

Academics

What is the Advisory Period?

The Advisory Period takes place weekly on Thursday (unless otherwise communicated) and is split into two 45-minute blocks. One block will provide opportunities for students to learn about financial literacy, digital citizenship, and explore careers and interests. This time can also be spent at assemblies, listening to guest speakers, and enjoying Team celebrations.

A focus for the other block will be on iReady mathematics. Once students complete the iReady diagnostic, they will have computer generated personalized learning to meet their academic needs. Additionally, students may be pulled into small groups with a math teacher and/or special educator to receive in-person instruction on areas of growth. All HCPS middle schools have this class and will have similar content.

The Advisory Period is its own class, but graded assignments can be transferred to a grade in a content class.

Who teaches the Advisory Period?

General and Special Educators teach the Advisory Period. Students are grouped as a Team then divided alphabetically.

What are Unified Arts?

In elementary school, Unified Arts is called “Specials” and in high school, they are called “Electives.” The Unified Arts class changes each quarter. All students are required to take Health each year. The other three classes are selected for students based on their interest inventory given at the end of the previous school year. Unified Arts classes at SOMS are: Art, Career Compass (7th grade only), Computer Science, Drama, Engineering, General Music, Health, and Interactive Media (8th grade only).

Why does my child need to dress into a uniform for PE class?

The main reason students dress in uniforms for PE class is hygiene. Students are physically active in PE class and thus sweat. Changing from regular street clothes to the PE uniform allows students to perform at their best and not worry about messing up their school attire. Many students are in PE class 50-90 minutes each day and are expected to demonstrate their physical best for the entire period.

How do I purchase a PE uniform?

STALLION SHIRT AND SHORT (\$25 total – available for all students to purchase)

- Purchase from the *School Cash Online* store
<https://harford.schoolcashonline.com/>

(Scan QR code or use the URL above to access the store)

- If you need assistance with accessing *School Cash Online*, please contact the main office.
- The store is open for uniforms to be purchased.
 - If you purchase before the open house, you can pick it up at the open house in the downstairs PE hallway.
 - You can purchase and pick up during open house.
 - Or you can purchase anytime and students will be able to pick up their uniform during PE class the first week of school.

My child is uncomfortable changing in front of other students. What should they do?

Both the girl's and boy's locker rooms have an area that is reserved for individual changing. It is up to each student whether they prefer changing at their locker or in the private changing area.

Why do some students have PE every day and others do not?

If a student is in Band, Chorus, or Orchestra they split this time with their PE class. Usually, every other day the student attends each class. If students are not enrolled in the music program, they attend PE each day.

Why does my child attend music lessons during the regular school day? They are missing time from other classes.

It is important for Ms. Campbell and Ms. McMenamin to have an opportunity to work with individual students. Being able to listen to just one student play their instrument allows the teachers to correct issues on the spot and build student confidence for when they rejoin the music group.

How do I sign up for a Conference Night?

One week before First and Second Quarter Conference Nights, a Signup Genius will be sent to parents/guardians. Attending a conference is not mandatory. The Third Quarter Conference Night is a Showcase of Student Work for the whole school. No signup required.

How do I request an initial IEP or 504?

A request must be made in writing, an email is sufficient, to Helen Miller, Principal. She will then forward it to the appropriate staff members who will initiate the IEP/504 eligibility process.

How does my child apply for a Magnet Program?

All 8th grade students have the option to apply to one or more of HCPS' Magnet Programs. Information will be distributed to families about presentations they can attend. Applications open October 1st.

My child was absent from school. How do they get their makeup work?

On the day the student returns to school, they will ask each of their teachers for the makeup assignments. The student has the same number of days absent to complete and submit the make-up work. For example, a student is absent on Tuesday and returns to school on Wednesday. They collect their make-up work on Wednesday when they do to each class, have Thursday to complete the assignments, and submit the make-up work on Friday. Students must initiate the conversation about make-up work with their teachers.

How do I request after school tutoring?

A teacher's workday is 7:35am to 3:05pm. A parent/guardian can contact their child's teacher to schedule a tutoring session that will end at 3:05pm. If more tutoring is requested, HCPS has a list of teachers who are willing to be compensated for tutoring.

For a list of current and former HCPS teachers who offer tutoring services, please contact the appropriate content area office as listed below.

English/Language Arts & Reading Jennifer Brazil Jennifer.Brazil@hcps.org 410-588-5221

Mathematics Denise Lamphere Denise.Lamphere@hcps.org 410-588-5303

Science Renee Mozingo Renee.Mozingo@hcps.org 410-588-5295

Social Sciences Lucy Brandt Lucy.Brandt@hcps.org 410-588-5222

World Languages Gustavo Ugalde Gustavo.Ugalde@hcps.org 410-638-3804

How do I dispute a grade on an assignment?

In middle school, we are supporting students as they transition from a dependent learner to an independent learner. It is best to sit with your child as they create and send an email outlining their concerns to their teacher. The parent should be copied on the email. The teacher will contact the student and parent/guardian to discuss the concern.

What is the grading policy?

At SOMS we have a Grading Committee that provides guidance and expectations to teachers on what/how certain assignments should be graded. It is important to read

each teacher's syllabus to explore their specific product and process late policy and process redo policy. Below are the basic grading procedures and HAC codes teachers will use.

The Physical Education department uses an HCPS PE Grade Policy.

HCPS Grading Policy/SOMS Grading Procedure

Product 50%	<p>Product grades are summative assessments which assess a student's mastery of content and skills. Product assessments are graded for accuracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of these assessments are, but not limited to, traditional tests and quizzes, projects, end of chapter activities, final drafts, labs, language dialogues, playing tests, presentations, etc. • Minimum 3 Product grades per quarter. • Product assignments are not eligible for redo.
Process 30%	<p>Process grades are formative assessments which assess a student's processes by which students master the knowledge needed for success on Product assessments (summative assessments). Process assessments are graded for progress and/or accuracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of these assessments are, but not limited to, guided reading questions, class assignments, class discussion, music lessons, notebooks, quizzes, drafts, etc. • Minimum 5 Process grades per quarter.
Practice 20%	<p>Practice grades prepare students for Process (formative) and Product (summative) Assessments. These assessments are designed to reinforce skills and concepts and are usually graded for completion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of these assessments are, but not limited to, practice logs, drills/warm up, closures, classroom activities, homework, etc. • Minimum of 7 Practice grades per quarter.

Extra credit may be given for curriculum-related extensions of learning.

Grading Codes in HAC

Code	Meaning	Grade Assigned
X	Exempt: Student is not required to complete this assignment.	Does not impact grade.
✕	✕: Your teacher has not yet entered any code/grade for this assignment.	Does not impact grade until teacher grades assignment.
M	Missing: Product assignment was not turned in.	50%
SB	Scored Below: Student scored below 50% on the Product assignment.	50%
TLTC	Too Late to Count: Practice or Process assignment	0%

	is no longer accepted for submission.	
NHI	Not Handed In: Student is able to submit this assignment. A point penalty may be applied to assignment when submitted. It is a zero until the assignment is submitted or TLTC.	0%
NYG	Not Yet Graded: Student submitted the assignment, but it has not yet been graded.	Does not impact grade until teacher grades assignment.

HCPS Physical Education Grading Policy

Factors which determine a student's grades are the following:

1. PRODUCT 50% (*Psychomotor – Rubric Based Assessments*)
 - Skill Performance
2. PROCESS 30% (*Cognitive – Knowledge Based*)
 - Examples include: Unit Tests, Quizzes, Homework, Exit Tickets, Peer-Assessments, Self-Assessments, Etc.
3. PRACTICE 20% (*Affective – Rubric Based Assessments & Work Habits*)
 - Personal and Social Performance and Development
 - Engaged in and Prepared for Learning

Arrival

How do students arrive to school?

Students may enter the building at 7:45am. If they are planning to eat breakfast, they go immediately to the cafeteria, drop off their backpack in the designated area, and eat breakfast. Other students go to their lockers and then to homeroom. All students must be to homeroom by 8:05 or are recorded as late to school. There is an 8:03 warning bell.

Can my child wait for a friend to arrive?

Yes, in the Main Lobby. Once all buses have arrived, students will be asked to move to Homeroom.

Attendance

How do I report my child's absence?

Students brought home the SOMS absence pad during the first week of school. Please complete this note and the student brings the note to their Homeroom Teacher who sends it to the Main Office with their daily attendance folder.

How do I alert the school that I will pick up my child before the end of the day?

The SOMS absence note should be completed and the student takes the note to the Main Office during homeroom to receive a hallway pass. When it is time for the student to leave, they show the pass to their teacher, gather their materials from their locker, and meets their family member in the Main Office. Parent/Guardian must show official identification in order to leave with the student.

How can I get a vacation approval?

The school principal can approve up to 5 vacation days each year. If the absence is for more than 5 days, the school principal must forward the request to the Director of Secondary Schools.

The approval will be based on the dates of the vacation, the vacation purpose, and then compared to the number of days the student has already been absent. MSDE identifies a student as Chronically Absent if they miss 10% (18 days) of the school year regardless if the absence is lawful or unlawful.

Requests for vacation days during scheduled State testing will NOT be approved. Families receive these dates during the first week of school.

Teachers will not provide school assignments prior to an approved vacation.

Bullying and Harassment

My child experienced bullying on the bus to and/or from school. How do I report this?

Parent/guardian should complete and submit the HCPS Bullying and Harassment Incident Report immediately. This is sent directly to HCPS and SOMS Administrators. After this is submitted, contact SOMS and ask to speak to your child's grade level AP.

My child experienced bullying and/or harassment at school. How do I report this?

There are two ways a bullying and/or harassment incident can be reported. The first way is for the student to report the incident to the closest adult and ask to go to the Main

Office. There they will complete an Incident Report that outlines what happened. To aid the AP with the investigation, students should include time, date, location, and any witnesses to the incident.

The second way is for the student or parent/guardian to complete the Bullying and Harassment Incident Form from home. Most likely this will be submitted after school hours. Once the AP receives the BHI form, they will contact the student and their family and conduct an investigation into the incident.

Cafeteria

Is the food in the cafeteria free?

Unless a student's family has been approved for a free lunch meal plan, they will have to pay a portion or full price of a meal. Application to free lunch meal plan can be found here <https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application>. Parents/Guardians use School Cash Online to load money on to their child's account. Students who do not have money available on their account can still get lunch, but they are denied any additional snacks. The student's account will show a negative balance. Families are contacted through HCPS Food and Nutrition Office to be made aware of account balances and learn how to pay for negative balances.

How much does breakfast and lunch cost?

Breakfast is \$1.50 and lunch is \$2.85. Use this link to access the daily school menus <https://hcpsmenus.com/index.php?sid=1503510605320&page=menus&sm=9&sy=2025#clicktoscroll>.

How does buying lunch in the cafeteria work?

Go to <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/login/postlogin.action> to load money on to your child's food account.

Can students sit wherever they want during lunch in the cafeteria?

Students enter the cafeteria with their academic team. The team is assigned a column of tables. Students can sit anywhere within that column.

Can I bring Chick-fil-A to my child during lunch?

The answer is yes, but the student will not be able to eat the food in the cafeteria because it causes a huge disruption as other students want to taste the food also. The student can eat the food in the Main Office.

Can I bring food for a class to share?

Students and families cannot bring food to school for students to share. Many students have food allergies that make it difficult to meet every child's dietary needs.

What is the link to the menus?

<https://hcpsmenus.com/index.php?sid=1503510605320&page=menus&sm=9&sy=2025#clicktoscroll>

Canvas

Use this link <https://www.hcps.org/departments/curriculum/options/> for information about Canvas.

Clubs

How does my child sign up for a club?

A list of clubs with sponsor contact information will be sent to students before the end of September.

How does my child start a new club?

Each club requires an adult sponsor. Once students have secured their sponsor, the sponsor speaks to Dr. Miller for approval.

Can my child be in more than one club during the school year?

Yes, depending on the club schedule.

Dismissal

How do students dismiss from school?

Students dismiss the building in three tiers. Once their tier is called, students go immediately to their locker, gather their things, and walk towards the front of the building. The first tier students leave at the 2:45pm bell and is for students who ride buses in the first half of the bus loop. These students exit through the front doors. The second tier is called at 2:47pm for students who ride a bus in the back half of the bus loop. These students exit through the side doors. Once all buses are off campus, approximately 2:55pm, students who walk home from school and those getting picked up by parents are dismissed.

Health Suite

What is the job of the school nurses?

The school nurse's job is multifaceted. Students who have chronic issues or have a medical plan usually visit the Health Suite at least once a day for assessment and/or medicine. Most of the nurse's time is spent assessing and triage students who visit the Health Suite to determine the wellness of the student. The goal of the Health Suite is to listen to the student, treat their issue (if possible), and return them back to class.

The nurses want to limit the time a student spends out of class since that can affect academic achievement. If the student continues to feel unwell, they may return to the Health Suite. If the student wants to call home, they can do so from the Health Suite or the Main Office.

Can my child bring their own medication to school?

No. Students found in possession of counter and/or prescription drugs may face disciplinary actions. Students who have an Order to Carry Contract may carry their inhalers and epi pens. Please speak with the nurse for more clarification.

Library

What are the book loaning rules of the library?

Library materials have a loan period of 21 days. We do not charge overdue fines. However, after an item is overdue 90 days, it is declared lost. A circulation block and bill for the replacement cost of the book is issued until the book is returned in satisfactory condition. In addition, materials that are returned in damaged condition will be charged for the replacement cost of the material. Students receive overdue notices via email on Monday mornings.

We do not require students to borrow materials from our school library, and we welcome family input into their student's borrowing practices.

Lockers

Does my child have to use a locker?

If students carry a backpack, lunch box, and/or outerwear, the locker is the place to keep these items secure. If a student brings a cell phone to school, the cell phone stays in the locker during the regular school day. Students have opportunities to stop at their locker throughout the day to retrieve materials.

Lockers should be locked at all times. Students should only use their assigned locker. Lockers are a privilege to use.

Middle School Sports

What sports are offered at SOMS?

HCPS Middle Schools offer competitive Basketball and Soccer teams.

How does my child tryout for a sports team?

There are 3 steps to try out for a SOMS sports team.

1. Complete an on-line registration during the allotted time frame.
2. Submit a Physical form to the Athletic Director dated on or after 6/1/25.
3. Academically Eligible- No E's on report card.

Try out for basketball will happen in November and soccer in March.

Are there other ways my child can engage in physical activity at school?

Intramural Sports through the Physical Education Department is offered in a three week activity rotation. For example, flag football will be offered three days a week for three weeks. Then another activity will be featured. Interested students must complete the permission form.

Miscellaneous

School supply information?

A school supply list has been posted since July 2025 on the school website.

Where is the lost and found kept?

The lost and found is kept in storage lockers under the 2A stairwell, close to the elevator. High value items like jewelry, glasses, and electronics are kept in the Main Office. We will bring materials to the front lobby (except the high value items) before the end of each quarter for students to retrieve their items. After this time, lost and found items will be donated to the Care Closet or a community organization.

How does SOMS communicate with families?

Families will receive The Round Up each Sunday evening at 5:30 or on the night before returning from a holiday. The SOMS website <https://soms.hcpsschools.org/> and our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/559950655359694> are updated often. Our Parent and Community Liaison is Ms. Theresa Bates.

Community members can download the HCPS app and sign up for push notifications from HCPS and the schools of their choice.

What is EHallPass?

EHallPass is an electric hall pass system. If a student is approved to leave the classroom, they create an ehallpass request and the teacher approves the pass. Students have 3 passes per day.

How do I drop off an item at school that my child forgot?

Bring the item to the Main Office and the staff will contact your child so they can retrieve the item.

What are Character Awards?

Each quarter, academic teams, UA, music, and PE select students who exemplify our motto of Empower Grow Accept. These students are honored with a celebration family members can attend.

How can I volunteer at SOMS?

Volunteer opportunities will be announced in The Round Up and/or through PTSA.

Safety and Security

Are there video cameras at school and on buses?

Video cameras are installed in all HCPS schools and buses.

Do students practice evacuations and other emergencies?

Each HCPS school practices different evacuations 10 times during a school year.

What is the role of the School Resource Officer?

Our School Resource Officer is DFC Landsverk. Her role is to maintain a safe and secure environment for all SOMS students and staff. DFC Landsverk is employed by Harford County Sheriff's Department and enforces state law.

What is the role of the School Safety Liaison?

Our School Safety Liaison is Ms. Quickley. Her role is to maintain a safe and secure environment for all SOMS students and staff. Ms. Quickley is employed by HCPS and enforces HCPS policies and procedures.

Is it possible to get a map of the classrooms for all grades?

For safety purposes we do not publish a map of the school, however, one is available in hard copy at the Main Office.

School Events

Pink Out is a joint effort between SOMS and CWHs to support breast cancer research. Students dress in pink and can purchase pink merchandise during lunch as a fundraiser.

Fall Fling is an afterschool event sponsored by the SGA and supported by the PTSA. Students can dress in costumes and enjoy an hour of dancing with music provided by a DJ, volleyball games, and concessions. Tickets must be purchased before the cut-off date/time and will not be sold on the day of the event.

Spring Fling is an afterschool event sponsored by the SGA and supported by the PTSA. Students can dress casually and enjoy an hour of dancing with music provided by a DJ, volleyball games, and concessions. Tickets must be purchased before the cut-off date/time and will not be sold on the day of the event.

Sports Spirit Days are scheduled throughout the year for baseball, football, basketball, and soccer so students can show their appreciation for their teams. Face paint is not allowed on any spirit days.

Spirit Days are created and sponsored by the SGA and are advertised throughout the school on posters, during the Blaze announcements, and through the Round Up.

School Groups

The Blaze is the AM announcement news crew. Students can try out for in front and behind the camera positions. Ms. Meredith Campbell is the sponsor.

Student Ambassadors are students who earn community service by working with incoming students. They self-nominate and are teacher approved to be the role models for new students at different events.

Principal's Paddock are students selected by their homeroom teacher to meet quarterly with Dr. Miller to discuss successes and challenges students are facing at SOMS.

SOMS Staff

How do I report a concern I have about a staff member?

Please contact the teacher first to discuss your concern. This may seem challenging at first but allowing the teacher to explain often leads to answers. If the concern is not addressed to your satisfaction, contact your child's grade level AP to discuss the concern.

How do I request a meeting with Dr. Miller?

You may email Dr. Miller directly, helen.miller@hcps.org, and outline the purpose and your availability for the visit. You may also email Dr. Miller's Administrative Assistant, Kim Sullivan, at kimberly.sullivan@hcps.org.

How do I request a meeting with my child's School Counselor and/or Assistant Principal?

Call or email the School Counselor and/or Assistant Principal outlining the reason for the appointment and your availability for the visit.

How do I request a meeting with my child's teacher?

Contact your child's teacher. Meetings can occur during the school day at designated times either in-person or via Teams.

Student Behavior

What is the backpack policy?

Please use this link <https://www.hcps.org/webfiles/WebFilesHandler.ashx?id=7975>.

What is the cell phone policy?

Please use this link <https://www.hcps.org/webfiles/WebFilesHandler.ashx?id=7978>.

What is Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS)?

PBIS is a standard for how students should behave in school to get the most of their education. The motto of SOMS PBIS is Helping, Organized, Ownership, Focus, and Safe (HOOFS). HOOFS represent SOMS Stallion Standards, a guide for student behavior and expectation. A student can be awarded a HOOFS for demonstrating these behaviors. HOOFS can be collected and used to "purchase" items and experiences from The Stall.

My child has been assigned In-School Suspension (ISS). What does this look like for my child?

On the day the student has been assigned ISS, they check in with their homeroom teacher and then report to the Main Office with their laptop and materials. The student will sit in a study carol in the Main Office to complete the assigned teacher work. The assignments will be posted to Canvas, emailed to the student, and the teacher may bring the assignment to the student in the Main Office. The student will get lunch from the cafeteria and eat at their study carol. The student should complete all of their assignments while serving ISS.

Why is gum not allowed in school?

Too often chewed gum finds its way to hallway floors and under furniture. If a student is seen with gum, they will be asked to dispose of it.

What is the difference between a BIC and a Referral?

BIC stands for Behavior Intervention Checklist. This is used by teachers to track minor behavior infractions. A Referral is written by a staff member that includes information about a major behavior infraction.

My child was involved in a fight with another student. My child was disciplined. Why can't I know the consequences for the other student?

Privacy laws do not allow the school to disclose any information about another student, regardless of the situation.

Student Dress Code

What is the school dress code?

Please use this link <https://www.hcps.org/webfiles/WebFilesHandler.ashx?id=7072>.

School Schedule and Events

What is the schedule every day?

Monday, Tuesday, and Friday are 7 period schedules and Wednesday and Thursday are 4 period schedules.

Where can I find a calendar of events?

We post events to Canvas and our website as soon as we are made aware of an event. The Round Up will contain events happening in two-week intervals.

Technology Issues

Procedure/what to do/who to contact when a school device has a problem?

Students who encounter a problem with a device can report it to any teacher. The teacher will place a work order request. Once the work order request is received, the student will be placed on our list for device help or, if needed, a device swap the next morning during homeroom. In the interim, teachers will provide printed copies of the work, or they may send a student to the library to use a desktop computer for digital assignments.

Transportation

How do I drop off and pick up my student in my own car?

The morning drop off line enters to the right of the bus loop. Cars travel to the back of the parking lot to the side of the school for drop off. Please pull up as far forward as possible. Students can leave their vehicle any time when the car reaches the side of the school.

The afternoon pick up process has been modified. We have rearranged the bus map to provide more space at the school's entrance at Moores Mill Road. This will allow families to park in the front parking lot as soon as all the buses are on campus. This will help alleviate traffic congestion and eliminate having to park on Moores Mill Road, in a location that would cause a county sign violation or even worse, grid lock the area due to the line backing into the circle.

Once traffic cones are in place, enter the parking lot immediately to the left. Your children will be advised to exit the building and walk in the crosswalk to meet you there. Cars will no longer be able to enter the bus loop directly in front of the school during dismissal.

My child needs to ride a different bus to and/or from school on a particular day. What is the approval process?

The parent/guardian writes a note to include the reason for the temporary bus change. The Main Office Administrative Assistant gives the note to the grade level Assistant Principal for approval. Once approved, a temporary bus pass will be completed, picked up by the student, and handed to the bus driver when entering the bus.

Requests for hanging out with friends after school will not be approved.