

**Absences:**

A child can be excused for illness, death in the immediate family, religious holiday, or other serious reasons. A written excuse from the parent/guardian should be given to the child's teacher upon return to school.

*A student is counted present for a full day if a student is absent no more than one hour of the school day. A student is counted absent for a full day if the student is present for one hour or less of the school day. A student is credited with ½ day attendance if the student is present more than one hour of the school day and is absent more than one hour of the school day.*

**After Hours Events:**

The school sponsors several after hour's events each year designed to further enhance the educational program and promote school spirit and a sense of community. Notices will be distributed.

**Articles Not Allowed at School:**

Distracting and/or unsafe articles such as toys, skateboards, scooters, roller blades, roller shoes, pagers, electronic games, and other such items should be left at home. Teachers and/or the school office will confiscate such items and notify parents to come pick them up. School is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Knives (including pocket, pen, and Swiss Army knives) and other weapons are not permitted on school grounds. If a student is found in possession of such an item, the parents will be called and the student could be immediately suspended.

**Assemblies & Award Ceremonies:**

Instructional assemblies will be held periodically for the students throughout the year. Parents are welcome to attend. Honor Roll recognitions will occur at the end of each quarter. Parents whose children are due to receive an award will be personally invited.

**Bicycles:**

Only upper grade (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>) students may ride bicycles to school. All bicycles must be registered with the Montgomery County Police Department. Flower Hill strongly encourages the use of bicycle safety helmets. Bicycles must be "walked" on the school property, and a chain is recommended for locking the bike to the bicycle rack (located near the flagpole). The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen bicycles. Helmets may be brought into classrooms and stored in backpacks or on coat racks.

**Breakfast Program:**

A breakfast program is offered each school day from 8:30 a.m. to 8:50 a.m. The breakfast menu appears on the lunch calendar, which is distributed to every student at the beginning of each month. Students who want to purchase breakfast should report to the school cafeteria. The cost for breakfast is \$1.30. There is no cost for reduced breakfast (pre-qualification required).

**Bus Transportation:**

Children are requested to be at their bus stop no more than ten minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the bus. Children must observe the Montgomery County Public School regulations concerning responsibilities of students riding buses. Children with three unfavorable reports for misbehavior on the bus or at the bus stop may lose the privilege of riding the bus. Parents/Guardians must then provide their own transportation.

Children must ride the same bus daily. Children who want to go home with a friend on a different bus may only do so if they have a note from the parent/guardian AND if a seat is available on the bus. Children, who want to ride their own bus but get off at a different stop, must also have a note.

All problems concerning bus transportation should be directed to the MCPS Transportation Office at (301) 353-0955.

It is essential that parents have clear, pre-arranged plans for emergencies, such as late openings or no-show buses. *Children should know where to go and whom to call if they are unable to get to school as usual.*

**Calendar:**

A calendar for this school year is available on the Flower Hill web site as well on the Montgomery County Public School web site (<http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org>) and portions of it will appear in the *Parent Newsletter*.

**Classroom Visits:**

Parents are invited to visit classrooms and to meet teachers on “Back to School Night” on September 23, 2010. On Columbus Day, parents are encouraged to visit the school during the school day to observe the class in progress. Other classroom visits should be arranged by calling the classroom teacher. **All visitors to the school must sign in at the office and obtain a visitor’s badge.**

**Conferences & Communications with Teachers & Principals:**

At the end of the first grading period (November 11 & 12), a parent-teacher conference will be scheduled for each child. Additional conferences can be scheduled throughout the school year and should be arranged with the teacher directly.

On “Back to School Night” your child’s teacher will explain his or her preferred method of communicating with parents (phone call, e-mail, note, etc.). If you wish to speak with the principal, assistant principal, or the school guidance counselor, please call the office to schedule an appointment.

**Communications From School to Home:**

**Flyers:** Notices containing important information are distributed each Wednesday throughout the school year. Please remind your child how important it is for you to see these notices, and check for them when your child arrives home.

**PTA Newsletter:** *The Falcon* is the PTA newsletter. *The Falcon* is published monthly. Please submit items for attention to the PTA mailbox in the office.

**Counseling Program:**

Ms. Kotlewski is the school counselor at Flower Hill. Her job is to help students confidentially work through any troubles, concerns, worries, or changes in their lives. The goal is to teach students new ways to deal with issues. Ms. Kotlewski is also available as a resource to parents. She has many materials in her office that address parents' common worries, as well as information from community agencies that offer support.

**Daily Arrival:**

Children should not line up or be dropped off at school prior to 8:30 a.m.

In an effort to improve safety and security in and around Flower Hill Elementary School we are implementing a number of new procedures for student drop off and pick up each day.

**NEW ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

- **All** students must enter the building through the main doors by the front office.
- We will have **indoor line up on a daily basis** beginning on the first day of school.
- All students in grades **K-2 will line up in the hallway** outside of their classroom door.
- All students in grades **3-5 will report to the gym** and line up by classroom teacher each day.
- All students who would like to **eat breakfast in the morning should report directly to the cafeteria** beginning at 8:30 am.
- Students should **arrive no earlier than 8:30 am.**
- **Parents will not be allowed to escort their children to their classroom door.**

**NEW DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

- **All bus riders will report to the gym** in the afternoon and line up by bus color.
- **Parents must wait outside** the building to pick up their child at the end of each day.
- Parents picking up students for early dismissal **must show ID** and must arrive before 2:50 pm.
- **Older siblings (high school/middle school students) must wait outside** if they are picking up a student.

All visitors during the school day **must** sign in at the main office and **must wear a visitor's sticker at all times.** The rules for the car pool loop at arrival and dismissal remain the same. Please do not enter the parking lot once the cones have been put up. The safety and security of the students at Flower Hill is our number one priority. We thank you in advance for complying with these new guidelines and cooperating with all the patrols and staff members who will be enforcing them.

If your child arrives at school after 9:00 a.m., please accompany your child to the office, so he/she can receive a pass.

All students should obey bus drivers, crossing guards, and safety patrols. Students who walk to school should cross Flower Hill Way with the crossing guard at the corner of Flower Hill Way and Tea Rose Drive.

**Day Care:**

KidsCo (301-740-9600 or KidsCoOnline.com) a private, licensed, MCPS approved, day care provider operates a before and after school center at Flower Hill.

KidsCo offers:

- safe and convenient school-based care.
- before school (6:30 am – 9:00 am) and after school (3:00 pm-6:30 pm) hours.

**Delivery of Articles to Students:**

When it is necessary to deliver messages, books, lunches, umbrellas, or other articles to children during school hours, please bring items to the school office. The staff will see that the item is delivered to your child at a time that will minimize disruption to the instructional program.

**Directory:**

The PTA publishes a school directory with names, addresses, and phone numbers for the convenience of the school community. One directory is distributed to each family. Information in this directory should not be used for business purposes. Please notify the office prior to October 1, if you DO NOT want your home phone number or address listed.

**Dress Code:**

Guidelines for consideration:

- Children should not wear clothing displaying offensive words or pictures or pictures of violence
- Children should dress appropriately for the weather.
- Children should wear shoes and clothes appropriate for school activities (recess, Physical Education class).
- Children will remove hats when in the building.

**Emergency and Evacuation Drills:**

Maryland law requires ten fire drills and four crisis response drills each school year. The Administration makes every effort to conduct the drills at various times of the day and year to ensure that students and staff know the process. There may be weather related or other emergencies at the school. Drills for these situations are conducted one or more times a year to ensure that students and staff know the proper procedure to follow.

**Student Emergency Information:**

It is **VERY** important to keep the school informed and up to date with emergency contacts. Yellow “Student Emergency Information” forms are distributed at the start of school. Complete these forms immediately and return them to school. The information on these forms is used to contact parents in the event of an emergency. ***If this information changes during the school year, inform the school office in writing immediately.***

**Field Trips:**

When a class plans a trip off of school property, each child will bring home a permission slip. This slip must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the teacher, prior to the scheduled trip. No child may attend a trip without written permission from a parent/guardian. Verbal permission will not be acceptable.

Transportation for field trips sponsored by the school is provided by MCPS school buses or private chartered buses. The classroom teacher will notify parents if they will be needed as chaperones. Younger siblings may **not** attend school trips. Trips may have a fee that must be paid in advance; however, no child should miss a trip due to a lack of funding. If you need assistance with these funds please see your child’s teacher, the school counselor or school administrator at the time the permission slip is returned.

**Gifted and Talented Program:**

In the spring of the second grade year, there is a global screening to identify Gifted and Talented students. In November of each year, there is an additional screening for children in grades three through five who were not tested in second grade. Parental permission is required for the November screening. GT students at Flower Hill are served through differentiated instructional activities and materials within their regular classroom and separate classes. Questions about this program should be directed to Ms. Barker.

**Gum Chewing/Candy:**

Gum chewing and eating candy are not permitted in school or on the bus. Please discourage your child from bringing these things to school because they often end up on books, materials, and furniture.

**Early Release Days:**

Early release days occur for conferences with parents and professional development for staff. School dismisses at 12:35 p.m. on early release days. The school calendar identifies early release days. If your child will need to leave school on early release days by a method other than his or her normal method, please notify your child’s teacher in writing. Lunch schedules will be pushed forward. Please note these days and ensure someone is there to receive your child.

### **Homework:**

The MCPS homework guidelines read, “*Homework is one of the many learning activities in which students engage. Its purposes should be to:*

- 1. Extend learning and/or provide opportunity to apply concepts initially presented in the classroom*
- 2. Provide opportunity for independent work*
- 3. Strengthen concept and skill development, and*
- 4. Provide opportunities for enrichment”*

Homework should be done by the student with minimal guidance from a parent/guardian. Homework should be reasonable in length, and should be appropriate to the student’s needs and abilities. If you find your child unable to complete the homework or taking excessive time in completing the homework, you should notify the child’s teacher.

If you know your child will be absent from school, you can request class work and homework assignments from the teacher. Please give the teacher at least twenty four-hour notice to pull the work together. You can pick up work in the office.

### **Holiday Celebrations and Birthday Parties:**

**Food:** Montgomery County Public Schools prohibit homemade food items for student parties. All food items served in class must be purchased in a store or bakery.

**Class Parties:** Holiday parties occur at various times throughout the year in each class. Class parties for Halloween and Valentine’s Day are held in each class. The parties are arranged by teachers or room parents, therefore the refreshments and activities vary by class. The teacher will send home notification in advance of the celebration so you know what to expect. If you prefer your child not participate in the celebration, you should notify the teacher in writing when you receive your notification.

**Birthdays:** Consult your child’s teacher for the classroom policy on birthday parties. Do not send invitations for private parties to school. It is inappropriate to have your child distribute these invitations at school.

### **Illness and Injury:**

**Outside of School:** If your child is sick (fever, profuse coughing or runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.), he or she may not do well in school and should be kept home. See the section on Absences for more information.

If your child is diagnosed with a highly contagious illness or head lice, please keep your child at home and notify the school as soon as you learn of the diagnosis. In light of the H1N1 concerns, any student presenting flu-like symptoms will be promptly sent home.

**During School Hours:** Except in very minor cases, when a child is ill or injured during the school day, it is the school’s policy to notify the parent/guardian. Parents may be required to pick up the child if the health technician determines it is in the best interest of

the child. Please keep emergency cards updated so that we can contact someone if a child is ill.

**Immunizations:**

The Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene require that all children entering the school for the first time present evidence of primary immunizations against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (children under age 6), polio, measles and rubella, unless one of the criteria listed for exception in the regulation is fulfilled. No student may attend classes until the proper forms are on file. Please see the school nurse with questions.

**Lost and Found:**

All articles found in the school building or on the playground are placed in the Lost and Found collection box located in the hall across from the Cafeteria. It is advisable to label all children's apparel and belongings. Unclaimed articles are given to a charity at the end of the year.

**Lunch:**

Lunch may be brought from home or purchased in the school cafeteria. Milk is included with the complete lunch or can be purchased separately for \$.60. Students arriving late for school, who want to purchase a school lunch, should go to the cafeteria manager to place their order after their parent/guardian has signed them in at the office.

A lunch menu is sent home with each child at the beginning of every month. Prices are: hot lunch \$2.50 (includes milk) and reduced lunch with milk \$.40. In order to prevent children from carrying money each day for lunch, parents/students may deposit money in their "cafeteria account". Information regarding this option is included in the parent letter sent home in August.

Free and/or reduced price breakfast and lunch are available for eligible children. Please review the eligibility guidelines sent home the first week of school and return the completed form to the office promptly. Students who qualify for free or reduced breakfast/lunch from the prior school year remain so until September 30. Anyone who feels they qualify for the program **must reapply** each year.

The lunch periods are 25 minutes. Good manners are another thing to encourage in your children. Lunchroom monitors may help in this area. Flower Hill encourages healthy eating habits. Please do not send candy or soda in your child's lunch. Sharing of lunches between students is not allowed. Parents may bring lunch to have with students, as long as they sign in at the office first.

No snacks will be sold until October 1. After Oct. 1, students will not be permitted to purchase snacks when they get their lunch. Students who wish to purchase a snack will be given an opportunity to go back through the lunch line once they have finished their lunch and the lunch room aides have determined that their table is quiet and has earned

the privilege of going through the lunch line again. Students must have funds available in their account in order to purchase snacks. No school loans will be provided for snacks.

**New Lunch Schedule**

Grade 5	10:55 am-11:20 am
Grade 4	11:30 am-11:55 pm
Grade 1/2	12:05 pm-12:30 pm
Grade K	12:40 pm-1:05 pm
Grade 3	1:15 pm-1:40 pm

**Media Center:**

Media Center Schedule: The Flower Hill Media Center is open for Book Exchange daily. In addition to their scheduled Media Class, students may visit the Media Center with their teachers' permission at any time during the school day using a Media Center pass.

**Book Loans:** Students in Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten may check out one book for a period of one week. First and second grade students may check out two books for a period of two weeks. Third, fourth and fifth grade students may check out three books for a period of two weeks.

**Overdue, Lost or Damaged Books:** Responsible care of library materials is expected of all Flower Hill students. If a book is overdue or lost and can't be circulated, other students are unable to enjoy it. Overdue notices will be given to the student when the book is two weeks overdue, and at the end of each marking period. If a book is determined to be lost, a bill for the replacement cost of the book will be sent to the parent/guardian. Assessments for damaged books are done by the Media Specialist or the Media Assistant. If the book is unfit for circulation, the parent/guardian will be expected to pay the replacement cost.

Please direct any questions to Diane Creel, Media Specialist or Iris Tuttle, Media Assistant, between the hours of 8:00 am and 3:50 pm.

**Medication:**

Treatment schedules, which allow doses to be given at times other than during school hours, are preferred and encouraged. When it is necessary for medication is to be given during school hours, specific procedures must be followed. By State law, no medicine may be administered at school without the parent/guardian's written permission AND a physician's signed statement. Physicians can either complete the form "Administration of Medication to a Pupil" (which can be obtained in the office) or can write directions on their prescription form. The written directions must include the child's name, the name of medication, the dosage, the time medication is to be administered, and the beginning and ending dates the medicine is to be administered. A pharmacist must properly label authorized medicines, and the medication must be hand delivered to the health room by a parent/guardian in the original bottle. The school nurse or other trained personnel will administer them.

The school is not permitted to give aspirin, cough medicine, or any unauthorized medication.

Children should not carry any medication on them or in their backpack without authorization by the school nurse. Please contact the health room with any questions. (301-840-7161)

**Photographs:**

**Individual photographs:** Individual photographs are taken in the fall. Pictures taken at this time will appear in the yearbook and a copy will be retained in the office for security reasons. You will receive prior notice along with an order form for these pictures if you choose to make a purchase. If you decide to purchase the photographs and are not happy with the quality, a retake/make-up session will be scheduled. We also offer the opportunity to have another picture taken in the spring. At this session, only children with an order form and payment will have their pictures taken.

**Class photographs:** Class photographs will be taken in the winter. You will receive prior notice along with an order form for parents/guardians wishing to purchase.

**Group photographs:** Group photographs (patrols, band, chorus, etc.) are taken on the same days as the class photographs. These pictures will appear in the school yearbook, and can be ordered for purchase.

**Spring Portraits:** Spring portraits will be taken in the spring. All students will have their photo taken and a packaged will be sent home for parents to purchase if they choose. If not just return the photos to the school.

**Fifth grade photograph:** The fifth grade will be photographed in the spring. Parents/guardians of fifth grade students will receive prior notice along with an order form for these pictures.

**Recess:**

Recess is a time for fun and relaxation. The same rules of discipline that apply in the classroom will apply on the playground. Children have recess every day except for early release days. They will go outside for recess whenever the weather permits. Please have your child wear appropriate outerwear. In case of inclement weather, recess will be held inside, usually in the classrooms.

**Recess Program Schedule**

Grade 5	10:30 am- 10:55 pm
Grade 4	11:05 pm-11:30 pm
Grade 1/2	11:40 pm-12:05 pm
Grade K	12:15 pm-12:40 pm
Grade 3	12:50 pm-1:15 pm

**Property Damage:**

Parents could be expected to assume responsibility for the repair or replacement of school property damaged, lost, or destroyed by their children.

**PTA:**

The PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) is very active at Flower Hill. Meetings are held throughout the year. A membership drive is held in the fall, but people can join all year. The Flower Hill PTA provides hours of volunteer services at the school, as well as financial support for countless programs and learning opportunities. The PTA also purchases supplies for teachers, staff, and the school that MCPS is unable to purchase. Please join the PTA!

**Report Cards:**

Report cards are issued four times a year for grades 1-5 and twice a year for Kindergarten. The dates can be found on the MCPS web site.

**School Closing, Late Opening, Early Dismissal:**

For information as to whether the school will be closed or opening late, please listen to the radio or TV. Stations receive this information as early as 6:00 a.m., and announce it throughout the morning. You can also check the MCPS web site (<http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org>) or arrange to have an email sent to you via the web site [www.schools-out.com](http://www.schools-out.com). Calling the school is not necessary. The school has the same information as the radio or TV.

Any unscheduled early dismissals for emergency reasons will also be announced on radio, TV, and the web as soon as the superintendent of schools makes a decision. These decisions are usually made by 11:00 a.m.

You will receive an Emergency Plan form to complete and return to the school. The information you provide on this form will document what you want your child to do in the event of an emergency closing. **Be sure your child knows where to go if the school closes early due to an emergency.**

**Special Permission:**

A note is required from the parent/guardian to request special permission for anything out of the ordinary. Examples of such things include:

- When a child is to be excused from school early
- When a child is to leave the school with another person
- When a child is to ride a different bus
- When a child is to be away on vacation
- When a child is to be excused from a regularly scheduled activity (PE class, recess, etc.)

Children who leave the school during the day must be signed out in the office before 2:50 p.m. Parents who need to pick up their child early but did not send a permission slip can call the office to notify the school they will be picking up their child early. Adults are required to present photo ID when a student is picked up early.

**Testing:**

Your child will take many tests over the course of his/her academic career. To help you understand some of the tests, a brief description follows.

**Reading/Math MSA:** State required for third, fourth, and fifth grade students. Administered in March.

**Science MSA:** State required for grade 5 students only.

**GT:** See Gifted and Talented Section

**TN2:** County required test for second grade students. Administered in April.

Students with IEP's will receive the appropriate accommodations.

**Vehicle Traffic Pattern:**

Private cars are not permitted in the school parking lot during student arrival (8:20– 8:45 am) and dismissal (2:45 – 3:15 pm), except for staff. Please keep the patrols at the parking lot entrance safe by adhering to this rule.

**Visitors:**

County regulations require that ALL visitors report to the school office upon entering the building to sign in and receive a Visitor Pass. Even if a visitor plans to go to a portable classroom, they **MUST** sign in at the office. All doors remain locked during the school day. Visitors should enter through the main door and report directly to the office.

**Volunteers:**

Volunteers are an important part of Flower Hill. Our school has a tradition of having an excellent volunteer program in place. In years past, we have had support from parents, grandparents, guardians and middle and high school students wanting to earn community service hours. We are actively recruiting volunteers for this school year to help with a variety of tasks. Your child will bring home a volunteer registration form showing the areas of help that are most needed. Please consider donating some of your time to help Flower Hill. Your time will be VERY beneficial to the children and the staff.

County regulations require that ALL volunteers report to the school office upon entering the building to sign in and to receive a Volunteer badge.

