

# Wood Acres Elementary School Principal's Update

A monthly newsletter  
Mrs. Sherburne, Principal  
Mrs. Alexander, Assistant Principal  
September 2, 2009



## Important Upcoming Dates

September 7	No School Labor Day
September 16	K - 2 Back to School Night
September 24	3 - 5 Back to School Night
September 28	No School Yom Kippur
September 30	Individual Picture Day
October 2	Early Release – 12:35 p.m.
October 6	PTA Meeting 7 - 9 p.m.

## Happy New Year

Welcome one and all to the 2009-2010 school year. Open House was well attended and the first day of school was a positive one. The Wood Acres Wildcat welcomed 727 students through our doors. With such a large student body, I will be sharing some procedural changes through this monthly communication, Woodnet and Connect Ed (telephone messages). I will also be working with the PTA to develop a parent handbook that will guide you through everyday MCPS and Wood Acres policies and procedures.



We welcome the following new staff to our school:

Mrs. Pagano – Gr. 2  
Ms. Curran – Gr. 2  
Ms. McGee – Gr. 3  
Mrs. Kashatus – Gr. 3  
Ms. Krall – Gr. 5  
Mrs. Konar – Art  
Mrs. Boswell – Part-time Art  
Ms. Duke – Part-time ESOL  
Mrs. Dolan – Part-time Music  
Ms. Pisciotta – Part-time P.E.  
Mr. Thomas – Building Service Night Mgr.  
Mrs. Checchia – Paraeducator & Lunch/Recess  
Mrs. Marly Carpenter – Lunch/Recess Aide

## Communication

**MCPS QuickNotes** is a free, subscription email service that provides parents with an important information connection to MCPS. Subscribers can choose the types of information they would like to receive by email, including a monthly newsletter, emergency information about

weather delays and closings, and periodic updates on topics of interest. To subscribe, visit [www.mcpsquicknotes.org](http://www.mcpsquicknotes.org), fill out your email address, choose a language preference, then, click "submit" to create your personal profile.

## Attendance

If you know that your child will be late or absent from school, please call the main office prior to 8:30 a.m. and leave a message on the answering machine. Leaving a message will help us to improve our customer service and attend to children and adults in the front office more efficiently between 8:30-9:30.

## End of Day Plans

Play-dates should be prearranged at least the day before they are to occur, and a note should be sent to the classroom teacher. Advanced planning will decrease your child's anxiety when plans are altered. While you are attending to the needs of one child, here at school, we are ensuring that all 727 students arrive to their destination safely. Our buses are quite full this year, and we cannot accommodate additional riders going to play-dates. If there are emergency last minute changes, you may call and leave a message with one of the people in the office. Email is not an effective method to communicate this information since we do not always get to check it before end of day. We appreciate your cooperation with this practice.

## Health and Safety

**Seasonal flu vaccination program** for students will take place at Wood Acres in October. A letter and consent form should have come home today. Please read carefully and follow directions that are outlined. **H1N1 Update** - At Wood Acres, we are working with our school nurse, Mrs. Olson, and school health room aide, Mrs. Carpenter, to review hand washing policies with students and teachers through the first few weeks of school. We will try to keep you

informed as information becomes available. Please check this website for additional updates. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/h1n1/>

### **Nut Free Table in Cafeteria**

There is a nut-free table identified in the cafeteria to accommodate children who have nut allergies. Students with nut allergies are encouraged to invite friends to sit with them at the nut-free table. In order for invited students to sit at this table, they must have lunches that are free of nuts and nut products. All lunches that are purchased from the school's cafeteria are nut-free, except for Chips Ole, which has peanut oil as one of its ingredients. There are unique procedures regarding the supervision and maintenance of this table; these procedures are outlined in the Lunch and Recess Handbook. If you have questions regarding the nut-free table, please contact a member of the lunch and recess staff.

### **Lunch and Recess Procedures**

The Lunch and Recess Handbook has been updated. It is posted on the school web site and PTA web site. Should you sign up to volunteer, please check in with a lunch recess staff member to get specific direction on where your help might be needed. As always, sign in at the Main Office before coming up to the cafeteria. Take a green lanyard with a badge that indicates you are volunteering.

### **Emergency Drills**

Throughout the school year, each school in MCPS is required to conduct ten fire drill evacuations and two code red and code blue drills. The regular practice of these different types of drills helps children and adults in the building to problem solve and improve response to unforeseen circumstances. Directions for all these drills are posted in the classrooms for assistance with appropriate safety steps.

**Fire drills** require everyone to evacuate the building. All students, staff and parents are accounted for at their evacuation location. Should you be volunteering in the building at that time, please leave the building through the nearest exit and relocate to a classroom teacher so that your presence can be noted.

**Code Blue** is a term used to alert staff that an emergency or crisis exists at or near our school. Students, staff and parents are accounted for in their classrooms using the email system and walkie talkie. Instruction generally continues unless there are unusual circumstances where activity might need to be restricted. An elevated code blue may require that the doors be locked and students remain in classrooms without

switching for specials, lunch or recess for a period of time.

**Code Red** is a term used to describe an emergency or crisis at our school. Code red alerts staff that imminent danger exists inside or outside the building and requires moving to an immediate lockdown mode. Students, staff and parents are accounted for using the email system in their lockdown location. If you are volunteering in the building at the time of the announcement, move immediately to the nearest securable space.

### **Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

The majority of our community is doing a wonderful job at arrival and dismissal whether you are in the Kiss and Go loop or dropping off/picking up a walker. However, I do need to share a few reminders and ask that you also help parents and caregivers when they forget. **Do not** bring your dogs close to the exits. They should remain on the grassy areas. **Do not** leave them unattended tied to signs, fences or trees. This is for the safety of your pet as well as the children. At dismissal in the **Kiss and Go loop**, when the line of cars is starting to move, you should be with your car so that you do not hold up traffic. If your child has not come out, exit the loop area and go into the adjacent parking lot. When leaving the Kiss and Go loop, the posted signs direct you to turn right ONLY. Abide by NO PARKING SIGNS adjacent to the school property. Think about where you drop off and pick up. Is it safe for all children? Remember, it isn't about convenience, it is about safety.

### **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT**

September 16	K-2 Back to School Night
September 24	3-5 Back to School Night

We will start in the classrooms at 7:00 P.M. You will hear a welcome message from your PTA leadership and Mrs. Alexander and me about our focus for the school year. Most importantly, you will hear your child's classroom teachers describe the curriculum that will be learned this year, classroom procedures and best method of communication with the teachers. This will also be the first opportunity to sign up for conferences scheduled for November 11th and 12th. Watch for further information that will come home from classroom teachers.