



**This Week**

<b>Mon., Sept. 19</b>	<b>Welcome back!</b>
<b>Tue., Sept. 20</b>	<b>Instrumental music assembly for students Art Escapades, 3:50 pm, rm. 159 Odyssey of the Mind Parent Info. Mtg, 7:00 pm, Media Center</b>
<b>Wed., Sept. 21</b>	
<b>Thur., Sept. 22</b>	<b>Brownie Troop 1643, 3:50 pm, rm. 159 Clay Creations, 3:50 pm, rm. 163</b>
<b>Fri., Sept. 23</b>	<b>Have a great weekend!</b>

**A Look Ahead**

<b>Sept. 28</b>	<b>Restaurant Night at Potomac Pizza, 4:00-9:00 pm</b>
<b>Sept. 30</b>	<b>Early Release, dismissal at 1:20 pm</b>
<b>Oct. 3</b>	<b>School Closed</b>

- **Thank you for attending our Back to School Night events this past week. We had a great turnout for each evening. It demonstrates your commitment to being partners in your child's education. As always if you have questions concerning your child's progress please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher.**
- **Many after school activities are beginning now. It is important that you send a note informing your child's teacher of any changes to dismissal plans. Also, remember to inform your child's aftercare providers, including Georgetown Hill, Bar-T and Little Acorns.**
- **On Tuesday, September 20, students in Grades 4-5 will attend an assembly to learn about the Bells Mill instrumental music program. Students will bring home a form for parents. Please complete and return the form to your child's teacher if you are interested in having your student take part in this program.**
- **Important! All volunteers who regularly support schools must complete the mandatory 30-minute online training, "Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect for Volunteers and Contractors" at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/childabuseandneglect/> . Lunch/recess, field trip, media and classroom volunteers MUST take the training. You will receive a confirmation email. Please forward it to Mrs. Vincenty in the main office. We encourage all families to take the training in anticipation of your future volunteering at school.**

**New information: Volunteers must undergo fingerprinting and background checks before chaperoning field trips that are out of area or beyond the school's official start/dismissal times. Please read the attachment at the end of this newsletter for important details regarding this new requirement.**

- **If you haven't already done so, please complete and return the WHITE Student Emergency Information form and the ORANGE Authorization to Release form that were sent home in backpacks. Although they may seem redundant, they are needed for different purposes. In the event of an emergency, it is essential that we have your child's current information on file.**
- **All students brought home the Bells Mill Discipline Policy. Please review this packet with your child, sign and return the tear-off portion on the front page. Keep the packet for your information.**
- **Please consider joining the PTA.** They offer many events throughout the school year that support the school and the school community. The PTA provides cultural arts assemblies, enrichment activities, guest speakers, and staff appreciation just to name a few. Visit the PTA website to find out how to join <http://bellsmill.org/>.
- **Attention Gr. 1-5 Parents: There will be a Parent Information Meeting for those interested in learning about the BMES Odyssey of the Mind program, Tuesday evening, September 20, 7:00-8:00 pm, in the Media Center.** Odyssey of the Mind demonstrates that creativity can be taught, stimulated and improved with practice. Students use their artistic, theatrical and engineering skills to create new solutions to intriguing problems; they learn to "think outside the box" and develop valuable skills that will be essential for success in the 21st Century.
- **Bells Mill Night at Potomac Pizza in Potomac Village is Wednesday, September 28, 4:00-9:00 pm.** Tell them that you are from Bells Mill. A percentage of the night's proceeds goes to the PTA.
- **Thank you to Gr. 4 parent Mr. Scott Weaver for helping Mr. Romans install new outdoor soccer goal nets.**
- **The George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy kicks off its 2016–2017 season of Saturday School on Saturday, Sept. 24.** Saturday School is a low-cost tutoring and mentoring program that provides a sixth day of learning and helps MCPS students enhance their mastery of core academic subjects. Students who are in need of additional academic support can attend sessions at one of 12 locations across Montgomery County. Classes begin on **Saturday, Sept. 24**, and will end in May. Registration is \$40 for students who receive free and reduced-price meals services (FARMS) and \$70 for non-FARMS students. Visit [www.saturdayschool.org/](http://www.saturdayschool.org/) for more information.
- **Sign-up for MCPS QuickNotes**, a free e-mail service that provides subscribers with important news and information about MCPS programs and activities, plus emergency information. *MCPS QuickNotes* is offered in seven languages: English, Spanish, French, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Amharic. Visit [www.mcpsquicknotes.org](http://www.mcpsquicknotes.org) to subscribe.
- **Watch the new season of Homework Hotline Live** on MCPS TV, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 4:30 – 6 p.m.: Comcast 34 & 998 (HD); Verizon FIOS 36; RCN 89 & 1058 (HD); AskHHL.org; and, YouTube (search: AskHHL)

*Thank you for being partners in your child's education.*

**Fingerprinting and Background Check Requirements.**

**Q :** What are the background check requirements for volunteers?

**A :** The following categories of volunteers are required to complete fingerprinting and background checks:

- Volunteer coaches,
- Grade 6 Outdoor Environmental Education Programs (Outdoor Education) overnight chaperones,
- Volunteers on overnight field trips, and
- Volunteers on extended day trip (e.g., out of area, out of state) that require Office of School Support and Improvement approval.

Active federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel who have completed a criminal background check as a requirement of employment are exempt from the MCPS background check requirement. However, they are required to provide a copy of their official law enforcement agency issued policy identification to verify exemption from fingerprinting requirement.

**Q :** Where do volunteers go for background checks and how long does it take to be cleared?

**A :** Fingerprinting and background checks may be obtained at the following location(s) **by appointment**:

- The Office of Human Resources Development (OHRD), located at 45 West Gude Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20850, 301-279-3276.
- American Identity Solutions (AIS), located at:
  - 6701 Democracy Boulevard, Suite 110, Bethesda, Maryland 20817, 301-571-9479
  - 12501 Prosperity Drive, Suite 200, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904, 240-670-7952
  - 7361 Calhoun Place, Rockville, Maryland 20855, 301-296-4499
- It takes approximately four weeks to complete the background check process.

**Q :** Who pays for volunteers to complete their background check?

**A :**

- The volunteer is responsible for the cost of the background check. The cost is \$54 at OHRD and \$59 at AIS. On a case-by-case basis, schools may work with volunteers to make alternative arrangements to cover the cost.
- Outdoor Education overnight chaperones will have no cost for background checks if fingerprinting is completed through OHRD. Parents who use AIS will pay \$20.00.
- Volunteer coaches will continue to pay for their background checks, as arranged through the Athletic Department.

**Q :** Do I need to undergo another background check if I completed a MCPS background check last year?

**A :** If a parent/guardian/community member has previously completed the MCPS background check process during the 2015–2016 school year, that person will not have to complete the process again during the 2016–2017 school year.

**Q :** If a school's Parent Teacher (Student) Association (PTA/PTSA) sponsors an after-school activity, enrichment program, or other program, are the providers subject to the requirements applicable to MCPS contractors regarding fingerprinting/background checks?

**A :** Fingerprinting and background checks are required for school-sponsored events only.

- If the after-school program is funded or sponsored by MCPS, or MCPS is part of the contract (i.e., *the principal's signature is on the contract*), training is required and if the after-school program providers will have direct, unsupervised, and uncontrolled access to students in an MCPS facility, background checks are required.
- If the contract is not school-sponsored and sponsored solely by the PTA/PTSA or other organization, or arranged solely through the Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB), MCPS does not require background checks or training. However, the PTA/PTSA or ICB may have additional requirements for their contractors.

**Q :** Who informs potential volunteers that they have been approved or not approved?

**A :** Potential volunteers will receive notification by mail of the background check results. MCPS OHRD will conduct a case-by-case analysis and promptly follow up regarding information about sexual offenses, child sexual abuse offenses, and crimes of violence, as well as any offenses involving distribution of drugs or other controlled substances, or any other criminal information that may significantly affect the safety and security of MCPS students. OHRD will not share any details regarding a potential volunteer's criminal background check with school-based staff members.

**Q :** Who should I contact if I have questions about volunteer training and background checks?

**A :** If you have any questions or concerns about volunteer requirements, please contact your school. In addition, concerns not addressed at the school level may be directed to Dr. Jonathan T. Brice, associate superintendent, OSFSE, at 240-453-2426.