

CASHELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Dear Cashell Families,

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year at Cashell. If you are just joining our school community for the first time, welcome! Cashell is an excellent school with a tradition of dedicated staff, an involved community, a very supportive PTA, and wonderful students. I hope that each of you will become involved in as much as you can with your child/children's time at school this year. My staff and I are looking forward to partnering with your family to ensure that this year is an enjoyable and valuable learning experience for every child.

Over the summer, our staff have been working hard to carefully prepare for the year. The building services team has also ensured that our building is sparkling and shining, and ready to receive students for the first day of school. We are so lucky to have Ms. Brewer, Ms. Medrano, Ms. Harris, and Ms. Castelo to take care of us. You may have noticed that we now have an additional portable classroom at the back of the building. Our fifth grade classes will use these spaces throughout the year.

In an effort to conserve paper and to keep you informed, many of our reminders will be sent electronically this year. Our Back to School documents are available online along with this letter. We will also regularly post important information on our website. Please be sure to bookmark this page and visit us often! When we do send home important information directly from the school in hard copy, it will almost always be printed on **lavender** paper. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/cashelles>
In addition to much information on the website, we also have the full staff directory. Once on the main page, click on *Staff Directory* to be linked directly to the staff member of your choice. Other useful phone numbers on the website are: the Counselor, the Health Room, and the Cafeteria.

The Cashell PTA website is also a great resource for all parents and community members: <http://www.cashellpta.org> You can also email the PTA directly at cashellpta@gmail.com. We are very lucky to have such a committed and supportive PTA and we are looking forward to working together for a wonderful year of events and programs to support students and the school community.

Please know that throughout this year, our goal is to work closely with you to ensure that the needs of our children are being met. It is important to keep lines of communication open between home and school so that together we are able to ensure an effective learning environment for all of the students at Cashell.

On the following pages, there is information that I hope you will find useful for the beginning of school and throughout the year. Please also visit our Parent Handbook online for other important information.

IMPORTANT DATES

August 31:

Back to School Night
Kindergarten - PARENTS ONLY
7:00 pm
Multi-Purpose Room

September 1:

Sneak Preview
10 - 11 am Classrooms;
New Family Welcome
11:15 am-12:00 pm
Media Center;
Patrol Meeting
10:30 am Gym

September 4:

No School, Labor Day
Holiday

September 5:

First Day of School for
Students

September 7:

Back to School Night for
Pre-K & Grades 1-5
PARENTS ONLY
7:00 pm
Multi-Purpose Room

September 8:

PEP Open House 2:00 pm;
Magruder Cluster Football
Game 5:30 pm

September 12:

PTA Meeting 7:00 pm -9:00
pm in Multi-Purpose Room

September 15:

Cashell Family Picnic
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

September 21:

No School for students

Community Tour- Please Join Us On **Monday, August 28** staff will be out in the neighborhood on a bus tour. Join us at one of our stops to say hello to our staff and to join us for a sweet treat before we board the bus and continue on our tour.

Norbeck Hills Pool at 10:20 a.m. – 10:35 a.m. Macduff Ave and Hines Road
Cherry Wood Park at 10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Cherry Valley Drive

Sneak Preview will be held on **Friday, September 1, 2017 from 10:00 am to 11:00 am**. This event is a chance for you to meet your child/children's teacher(s), get oriented with the classroom(s), catch up with old friends, and make new ones. Teachers will be sending postcards to all of their new students early that week and staff will be on hand to help you locate your child's classroom.

First Day of School is **Tuesday, September 5, 2017** and we are excited to see all of our new and returning students. I encourage all families to start the routines on Day 1 that you will follow for arrival and dismissal throughout the year.

School Hours are **9:00 am to 3:25 pm**. The first bell will ring at 8:50 a.m. to allow students to go to their classrooms and get ready for their day. Students may enter the building at 8:40 a.m. by way of the Multi-Purpose Room. Please note that staff are not available to supervise students at parent drop-off or inside the building prior to this time.

Kindergarten Parent Meeting/Back to School Night will be held on **Thursday, August 31, 2017 at 7:00 pm** in the Multi-Purpose Room. School staff and PTA officers will be on hand to talk about our programs in general, and the Kindergarten teachers will provide information about school, classroom, and arrival and dismissal procedures as well as their instructional program. We rely on the time together to ensure that our Kindergarten students start off their school experience successfully. Please note that this meeting is for parents only.

Back to School Night for Pre-K, SCB, and First grade through Fifth grade will be on **Thursday, September 7 at 7:00 pm** in the Multi-Purpose Room. Please plan to attend to hear from your child/children's teacher(s) and other staff about our instructional program, ways to build the home/school partnership, and more. We will send out more details about this event as it draws near.

Transportation:

- Our bus route information is available online. If you are eligible for bus transportation, please review the routes and stops so that your child/children is/are ready and on time at the closest stop to your home on the first day of school. All students who will be taking buses to school should do so on the first day to get accustomed to the routines and procedures. Any questions about bus schedules should be direction to the **Shady Grove North at 301-926-4179** or to **Shady Grove South for Special Program Routes 301-840-8150**.
- We encourage all families close enough to walk to school to take advantage of that mode of transportation. Walking benefits the environment and our own health while minimizing congestion and increasing safety in our parking lot.
- At the start and end of the school day, parents dropping off or picking up their child/children by car can do so at the designated area in the front of our building by the Multi-Purpose Room. New families can be provided a visor sign to help coordinate students to their families. Existing families can use the same visor sign as the past. We will have the signs available during the arrival and dismissal the first week of school should you need one. These are specifically used in the car rider pick up/drop off lane.

Arrival/Dismissal:

We encourage you to have your child/children ride the bus or walk to school to help develop their independence and limit the amount of traffic around the school. PLEASE NOTE: The parking lot is NOT OPEN for drop off or pick up during arrival and dismissal times.

- If you do need to drop your child off at school, use the Kiss 'n Ride drop off! Enter the driveway near the Cashell Road entrance and pull up as far as possible. Your child will be assisted getting out of the car and

will go directly into the Multipurpose Room. PLEASE DO NOT BLOCK TRAFFIC BY GETTING OUT OF YOUR CAR - have backpacks and lunch boxes handy.

- If you plan to use the Kiss 'n Ride drop off, make sure you are here by 8:45. We close the MPR door at 8:50. If you arrive after that 8:50, children will need to be signed in, so you will need to park and walk your child into the building. It is best for students to arrive no later than 8:45 so that they can start their day with their class. Just arriving to school 5 or 10 minutes earlier can make all the difference in your child's day.
- **If you are picking your child up after school, please enter the Cashell Road entrance and pull up to the end of the sidewalk. DO NOT GET OUT OF YOUR CAR - A staff member will be there to assist your child/children to your car. If the driveway is full, DO NOT STOP ON CASHELL ROAD AND BLOCK TRAFFIC! Instead, drive past the driveway, find a safe place to turn around, and return. Police will ticket cars that block traffic.**
- If you know ahead of time that you will need to pick up your child early, please send a note or email to your child's teacher and the main office. This will allow the teacher to have your child packed up for dismissal and give any assignments.
- If you need to pick up your child unexpectedly, call as soon as you know and we will notify the teacher. The secretary will call your child to the main office once you arrive.
- **Except in an extreme emergency, we will not dismiss students between 3:15 and 3:25.** It's too disruptive to the classroom. Thank you for understanding how hectic this time of the day can be in the main office.

Attendance/Absences Regular attendance is closely tied to school success. The only excused absences recognized by the school system are personal illness, religious observances, and significant family events, such as the death of a relative.

Whenever your child will be absent or tardy, please email the teacher and copy the attendance secretary by 10:00 a.m. An answering machine is available outside of regular office hours. A note explaining any absence is to accompany the child upon his/her return to school. By State Law, a written explanation of each absence is required from the parent/guardian within three days of the student's return to school.

Visitors and Security As many of you know, we have procedures in place to maintain building security and to promote safety and accountability. Specifically, the Access Control System provides front-door security during school hours. When you arrive, please press the red button to the left of the front door and wait for the buzz signal to open the first door. Once you enter the building, you will sign in using our Visitor Management System. Your driver's license or other state-issued identification will help speed this process so be sure you have it. Your cooperation is vital for safety and security reasons and is greatly appreciated. Even when visiting the playground or other outside activities, you must check in the main office and wear a badge at all times. We appreciate your cooperation with this effort.

Custody Concerns We are required by law to release students to any of their biological or legal parents/guardians unless we have a current legal document that states otherwise. If you have custody concerns, please communicate them to the main office immediately and provide copies of any applicable court orders.

Discipline All families will receive a copy of the MCPS Code of Conduct shortly after the school year starts. Please review this document, discuss it with your child/children, and return the form indicating that you have done so. We appreciate your support of our efforts to maintain a safe, productive learning environment for all students.

Home/School Communication is vital for our children's success. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will share with you the best ways and times to contact them, and you will have the opportunity to share that information as well. Please check your child's backpack regularly for important information. Since we will be relying on electronic methods for communication this year, please make sure that your child/children's teacher(s) and the main office have current email addresses and phone numbers. There are also several ways for you to stay connected to messages from the school system and receive timely information and announcements. I encourage you to take advantage of these services.

Health Matters

- **Health Conditions** including common ones such as allergies and asthma must be shared with school staff so we can ensure your child's safety and wellbeing. Please alert your child's teacher and our school nurse, who will develop a health care plan if necessary.
- **Medications** may not be administered at school without prior approval and the completion of school forms by you and your child's doctor. This regulation includes prescription and nonprescription medications, including sunscreen. If your child will require medication or treatments during the school day, please contact our health room as soon as possible.

School Meal Program Breakfast and lunch prices are as follows:

Breakfast:

Regular Price \$1.30
Reduced Price \$0.00*
Milk \$0.60

Lunch:

Regular Price \$2.55
Reduced Price \$0.40

*Because eating breakfast has a significant impact on a student's ability to learn, the school system will continue to provide free breakfast to those students who qualify for the reduced price.

I encourage you to take advantage of the [MySchoolBucks](#) Program by depositing money in your child's accounts and making sure that they know their PIN numbers. Parents will receive notification when account balances are low. Students will be allowed to borrow money twice. On the third day without money in a MySchoolBucks account, the child will be given a cheese sandwich. All money borrowed from the cafeteria must be repaid promptly. Please make every effort to keep the account filled and particularly for those days we all experience when time doesn't allow you.

Free and reduced meal applications will be distributed during the first week of school. It is critical that these forms be completely fully and accurately and returned to school promptly. Students who qualified for these programs last year must reapply each year.

Staffing

We have a number of staff changes to mention. I am looking forward to introducing everyone to you in person.

A few teachers are returning this year in new roles: Mrs. Rebecca Gumbs has moved from third grade to second grade; Mrs. Julia Moloznik has moved from second grade to fifth grade; and Mrs. Katie Guenther has moved from first grade to be one of our special education teachers.

We are also saying goodbye to several of our staff members: Mrs. Lora Harmon, our special education teacher has moved to a school closer to home; Mrs. Christina Royster, our speech language pathologist will now be working with a department focused on assistive technology; Mrs. Blumberg, our guidance counselor has retired to Florida; Ms. Shannon Johnson, our PEP parent educator will be working at another school; Ms. Christina Kontoyianis, a lunch recess aide, is seeking a permanent position with MCPS; Mrs. Rachel Sumrow, our school nurse, has also been reassigned to other schools; Mr. Antonio Scott, our previous principal has relocated to Florida with his family; and Mrs. Susan Hill, a fifth grade teacher will also be enjoying retirement. We wish them all the best!

Joining the Cashell team are: Mrs. Tracy Andrews, Kindergarten; Mrs. Sarah Clay, PEP Parent Educator; Ms. Stephanie Hesse, Guidance Counselor; Ms. Katie Hilley, Second grade teacher; Mrs. Lisa Horowitz, Special Education Teacher; Mr. Cory Leopold, Third Grade Teacher; Ms. Nancy Ruffner, returning as our school nurse; and Mrs. Kendra Seligman, Speech Language Pathologist.

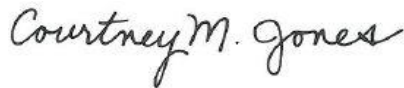
A complete [staff directory](#) is available online.

Birthdays will be observed at school through recognition on the morning announcements and with a small gift from the main office. We will not be having birthday parties or sharing treats sent from home, as these bring with them concerns about equity; allergies and other medical conditions; cultural preferences; disruption of instructional time; and demands on staff.

Safety Patrols are expected to be at their posts on time on the first day of school. There will be a patrol meeting during Sneak Preview at **10:30 am in the gym**. The meeting will last approximately 20 minutes. Patrols that are unable to attend the meeting should still head to their posts on September 5 and they can pick-up their belts and other reminders from their classroom teacher in their classroom after arriving for the day.

We are looking forward to welcoming your child/children back to school! We hope to see you at many of the events at the beginning of the school year. It is going to be a great year!

Most sincerely,



Courtney M. Jones
Principal

Helpful Links:

[Cashell Elementary School Website](#)

[Cafeteria News, Meals Information and Menu](#)

[School Calendar](#)

[Who to Contact If You Have Concerns](#)

[School Supply Lists](#)

[Form for Medication](#)

[How to Receive MCPS Emergency Information](#)

[Staff Directory](#)

[PTA Website](#)