacation/trip requests that are ten or more days will be forwarded to the Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW). There are two options for a trip/vacation that is ten or more days:

1. Student is withdrawn from school after the tenth absence. Upon return from the vacation/trip, the parent/guardian will need to re-register the child by providing an updated Proof of Residency (i.e. current BGE bill, landline phone bill).
2. Parent/guardian applies for homeschooling through the PPW. Upon returning from the vacation/trip, the parent/guardian will need to re-register the child by providing an updated Proof of Residency (i.e. current BGE bill, landline phone bill).

Under normal circumstances, the child will likely be placed back into the same classes upon return. For more about lawful/unlawful absences, the appeal process for denied vacation requests, make-up work, and for grade level-specific information, please review the full handbook online at [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org). [Back](#)

### **BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, HARASSMENT OR INTIMIDATION**

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation are prohibited and not tolerated by the students, volunteers, or employees of Harford County Public Schools. If you believe your child has been the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, you are asked to notify a school staff member and complete a Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form. The form is available on the Harford County Public Schools website, [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org), and at your child's school. The form may be submitted online or returned to the principal at the student victim's school. Contact the school for additional information or assistance. [Back](#)

### **CELEBRATIONS**

Homestead-Wakefield has a "no treat" policy including any food as a means of celebrating a birthday. In addition, balloons are not permitted. We make every attempt to preserve the instructional routine of the day without interruptions. We must also be sensitive to the health and well-being of students and that there are areas, including the cafeteria and classrooms, which have restrictions due to allergies. [Back](#)

### **CHARACTER EDUCATION**

Paws to Celebrate assemblies will be held to celebrate with students a variety of character education initiatives and characteristics. At each celebration, students will be recognized as the "Pawesome" Student for exhibiting safe, respectful and responsible behavior. Parents will be notified and invited to attend the assembly and share in the celebration. Since the program is designed to recognize those displaying outstanding character on a consistent basis, not every child can be recognized as a "Pawesome" Student. However, there are other opportunities for individual and class recognition on a variety of levels through the "Pawesome" Program. [Back](#)

### **DRESS CODE**

Students have the responsibility to choose their attire and personal appearance in a manner that is safe, healthy, inoffensive and is not disruptive to the educational process. Accordingly, students are prohibited from wearing clothing, jewelry, tattoos, bookbags, or other articles of personal appearance that depict profanity, obscenity, the use of weapons, or violence; promote the use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or other illegal or harmful products; contain sexually suggestive messages; unduly expose or reveal skin or undergarments such as tank tops\*, tube tops, halter tops, mesh tops, bare midriff tops, spaghetti straps, pants worn below the hips, short-shorts, miniskirts, or bedtime attire; contain language or symbols that offend or demean an identifiable person or group or otherwise infringe on the rights of others in violation of the Board harassment or discrimination policies; cause, or is likely to cause, a substantial or material disruption to school activities or the orderly operation of the school, including but not limited to swastikas and gang-related attire; contain profane, disrespectful, or discourteous expressions inconsistent with civil discourse and behavior; endanger health or safety.

\*A tank top is a sleeveless garment with wide shoulder straps that dips well below the neckline. The top is typically "U" or "V" shaped, exposing a broad area of the shoulder, upper chest, and neck. Tank top straps are typically two to four inches wide. Tank tops, especially those with thinner straps, do not sufficiently conceal components of the undergarments and or body parts.

Exceptions under this policy shall be given consideration in the following instances: when a reasonable accommodation is made if a student wears an article of dress or other item which is a lawful exercise of his/her right to freedom of expression or freedom of religion; when a reasonable accommodation is necessary due to a documented medical or health reason, but only as authorized by the school principal; when an authorized activity, such as athletics or band, requires different attire, but only upon the direction of the coach or faculty sponsor of the activity.

### **Special Provisions and Restrictions**

The following examples are provided for guidance in implementing the policy and are not intended to list every possible violation or circumstance.

- Physical Education – Proper physical education apparel and shoes are to be worn. Jewelry of any kind shall not be worn in physical education classes. Pierced ear studs are permitted to be worn by elementary students only. Jewelry which needs to be removed for physical education class shall be the responsibility of the student. Fitness devices which record data regarding activity, may be worn in physical education provided they are safely secured and do not otherwise present a safety risk to the student or others. It is understood that students will comply with the procedures contained in the Portable Communication Device Policy, Acceptable Use Policy for Students and the procedures stating parent financial responsibility associated with items brought to school.
- Clothing - Clothing worn in such a manner so as to reveal undergarments or bare skin between the upper chest and mid-thigh is not permitted. Skirts, dresses, and shorts must be no shorter than the student's longest fingertip when the student's hands are held at their side. Pants shall be secured at the waist; must not touch or drag on the ground; must not reveal undergarments or bare skin while sitting or bending; must not have any holes or tears above the knee; the crotch of the pants shall be no longer than the student's longest fingertip when the student's hands are held at his/her side; and the bottom of the pants must be no wider than the length of the wearer's shoes.
- Outerwear – It is a general expectation that outer garments, including, but not limited to, lightweight jackets, hats, etc. are not to be worn during the school day. These items are to be stored in lockers. Principals will have the discretion to permit students to wear outerwear in the school building when conditions are warranted. Headwear, including, but not limited to, hats, visors, doo rags, sweatbands, and bandanas, is not to be worn inside school buildings during the school day.
- Jewelry – Jewelry/body piercings (example: spiked jewelry, chokers, rings, bracelets) that pose a health or safety hazard or is disruptive to the orderly process of the school is not permitted. Chains that could cause injury to others are not permitted.
- Sunglasses – Sunglasses are considered inappropriate for inside wear.

### Dress Code Violations

Attire shall be disallowed if, in the judgment of the local school administrator, such attire may negatively impact safety, health, or which materially disrupts the school, or is otherwise unlawful. When a student's attire or personal appearance violates this policy, the principal or designee shall investigate and take corrective actions, including but not limited to the following: Requiring the student to remove or change the item; taking reasonable steps to notify the student's parents of the violation; for repeated violations, initiating progressive discipline for insubordination as appropriate, which may include suspension.

Principals will have the authority to suspend or waive the restrictions on clothing for social events such as, but not limited to, proms, homecoming dances or school sponsored activities aimed at promoting school spirit. Medical exceptions may also be considered by the principal.

Please see the full dress code policy in its entirety online at [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org). [Back](#)

### FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are optional educational experiences that extend the learning environment beyond the classroom. These trips are planned in conjunction with current studies yet they are not mandated by the curriculum. A signed permission slip by a parent or legal guardian is required for participation in a trip. Children without written permission may not go on the trip and will receive alternative arrangements and accommodations. Students must ride the bus to and from the field trip destination unless other arrangements have been made in advance. There may be a fee for students and chaperones on some field trips. There are destinations that have a limit to the number of chaperones that are able to attend. A fair and equal opportunity will be given to those that wish to attend a trip. [Back](#)

### HOMEWORK

Homework assignments should relate directly to classwork, extending learning beyond the classroom and encouraging independent learning while providing experience in following directions, making judgments, raising additional questions for study, and developing responsibility and self-discipline. It is also a means to communicate with parents regarding current class activities and topics of study. While homework may be assigned over the weekends, it may not be assigned over the holidays when schools are closed.

Normally, children in primary grades (K-3) are assigned from fifteen to thirty minutes of homework per day. Children in the intermediate grades (4-5) are assigned from thirty to forty-five minutes of homework each day. In the event that a homework assignment is too difficult or not understood, please contact the teacher. [Back](#)

### **HONORS PROGRAMS**

Students receiving straight A's will get a letter from the Principal recognizing their outstanding achievement. Students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade only are eligible for the President's Award for Educational Excellence. Students must earn a 3.5 or better grade point average when computing the average from the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of fourth grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters from fifth grade. Students must also make positive performance in other areas such as but not limited to: demonstrating safe, respectful and responsible behavior; community or school service; creativity/achievement in the arts; leadership in school; etc. A school team will review candidates to determine student eligibility. [Back](#)

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

All public schools in Harford County will be closed on days when roads, school parking lots and/or school driveways/walkways are considered unsafe for school bus transportation and student/staff use. The decision to close is made by the superintendent of schools as early as possible on the morning in question. In the vast majority of cases, this is prior to 5:00 a.m. Any change from the normal school schedule as a result of inclement weather will be communicated through the school system's rapid telephone notification system, email, text message, Twitter, Facebook, and on radio and television broadcasts. In addition, changes will be listed on the Harford County Public Schools website at [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org). No telephone calls or media announcements will be made when schools are operating on a normal schedule. Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information. [Back](#)

### **MEALS**

School breakfast and lunch menus are available [on-line](#) and also include the opportunity to receive e-mail updates. Full information with regards to the Food and Nutrition Department can be found [on-line](#). Parents can use a free on-line service called [MySchoolBucks](#) to place money on a child's account, monitor purchases and add money to the account.

Students who have a negative balance of \$10.00 or more will be notified via automated phone calls as well as letters from school. Meal Benefits Applications for free and reduced priced meals are available and may be picked up in the office or at [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org).

In accordance with the HCPS Wellness Policy, as well as practices to promote healthy lifestyles, students will be able to purchase only one snack (chips, ice cream, cookies, etc.) during lunch. The cafeteria offers a wide range of healthy alternatives on a daily basis including fresh fruit, salad, vegetables, etc. which can also be purchased a-la-carte.

Due to allergies & safety concerns, students may not share food – an innocent act could prove dangerous for some. There may also be some areas in the cafeteria as well as classrooms that are reserved as "Allergy Awareness" zones and there may be restrictions/precautions for classroom-based snacks. We appreciate your attention to the needs of others. [Back](#)

### **MEDICATION**

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of medication on school property; school buses or at school activities (with the exception of students who are authorized to self-administer medication). Medication means prescription or nonprescription substances used to relieve or treat a medical, physical, mental or emotional problem or condition including Ibuprofen, Tylenol, Aspirin and similar substances.

- All medication must be accompanied by a written physician's order (authorized prescriber). The instructions must contain: the student's name, name of the medication, the dosage, time and circumstances of administration, length of time the medication is to be continued, reason for prescription, physician name and date of order. Parents/guardians must also sign a form authorizing the nurse to administer the medication. This form is to be updated annually.

- An adult must bring the medication to school and present it to the school nurse. Children are not permitted to transport the medication on the bus or to carry it to school. All medication must be in the original prescription bottle, properly labeled by the pharmacy.
- No medication will be stored over the summer. A parent/guardian must pick up all medication by the end of the school year or it will be destroyed.

Please consult your HCPS Parent-Student Handbook, visit [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org), or contact the School Nurse for complete details regarding medication. [Back](#)

### **NONDISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES**

The Board is committed to providing an environment that is safe and optimal for academic achievement and productive work activity and free from any form of unlawful discrimination. Any act of unlawful discrimination committed by a member of the school community is a violation of this policy. Harford County Public Schools will investigate all complaints of discrimination and/or harassment and will take appropriate disciplinary or other action against any member of the school community who is found to have committed any act of discrimination. [Back](#)

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Personal property that is brought into the school by students is not covered under the insurance of Harford County Public Schools. Homeowner's insurance or Renter's insurance may have off-premises coverage for valuable items, such as musical instruments, but you must confirm coverage with your personal insurance carrier. Students and parents/guardians should evaluate the personal items that are brought to school and should permanently mark items so they are clearly identifiable. Please view the full handbook for more information. [Back](#)

### **PLAYGROUND GUIDELINES**

Play is an important part of the education process, unfortunately, each year thousands of children are injured on playgrounds. In order to help our students to be safe, each class will receive an orientation from a physical education teacher highlighting safe and appropriate behavior on the playground. Students will be asked to sign a contract before they are allowed to use the equipment. Although not all the rules are listed here, below are some general guidelines that students must follow. For more information, please contact the school's physical education teacher.

- Students are permitted on equipment only if shoes have an attached back and a flat sole.
- Students may only wear post (stud) earrings. All other jewelry must be removed.
- Students should remove drawstrings from jackets/sweatshirts.
- Students are to remain in their designated area and use age-appropriate equipment only. [Back](#)

### **PORTABLE COMMUNICATION POLICY**

Students may possess or use a portable communication device (PCD) on school grounds and buses under the following circumstances:

- Students in any grade may possess and use a PCD on school grounds and buses when authorized to do so pursuant to the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.
- Secondary teachers may allow students to use a PCD in the school building for an instructional purpose following the Responsible Use Procedure for Students.

Students in elementary school may possess a PCD on school grounds and buses during the regular school day provided the PCD is kept and maintained in the student's backpack or cubby and is deactivated. Students enrolled in any grade may use a PCD on school grounds before the regular school day and after the regular school day. Students enrolled in any grade may use a PCD on school buses before or after the regular school day provided:

- the student does not use the PCD for conversation, calls, photographing or videoing;
- such use does not include implementation of the audio component of the PCD unless the student uses ear buds.

Students' possession or use of PCDs permitted under this policy shall not:

- disrupt the educational environment;
- violate federal or state law or regulation;
- violate Board policy and procedure including Board policy and procedure relating to student conduct and harassment; or
- invade the privacy of other students.

Students who violate the above restrictions shall be deemed to have created a disruption to the instructional environment and be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information. [Back](#)

### **PRIVACY RIGHTS OF PARENTS & STUDENTS**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)/Student Records. Definitions:

- Directory Information – Records which contain personally identifiable information, but which have been designated by HCPS to be disclosed without parental consent.
- Personally Identifiable Information (PII) – data or information including (a) the name of the student, his/her parents/guardians, and family members; (b) address; (c) social security number or student number; (d) a list of personal characteristics which would make it possible to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or (e) other information which would make it possible to identify the student with reasonable certainty.
- Student Records – records that are: (a) directly related to a student; and (b) maintained by Harford County Public Schools or by a party acting for the Harford County Public Schools.

### **Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools**

The FERPA affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access. Parents/Guardians or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Parents/Guardians or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the school will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to provide written consent before the school discloses PII from the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.

A school official is a person employed by the school or other agency as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and school resource officer) or a person serving on the school Board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent/guardian or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent/guardian, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202.

#### Notice for Disclosure of Directory Information

FERPA requires that Harford County Public Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Harford County Public Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Harford County Public Schools to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications.

In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents/guardians have advised the local school system that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want Harford County Public Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the student's principal in writing within 10 school days of the first day of school. Harford County Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name and grade, but only when it appears on honor roll or graduation list or as a member of a school-approved team, club or other student organization or school publication;
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- Degrees and awards received;
- Student's name and photograph as they appear in individual school or school system publications. [Back](#)

#### **PROCEDURES RELATED TO PARENTAL RIGHTS**

The information below is being provided to assist parents who may have custody questions. Questions related to these procedures should be directed to the Director of Student Services at 410-588-5334.

#### Definitions

- a. Parent is the biological or adoptive parent of a student in HCPS.
- b. Legal guardian is an individual who has been awarded guardianship of a student in HCPS by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- c. Supervised visitation means a circumstance wherein a parent, who by court order, may not visit or be with his/her child unless some other person is present.
- d. Non-custodial parent means a parent who has not been awarded, by court order, sole custody or joint custody of the student in question.

#### Rights & obligations of a parent/legal guardian

1. The rights/obligations set forth in Section 1 apply whether a parent has been awarded custody, joint custody, or visitation or where parents are living separate and apart and no court order relating to the children has been issued. A parent/legal guardian may exercise the following rights unless a court order prohibits the parent/legal guardian from exercising said rights either in whole or in part. Said rights are as follows.

- a. A parent/legal guardian may pick up a child from school with the exception that a parent, who may exercise supervised visitation only, may not pick up or sign out.
- b. A parent/legal guardian may be present at school for the purposes of observing their child in the educational environment, in school activities such as assemblies, plays, concerts and similar functions or activities which parents usually and ordinarily attend.
- c. Parents/legal guardians may inspect and review educational records of the student.
  1. Schools may charge a fee for copies of the student records which are made for the parent or guardian of the student provided the fee does not effectively prevent the parent or guardian from exercising the right to inspect and review the records.
  2. If a non-custodial parent requests to be provided copies of school related information which is provided to the custodial parent, the school shall provide the non-custodial parent copies of the information.
2. Only a parent who has custody/joint custody or legal guardian may withdraw a student.
3. Educational Decision Making. In circumstances where parents are living separate and apart, only parents who have been awarded, by court order, custody or joint custody, or parents who are living separate and apart with no court order relating to the child, shall make or participate in decisions relating to the child's education. This paragraph does not apply to decisions or matters discussed at an IEP meeting.
4. Identification. In the event an administrator has a reasonable doubt regarding whether an individual is, in fact, a parent or legal guardian of a student, the administrator shall request such documentation which shall include a birth certificate or judicial record which establishes either the maternity or paternity or legal guardianship of the person relative to the student in question as well as a photographic identification of the parent/legal guardian. In the event that the parent/legal guardian fails to provide such documentation or such documentation is provided but is in the opinion of the administrator insufficient, the administrator shall prohibit the person in question from exercising the rights set forth above.
5. Written Authorization. Except for activities described in paragraph 1(b) above, which are attended by members of the general public, no person other than a parent/legal guardian shall be entitled to exercise the rights above without written approval of the parent/legal guardian.
6. Visitation at school. Parents who have visitation rights shall not exercise visitation at school. Such parents may participate in all school functions or activities in which other parents participate unless a court order prohibits same.
7. Safety. Administrators shall not allow a parent/legal guardian to remove a child from school if the mental or physical condition of the parent, legal guardian or student at the time is such that the administrator reasonably believes the child's health, safety or welfare is at risk in the event the parent/legal guardian removes the child from school.
8. Neutrality. School administrators/personnel should at all times be neutral in family, personal or legal problems related to marital & custody disputes, separation & divorce.
9. Notice by Parents/Legal Guardians. Parents/legal guardians are responsible to provide the school administration with a copy of any court order which relates in whole or in part to any of the rights set forth above. [Back](#)

### **RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

HCPS provides telecommunications resources to students for educational purposes. Telecommunications resources shall be used in accordance with the Responsible Use Procedure (RUP). HCPS utilizes an outside Internet filtering company to ensure the safety of our students while they access the Internet and allows HCPS to comply with the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA). The RUP is available at [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org). Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information. [Back](#)

### **SAFETY & SECURITY**

As much as we try to recognize all school family members, please be prepared to show picture identification. For the safety of our students and staff, all doors are secured. Visitors must ring the "doorbell" located at the front door to alert the office of their presence. The office staff will request the purpose of the visit prior to releasing the door.

Visitors must report directly to the main office immediately upon entering the building. Each visitor will enter information into the Visitor Management System, a photo will be taken, and a picture identification badge will then be issued.

#### Alcohol, Metal Detectors & Surveillance Cameras

With reasonable suspicion, students may be asked to submit to an alcohol odor detecting device or metal detector during the school day or at after school events on school property. Some schools may have video surveillance cameras. Some buses operated or contracted by HCPS may have both video surveillance cameras and audio recording equipment to monitor student safety and behavior. Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information.

#### Classroom Visitation

Classroom visitations should be reserved for specific educational needs as we do not want to interrupt the instructional day. In the event that you would like to meet with a teacher, please contact the school to set-up an appointment.

#### Emergency Contacts

The school maintains an emergency card for each student that contains vital information. Please make sure to update the card if any information changes. Only those who are authorized on the emergency card may sign students out from school or visit the classroom for the purposes of observing. We appreciate your cooperation and support! [Back](#)

### **SCHEDULE**

- 8:00 a.m..... School office opens
- 8:30 a.m..... Doors open for students - school supervision begins
- 8:50 a.m..... Announcements begin
- 9:00 a.m..... Instruction begins (students not in homeroom by 9:00 are considered tardy)
- 11:30 a.m..... Morning session of pre-kindergarten and pre-school is dismissed
- 12:45 p.m. .... Arrival of afternoon pre-kindergarten and pre-school
- 1:00 p.m..... Afternoon pre-kindergarten and pre-school instruction begins
- 3:30 p.m. .... Student dismissal begins
- 4:00 p.m..... Office closes

#### Arrival

Staff responsibility and supervision of students does not begin until doors open at 8:30 a.m. and students should not arrive prior unless under the direct supervision of an adult. Upon entering school, students are expected to report directly to their classroom unless they are purchasing breakfast. A student is considered tardy if he/she is not in their homeroom when the 9:00 a.m. bell rings. After 9:00 a.m., parents need to walk students into the building to receive a late pass from the office.

#### Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 3:30 p.m. Changes in dismissal should be provided in writing and in advance. E-mailing dismissal changes to the teacher should not be relied upon since a teacher could be absent or unable to check e-mail during the instructional day. Late phone calls to the office should be reserved for emergency or unexpected situations. Frequent and unexpected changes to dismissal can be a safety concern and puts undue stress on students and staff. Late requests may be denied by the school if it is determined that the change is not an emergency or is too late to enforce. Unless

#### Early Dismissals

Elementary schools will close three hours early 10 times during the school year. Please check the school calendar and plan in advance, making sure to inform the classroom teacher in writing of any dismissal changes that may be necessary. Pre-kindergarten/pre-school hours for 12:30 dismissals are 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. for the morning session and 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for the afternoon session. In the event that there is a delayed opening due to inclement weather, any planned early dismissal will be cancelled and students will follow the delayed opening schedule. In addition, we hold School Spirit Days on each early dismissal – we hope your child will participate! [Back](#)

## **STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE INFORMATION**

At the beginning of each school year, HCPS provides parents/guardians with information on a voluntary accident insurance program. More information and enrollment applications can be found on [www.studentinsurance-kk.com](http://www.studentinsurance-kk.com) or contact the Risk Management Office at 410-588-5286. [Back](#)

## **STUDENT BACKPACK USE**

Students are permitted to use backpacks or similar items to carry their schoolbooks, materials, or equipment while traveling to and from school. However, such items must be stored in lockers or designated areas during the school day. The school principal will have the authority to make exceptions based on medical or health conditions, or disability. Harford County Public Schools shall not assume responsibility for the theft, loss, or damage to a student's backpack or similar item, or its contents.

The following conditions shall apply: bookbags, backpacks, etc. shall be stored in the student's assigned locker or designated area; musical instrument cases shall be stored in the music room or designated storage areas; athletic bags and gear shall be stored in the student's locker, assigned physical education locker, or designated storage area, as appropriate. Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information. [Back](#)

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

- In-school suspension – the exclusion within the school building of a student from the student's regular education program for up to, but not more than, 10 school days for disciplinary reasons by the school principal per school year.
- Short-term suspension – the removal of a student from school for up to, but not more than, three school days for disciplinary reasons by the principal.
- Long-term suspension – removal of a student from school for a time period between four to 10 school days for disciplinary reasons by the principal.
- Extended suspension – the exclusion of a student from a student's regular program for a period between 11 and 45 school days by the superintendent of schools or his/her designee. Depending on the length of the suspension, the student will either be permitted to make up work lost during the suspension period or, in the case of secondary students, be required to enroll in and satisfactorily complete the Harford County Public Schools' Alternative Education Program.
- Expulsion – the removal of the student from the student's regular school program for 45 school days or longer.

### Behavior which has taken place off school property

Students may be disciplined, including suspension or expulsion, for behavior which has taken place off school property and/or beyond the school day, if the behavior is determined by the principal to impact the educational environment of the school, the safety and/or welfare of other students and/or staff, and/or the maintenance of school order and discipline.

### Restitution

If a student is determined to have violated these discipline policies or a school regulation and in the course of that violation damaged or destroyed school property or the property of another person while on school property, the principal shall require the student or the student's parent/guardian to make restitution.

### Offenses Subject to Referral

Students shall receive a 10-day suspension and referral to the superintendent with the recommendation for further disciplinary action for certain offenses including, but not limited to, possession, use, sale, distribution, or transference of a controlled dangerous substance, medicine, alcohol, inhalant or other intoxicant, or to be in possession of paraphernalia or a substance misrepresented to be a controlled dangerous substance or alcohol; verbal or physical threat to an adult; attack on an adult; dangerous weapons; possession/use of an object which reasonably could cause physical harm/injury to a person, or an object which is represented to be, and a reasonable person would conclude was, a dangerous weapon, and for which there is no reasonable/legitimate cause for the student to possess or use on HCPS property/school-sponsored activity; arson/fire; serious bodily injury, sexual attack; & false alarms/bomb threats. Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information. [Back](#)

## **STUDENT SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

The principal or assistant principal may make a reasonable search of a student, including the search of a student's backpack or other belongings, on the school premises if he or she has a reasonable belief that the student is in possession of an item, the possession of which is a criminal offense under the laws of this state or violates a rule or policy of the Board of Education. This search shall be made in the presence of a third party.

A principal, assistant principal, or teacher may make a reasonable search of a student on the school premises or on a school-sponsored trip if the searcher has a reasonable belief that the student has in the student's possession an item, the possession of which is: a criminal offense under the laws of this state; a violation of any other Maryland state law; or a violation of a rule or regulation of the local school Board. A search authorized shall be made in the presence of a third party. Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information. [Back](#)

## **TEXTBOOKS/LIBRARY BOOKS/SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS**

Students are responsible for all textbooks, library books, technology and other school materials issued to them during the school year. A student must pay for all lost or damaged books/materials and failure to pay could result in the withholding of report cards. A student who does not return a library book may jeopardize his/her ability to check out materials from the media center. [Back](#)

## **TITLE IX COMPLIANT PROCEDURES**

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 states in part: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The Board of Education of Harford County has adopted Title IX complaint procedures for students, parents, and employees:

- Complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or retaliation shall be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator in accordance with Harford County Public Schools administrative procedures relating to Title IX complaints.
- A complainant shall file a complaint within 90 days of the date the alleged act of discrimination occurred.
- The Title IX coordinator shall attempt to informally resolve a complaint within 30 days of receipt.
- If an informal resolution cannot be reached, the Title IX coordinator shall issue a written decision setting forth in concise fashion his/her decision regarding the complaint and reasonings for the decision. Such written decision shall be issued within 60 days of receipt of the complaint..
- All decisions of the Title IX coordinator may be appealed to the superintendent pursuant to Section 4-205 of the Education Article of the Maryland Annotated Code.
- The complaint procedure described herein is in addition to any other administrative or judicial action the complainant may pursue.

For questions, contact the Supervisor of Equity and Cultural Proficiency at 410-809-6065, who also serves as the Title IX Coordinator for Harford County Public Schools. Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information. [Back](#)

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Please view the full handbook and/or the Board Policy Manual for more information regarding transportation. Students who are eligible are encouraged to utilize bus transportation; however, children may be dropped off by car at the "Kiss and Drop" area in the morning. Please pull forward and have your child ready to exit the car so that the flow of traffic may continue to move smoothly. Cars may not be in the bus lane from 8:30-9:00.

Harford County Public Schools utilizes a computer-based system called "[Infofinder](#)" to assist parents in determining bus routes, bus numbers, pick-up and drop-off times. Users can enter their specific address and get information for elementary, middle and high school. Please visit the [Infofinder](#) site to get started! The time that your child arrives home by bus will vary at the beginning of the year. As the year progresses and dismissal gets more efficient, children will begin to arrive home on time.

### Parent/Guardian Transportation

Parents/Guardians who choose to drop their child off at the school are responsible for the safety of their child until the school is open for students. Parents/Guardians who are not aware of the time that students are allowed to enter the school must contact their respective school directly for the information. The school will share normal opening times, as well as late opening times, with the parent/guardian.

### Transportation Responsibilities of Parents

Each parent/guardian has a definite role in the safe and efficient operation of a school's transportation system. If the transportation program, as a whole, is to function effectively, the parents/guardians must assume their responsibilities to the program and extend cooperation and support to the people charged with its operation. Parents/Guardians should be aware that the privilege to ride a school bus may be temporarily or permanently revoked if the "Transportation Rules for Students" are violated.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for the safety of their children from the time they leave home in the morning until the time they board the school bus and, at the end of the school day, from the time the school bus departs the bus stop and the children reach home. For those students in a non-service area, getting to and from the school safely is a parental responsibility. During the mid-day bus run, adult supervision is required for Pre-k/pre-school students at the bus stop until the child is picked up, and at the time a child is dropped off. Once the child boards the school bus, the responsibility lies with the bus driver and the school administration. In order to ensure the safe and efficient transportation, parents/guardians must also accept the following responsibilities:

- Cooperate with the school authorities and the school bus driver to promote safe and efficient services for all passengers.
- Insist upon good behavior on the part of their children while riding the school bus.
- Insist that their children occupy the seats that have been assigned to them.
- Instruct their children as to their responsibility for damages caused to the property of others, including the school bus.
- Informing/Ensuring their children arrive at the designated school bus stop five minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the school bus.
- Make suggestions to the school administration or to the director of transportation for improvements in the transportation program.
- Walk with younger children to and from the school bus stop, using this opportunity to teach the children proper pedestrian practices. If the parents cannot accompany their children, arrangements should be made, if possible, for older children (brothers, sisters, or neighbors) to escort the younger children to and from the school bus stop or school.
- Set an example for their children by obeying all traffic rules, signs, and signals in order to make their child(ren) aware of best safety practices.
- Understand that unauthorized persons, including parents/guardians, are not allowed to board the school bus under any circumstances.

### Transportation Rules for Students

- Students must follow directions from the driver the first time they are given. The driver shall be in full charge of the school bus and students, except in the presence of a teacher/administrator, who shall then be in charge of the students.
- Insubordination or disrespect to the driver or attendant will not be tolerated.
- Students will sit in the seats which have been assigned to them by the driver, the principal, or their designee. Students must remain in their seats at all times when the bus is in motion.
- Students may converse in a normal manner; but loud, profane, or obscene language or gestures will not be permitted.
- With the exception of their books, bookbags, and school equipment, students may not transport other items without the permission of the driver. No objects are to be placed in the bus aisle. Approved objects must be of a size that can be controlled in the seat by the student.

- Students must not extend any part of their bodies through bus windows. Spitting or tossing objects on or out of the bus is prohibited.
- Students should cooperate in keeping the bus clean (students may not eat, drink, or chew gum on the bus) and must not damage it. Any malicious or willful damage to a school bus will result in immediate withdrawal of transportation services for student(s) involved, until disciplinary consequences have been satisfied and the cost of repairing the bus has been satisfactorily settled.
- Students in any grade may use portable communication devices (PCD) on school buses before or after the regular school day, provided: students do not use PCDs for conversation, calls, photographing, or videoing; such use does not include the implementation of the audio component of the PCD unless the student uses ear buds.
- Students may not ride the bus while on suspension from school.
- Students must not attempt to board or exit the bus while in motion. Students may not leave the bus on the way to or from school without the permission of the driver, given only in cases of personal emergency, or upon written request from the principal.
- Students are permitted to ride only the bus to which they are assigned, utilizing their designated bus stop. Requests from parents/guardians for their students to ride other buses in an emergency may be considered by school officials.
- Students must be at the bus stop at least five minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the bus.
- No glass items, balloons or live animals (except those assisting disabled persons) are to be transported on buses.
- Students violating transportation rules will be reported and transportation services may be restricted or withdrawn.

#### Pre-k/pre-school Bus Procedure

Bus drivers will not drop off any Pre-k/pre-school child transported on a mid-day route unless a parent, guardian or pre-authorized designee is visibly present and prepared to take custody of the student. In the event no such parent, guardian or designee is present, the student will remain on the bus and be returned to his/her school at which time the parent will be contacted. In the event a student is returned to school more than twice during a school year, the parent shall be required to meet with the Director of Transportation and may be subject to termination of bus transportation.

#### Dismissal

A consistent method of dismissal that is familiar to the student, parent and teacher will assist in making dismissal safe. Dismissal begins at 3:30 p.m.

1. Changes in dismissal should be provided in writing and in advance. E-mailing dismissal changes to the teacher should not be relied upon since a teacher could be absent or unable to check e-mail during the instructional day. Late phone calls to the office should be reserved for emergency or unexpected situations. Frequent and unexpected changes to dismissal can be a safety concern and puts undue stress on students and staff. Late requests may be denied by the school if it is determined that the change is not an emergency or is too late to enforce. A student will be dismissed by their normal procedure unless written notification is received otherwise.
2. Cars are not permitted in the bus lane from 3:00-3:45.
3. As much as we try to recognize all of our school family members, please be prepared to show picture identification when picking up a student. Only those that are authorized on the emergency card will be allowed to sign a child out.
4. Please note that repeated instances of children being picked up late or dropped off early could result in a referral being made to the Pupil Personnel Worker.

In addition, please observe the following “best practices” and courtesies:

- Please refrain from talking on cell phones while driving on the school campus.
- Handicap spots are reserved for permit holders only.
- Please observe your speed when on the school campus.
- Children who arrive to school after 9:00 a.m. should be escorted by a parent to the office.

## Homestead Building

### Arrival (refer to map)

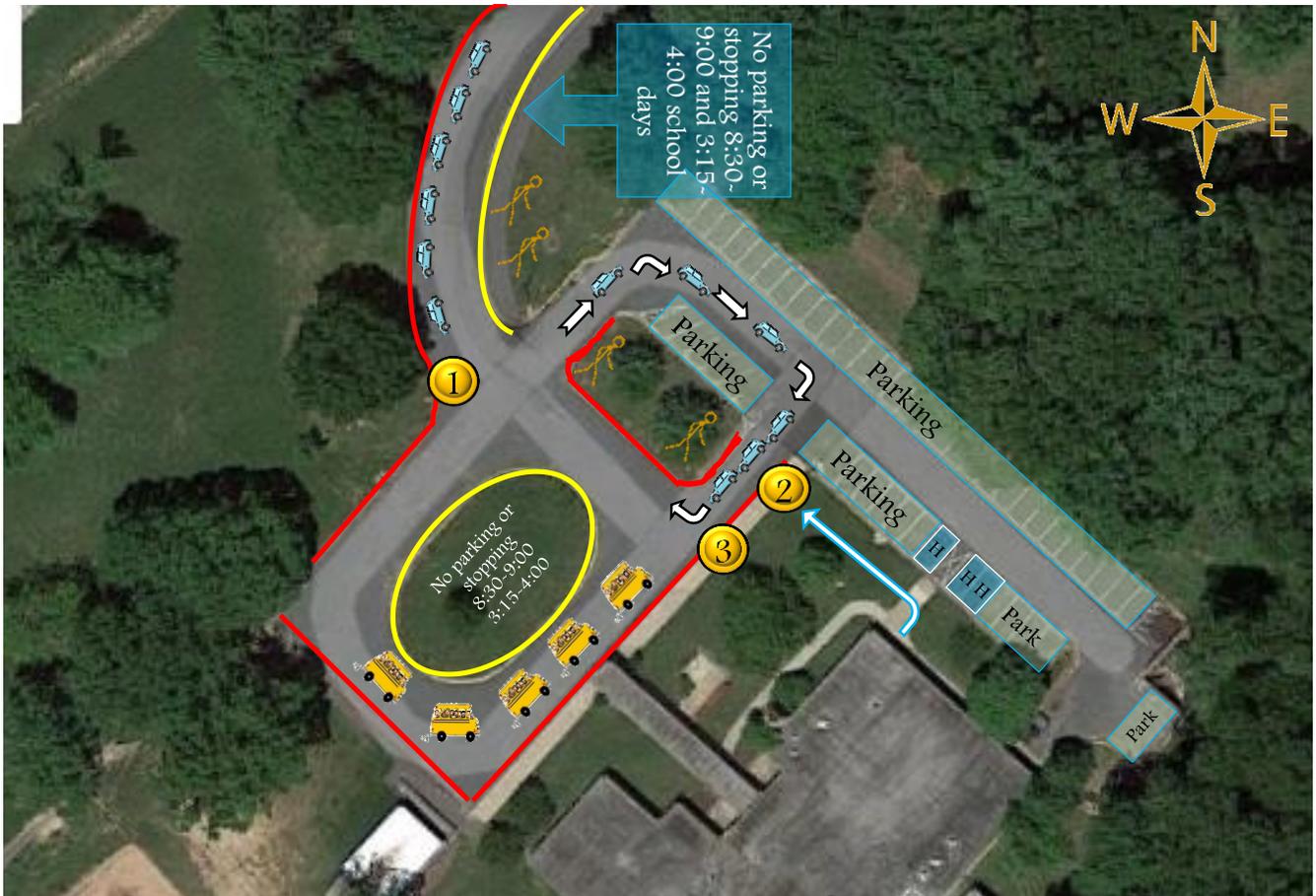
Parent drop off is not available prior to 8:30 a.m. due to staff not being on duty. Due to limited parking, cars may not park in the lot between 8:30 and 9:00, unless there is business to address in school. There is overflow parking at Bel Air Middle School if needed. Each bullet corresponds to the following map.

- ① Car riders will stage in line and wait until a staff member comes on duty. Once on duty, the staff member will direct cars to enter the lot in a single-file line. Please obey the directions of staff.
- ② Proceed to the Kiss and Drop area. For safety reasons, it is recommended that all children exit vehicles on the curb side/driver side.
- ③ After dropping off your child, exit the Kiss and Drop area by turning right. Please yield to school buses and obey the directions of staff members.

### Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 3:30 p.m. but could vary. Due to limited parking on our school campus, cars are not permitted on the lot until directed by staff. If you have business to address in school, please use any open parking space. Parents/Guardians will be given a “Fast Pass” to help staff quickly identify your child. Passes will be distributed as quickly as possible. Please have your “Fast Pass” on display when picking up. If you need additional passes, please call school. Each bullet corresponds to the following map.

- ① Cars will stage in line until dismissal starts. Once directed, cars will enter the lot.
- ② Students will exit the building and meet you at the curb. For safety reasons, it is recommended that all children enter vehicles on the curb side/driver side.
- ③ After picking up your child, turn right to exit the lot. Yield to school buses and please obey the directions of staff members.



## Wakefield Building

### Arrival

Parent drop off is not available prior to 8:30 a.m. due to staff not being on duty. You can either park and walk your child to the front door or use the kiss and drop lane (please note we have limited parking).

- ① Pull into the “Kiss and Drop” area and have your child ready to exit on the passenger side. Develop your child’s independence and responsibility to keep the flow of cars moving. After dropping off, turn left to exit. Please yield to pedestrians & busses and obey the directions of staff.
- ② Parking or stopping on islands or at the school entrance along Hunsinger Way will not be permitted between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and again between 3:15 p.m. and 3:45 p.m. Additional parking is located on the access road between Wakefield and Homestead.

### Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 3:30 but could vary. Parents waiting for walkers and car riders will need to find a parking spot in the lot or along the access road between Wakefield and Homestead.

- ① This area is reserved for commercial day care only in the afternoon.
- ② Parking or stopping on islands or at the school entrance along Hunsinger Way is not permitted between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 3:15 p.m. and 3:45 p.m. Additional parking is located on the access road between Wakefield and Homestead.
- ③ Parking or stopping along the red curb identified by the Fire Marshall is be prohibited.
- ④ Parents waiting for walkers and car riders will be permitted to enter the side entrance of the school at 3:25 p.m. Children will meet parents in the cafeteria. Parents will be issued a “Fast Pass” which will be the identification for pick-up. If a “Fast Pass” is not presented, it may cause a delay. Contact the school if you need an additional “Fast Pass”.



### **WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD**

In the event that you need to withdraw your child from school, please provide the office with a written request (preferably in advance) including the student's name, last day he/she will be attending and what school (if known) they will be transferring to. This advanced notice will give the school sufficient time to complete the necessary paperwork and gather all relevant materials helping to make the transition as smooth as possible. [Back](#)