

**FLOWER HILL
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



**HANDBOOK
2006-2007**

18425 Flower Hill Way
Gaithersburg, MD 20879
301-840-7161

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/flowerhilles/

Lamar Whitmore, Principal

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.

Please call the school STOP line in the morning before 9:30 a.m. to advise if your child will be absent or late. The STOP line phone number is (301) 840-7163. If your child's name appears on the absentee list and you have not called the STOP line, you will receive a call from the school.

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.

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.

See section on medications in school.

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 grading period. Parents whose children are due to receive an award will be personally invited.

Bicycles:

Only upper grade (4th and 5th) 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 \$1.25. The reduced fee price is \$.30 (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 appears on the last page of this handbook. If you misplace the calendar, you can obtain the information in several ways--it appears on the Montgomery County Public School web site (<http://mcps.k12.md.us/>) 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” in the fall. On Veterans’ 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 class teacher. **All visitors to the school must sign in at the office and obtain a visitor badge.**

Conferences & Communications with Teachers & Principals:

At the end of the first grading period, 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 periodically throughout the school year. Please remind your child how important it is for you to see these notices, and check for them daily when your child arrives home.

PTA Newsletter: *The Falcon* is the PTA newsletter. *The Falcon* is published monthly. Please submit items for his attention to the PTA box 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 solve their concerns or 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.

- Individual Counseling - Students are seen on an as needed basis. Some students may need more ongoing support, which is also available. Parental permission is required for more than three consecutive sessions.
- Counseling Groups - Many small groups will be organized on issues such as friendship, life transitions, grief, and anger management. Groups will promote positive social skills and peer relations. Groups will run 20-30 minutes and will last 6-8 weeks. Parental permission is required to be in a Counseling Group.
- Drop In Hours - Daily drop-in hours will be available where children can set up confidential meetings with Ms. Kotlewski.
- Newsletter - A School Counselor Newsletter will be sent home to encourage a home-school connection and to create consistency between lessons at school and lessons at home.

- Character Counts - Each month, teachers will provide two lessons devoted to teaching character, integrity, and morals. There will be a character trait emphasized each month. Parents can encourage the same traits at home, as they are being promoted at school. (Note some traits cover two months to stress the topic.)
 - September/Introduction of all traits
 - October/Responsibility
 - November & December/Caring
 - January/Trustworthiness
 - February & March/Respect
 - April/Citizenship
 - May/Fairness
- Special Counseling Sponsored Events/Committee - There will be a canned food drive during Thanksgiving and the Holiday Toy distribution during the December Holiday Season.

Daily Arrival:

Children should not line up or be dropped off at school prior to 8:30 a.m. Children will line up outside at the designated area for their grade until the first bell rings at 8:45a.m. Teachers or aides will lead the children to their classrooms. In case of inclement weather, children will line up inside at a designated area. The second bell will ring at 8:50am. Children should be in their classrooms at this time. If your child arrives at school after 9:00a.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 (301-762-7122 or companykid@aol.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 (7:00 am – 9:00 am) and after school (3:00 pm-6:30 pm) hours.
- excellent rates with a 10% sibling discount.
- WPA and POC vouchers accepted.
- continued care during early release days, snow days, and most holidays.
- homework period.
- great clubs, fantastic trips, creative projects, fun inside and outside group games, arts and crafts.
- experienced and energetic staff.

To find out more information call the KidsCo office at 301-762-7122.

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.

Discipline:

Discipline is developed through mutual respect between the students and the staff. Children must be aware that respect for public and personal property, respect for the feelings of others, and appropriate behavior are expected at Flower Hill. At all times, students are expected to:

- Follow directions
- Keep their hands, feet, and objects to themselves
- Respect themselves and others
- Be in the proper location
- Respect school property

In September, a copy of the school's discipline policy will be distributed to each student. Parents are expected to review the policy with their children. The last page of the policy should be signed by both the parent and the student and returned to the school.

Dress Code:

Guidelines for consideration:

- Children should not wear clothing displaying offensive words or pictures.
- 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 school tries 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.

Emergency Cards:

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

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. The school maintains some funds for this purpose. If you need to use these funds, arrangements can be made through the child's teacher or the school counselor at the time the permission slip is returned.

Foreign Language Class:

The PTA organizes before school Spanish classes through the Foreign Language for Every Study (FLES) program. These classes are available, for a fee, to children in grades three through five. Watch for flyers advertising enrollment/sign-up.

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 to five who were not tested in second grade. Parental permission is required for the November screening. Students in grades three through five who meet the county criteria may be designated as Gifted and Talented (GT) and will become eligible for special programs outside of the regular school program. 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. Skepton.

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. If a child has a medical condition that requires him or her to be allowed to chew gum or eat candy, please notify the school nurse in writing.

Early Release Days:

Early release days occur for conferences with parents and professional development for staff. School dismisses at 12:35p.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.

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 prohibits homemade food items for student parties. All food items served in class must be purchased in a store or bakery.

Class Parties: 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.

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. There is also a snack cart from which children can purchase items to supplement their lunches. 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 \$2.25 (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 30 minutes. Please encourage your child to eat as quickly as possible. 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 encouraged. Parents may bring lunch to have with students, as long as they sign in at the office first.

Lunch Schedule

Grade 1 & 2	11:00am-11:30 am
Grade Kdgn	11:35am-12:05pm
Grade 3	12:10pm-12:40pm
Grade 4	12:45pm-1:15pm
Grade 5	1:20pm-1:50pm

Media Center:

Book Loans: Children in grades K-1 may sign out one book at a time for a period of one week. Children in grades 2-5 may sign out two books at a time for a period of two weeks. The Media Center is open to all members of the Flower Hill Community at all times when a lesson is not being taught. Visitors must sign in at the office first.

Overdue or Lost Books: If a child has one or more books overdue, they will not be allowed to borrow any more books from the Media Center until the book has been returned. If the book is determined to be lost, then the parent/guardian will be expected to pay the replacement cost before the child is allowed to borrow any other books or materials. Overdue notices will go out at the end of each marking period.

Damaged Books: It is our hope that children treat books carefully. However, we know that damage can happen. Assessments for damage are done by the Media Specialist or the Media Assistant. Damage is treated on a case-by-case basis. If the book is unfit for circulation, the parent/guardian will be expected to pay replacement cost.

Please direct any questions to M.J. Georges Willard, Media Specialist or Ann Timinsky, Media Assistant, between the hours of 8:00am 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 1 & 2	11:30am-12:00pm
Grade Kdgn	12:05pm-12:35pm
Grade 3	12:40pm-1:10pm
Grade 4	1:15pm-1:45pm
Grade 5	1:50pm-2:20pm

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 on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the school. A membership drive is held in the fall, but people can join all year. The cost is \$8.00 per person. 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://mcps.k12.md.us/>) or arrange to have an email sent to you via the web site 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. 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.

Student Government Association- SGA:

The Flower Hill SGA is involved with many projects at the school, including fundraising, school spirit efforts, and more. A representative from each class is elected to represent the class in the SGA.

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.

MSA: State required tests for third, fourth, and fifth grade. Given in February/March.

GT: See Gifted and Talented Section

CTBS: County required tests for second grade. Given in February.

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 (8:20am – 8:45am) and dismissal (2:45pm – 3:15pm), except for staff.

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.

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.