



Pine Crest Elementary School

A dedicated and caring community building success
through excellence in teaching and learning.



August 2009

Welcome Back to Pine Crest!

Welcome to a new school year at Pine Crest Elementary School. It is hard to believe that it is already time to get ready for another terrific year. I hope that you are having a relaxed, fun-filled summer. Various members of the school, community and I have been busy preparing for your return by creating a variety of special programs and activities for your children this year. We're also providing many opportunities for you to become more involved with your child's experiences at school. By working together as a team, we can make this the most enjoyable and rewarding year yet!

As you will see, this newsletter contains a great deal of important information about how to get ready for the first day of school in a section entitled *Pine Crest "Helpful Tips"*. I suggest that you read it carefully and keep it some place safe where you can easily refer to it. Throughout the school year, your child's teacher and I will be making a special effort to stay in touch with you in other ways. We will keep you informed of your child's progress and school activities. Look for papers coming home on Wednesday from the school: newsletters, weekly learning skills, invitations, updates, tips and reminders. Your communication with us is very important, too. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or me whenever you have a question, concern, or need more information. Our doors are always open.

One way that you can start giving your support is to take a little time daily to talk with your child about his or her school day. Ask about homework, assignments, friends, and special activities. Your interest in your child's academic and social experiences at school can be a great motivator for learning. Let your child see that you are working together with the school to help make this a terrific year in every way.

I hope that you are preparing for the beginning of another fantastic year at Pine Crest. If you have any questions, large or small, please do not hesitate to call the school at (301) 649-8066. I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Meredith A. Casper
Principal



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Principal:
Meredith Casper
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Assistant Principal:
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School Events

- ☺ August 28
Open House at Pine Crest
2:15—3:15 p.m.
- ☺ August 31
First Day of School
- ☺ September 3
Back-to-School Picnic
5:00—7:00 p.m. at MKES
- ☺ September 7
School Holiday
- ☺ September 9
Back-to-School Night
7:00—8:30 p.m.
- ☺ September 28
No School

Pine Crest "Helpful Tips"

Absences

Parents are asked to call the school by 9:30 a.m. if their child will be absent. The school office will telephone home between 9:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. if we have not been notified of an absence. In addition, a written explanation of each student's absence is required from the parent when the child returns to school.

Arrival Time

School hours are from **9:15** a.m. to **3:30** p.m. Students are encouraged to arrive at school on time, but **not earlier than 9:00 a.m.** as adequate supervision is not available.

Attendance

Students will now be recorded as:

*AM Absent—if they arrive at school more than 1 hour late.

*PM Absent—if they leave school more than 1 hour early.

*Either AM or PM Absent—if they are absent from school for more than one hour during the school day.

*Absent for a full day— if a student is present for one hour or less of the school day.

Bicycles

Students who are identified as walkers may ride a bicycle to school if a written permission letter is sent to the office. A lock is needed in order to properly secure the bike to our rack. The school cannot assume responsibility for damaged or stolen bicycles. It is important that parents review bicycle safety and etiquette. Bicycles are to be "walked" on school property. Please remember that Montgomery County law requires that all children 18 years of age or younger wear bicycle helmets.

Breakfast Program

Breakfast is offered from **8:50** a.m. to **9:20** a.m. in the All Purpose Room. The cost of breakfast is **\$1.30**. Reduced price breakfast is **\$.30**.

Cell Phones

Elementary students are not permitted to possess or use portable communication devices on MCPS school campuses during the instructional day. By written request from a parent or guardian and upon approval of the principal, elementary students may possess a portable communication device during the instructional day. Principals will grant waivers to the regulation on consideration of the following factors: safety to and from school, communication during off-campus, after school activities or medical concerns. Communication between parent, student and principal is required for every waiver requested. (MCPS Portable Communication Policy)

Clothing

We are proud of the way our students look when they come to school. We feel that children have the right to choose clothing based on their own sense of taste and style. Dress that tends to disrupt the class or contribute to a safety hazard will result in a phone call home. Some clothing to stay away from includes: t-shirts with obscene or vulgar language, revealing or provocative clothing, bare feet, hats (without religious implications or prior approval), and inappropriate makeup. Gum chewing is prohibited.

Day Care

The SED Center will be offering a before school (7:00 to 9:30 a.m.) and

after school (3:30 to 6:30 p.m.) program at Pine Crest. More information may be obtained by calling: (202) 462-8848.

Enrollment Information

On the first day of school you will be asked for emergency information for each child in your family. If information should change during the school year, particularly emergency numbers, please call the school office so that we can update the information. Please supply the information requested immediately as it is important that we be able to contact you.

Free and Reduced Lunch

Under the new Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS), parents and guardians will submit just **one** application that lists all the children in their household who attend Montgomery County Public Schools. The applications will not be pre-printed with student information as they were in the past, so it will be necessary for parents/guardians to list the **names, ID numbers, birth dates, and schools** of the children for whom they are applying. (Parents/guardians are reminded that student identification numbers can be found on report cards.) The application will contain detailed, easy-to-follow directions. Parents/guardians should be aware that, because all students from a household will apply on one application, only the youngest child in the household will receive an application the first week of school.



Pine Crest "Helpful Tips"

Grading and Reporting

All elementary schools will continue to report grades based on grade level expectations in Grades 1–5. Teachers in Grades 1–5 will continue to report other information about a student's effort and behavior as learning skills separately from the academic grade.

In Grades 3, 4, and 5, students will receive the traditional report cards with letter grades of A, B, C, D or E to indicate student achievement progress.

I encourage you to continue to talk with your child's teachers about any specific questions you have about your child's grades.

Immunizations

Proper documentation of required immunizations must be received before enrolling a student. If a parent/guardian does not provide documentation of the required immunizations but presents evidence of an appointment within 20 calendar days of the date of enrollment, the student will be enrolled. However, if the documentation is not provided immediately following the scheduled date, the student will be excluded from school and marked absent.

Lunch Loans

The school will loan lunch money to any student who has forgotten his/her money. Parents should send in the return payment to the cafeteria promptly. Students who have outstanding loans, **exceeding 3 consecutive days of borrowing**, will not be allowed to borrow again until the debts are paid.

Lunch Program

Lunches may be brought from home or bought at school beginning with the first day. A computerized cash register system is used in the cafeteria. Each student is assigned an account which is accessed by a Personalized Identification Number (PIN). Students who are returning to our school will use their PIN from the 2008-09 school year. Third grade students, and students who are new to our school, will receive PINs on the first day of school. This is a debit system in which students may choose to make deposits into an account. At mealtime, the computer records food purchases and deducts them from the account when the student enters his/her PIN on the keypad. Students who choose not to pay in advance still enter their PINs, then pay cash. We highly suggest that deposits be made in advance. Checks - make out to *Pine Crest Elementary School*.

Lunch prices are: lunch \$2.50, milk \$.60. Reduced price lunch will remain at \$.40.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a student may be entitled to receive menu substitutions or texture modifications under the school lunch program. This entitlement occurs when a doctor determines that a child has an impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. A signed statement from the student's doctor must verify the student's diet. If the handicap prevents the student from eating the regular school meals, meal substitutions for that child will be provided by the school at no extra charge. If you believe your child needs substitutions, please contact the school office.

Vegetarian lunch options are also available on a daily basis. To access this service, your child will need to communicate this information to the cafeteria manager in advance of ordering that day to ensure that the appropriate food selection will be available.

Medication

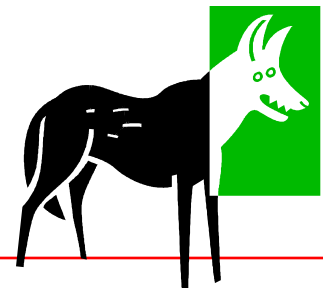
No medication will be administered in school without the parent's or guardian's written permission and a physician's statement. Medical forms are available in the school office or health room and are required for each episode of illness and for each medication ordered. The medication, properly labelled by a pharmacist, must be hand delivered to the school by the parent. All medication kept in the school will be stored in a secure area accessible only to authorized administering personnel.

Outside Food Items

MCPS has issued a directive that **prohibits** parents from bringing cooked items into the building for student consumption. Foods brought into the school building for students must, henceforth, be only those items that are pre-packaged.

School Menu—first day

Chicken nuggets with sweet potato fries or Garden Burger with corn. There will be **BREAKFAST** on the **FIRST DAY**. For last minute menu changes, check the MCPS website: www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/foodserv/.



Pine Crest "Helpful Tips"

Student Pick-up

Once students have arrived at school, they will be released only to their parents or legal guardians with proper identification. All students leaving school before the end of the school day must be signed out in the office by their parents/guardians. If a student needs to be picked up at school by anyone else, including siblings and grandparents, the parents must send a note to the school stating their wishes and the name of the person who will pick up the child. The person picking up the child should bring a picture identification with them to the school office.

****Students must be picked up by 3:15 for p.m. dismissal or after 3:30 as the school engages in a whole school dismissal.**

Visitors

Parents/guardians and other interested community members are always welcome to visit our school. All visitors, including volunteers, must check in at the main office and secure an identification badge before going anywhere else in the building.

Voice Mail

Our voice mail number is (301) 649-8009. Each staff member has their own mailbox number. Ask your child's teacher for his/her number so you can be directly connected to the mailbox.

BUDGET UPDATE

As these tight budget times continue, we appreciate the funding and support the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has received from the County Council. We recognize that it is imperative to use our resources in the most efficient and effective manner. MCPS staffing allocations are based on projected enrollment.

We certainly hope that at the beginning of the school year our actual enrollment matches the projected enrollment. Unfortunately, as a result of this current fiscal situation, it may become necessary for staffing changes to occur in some schools if enrollment comes in below projection and doesn't justify the staffing that was allocated. If there is a need to make an adjustment in staffing based on actual enrollment, I will do my best to minimize the impact of these necessary adjustments.

I will keep you informed and alert you of any changes that may occur at our school.

Family Involvement Events

Month	Event	Date	Time
August	Sneak Peak Open House	August 28	2:15 – 3:15 p.m.
September	Back to School Night Picnic (MKES)	September 3	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
	Back-to-School Night	September 9	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
October	PTA meeting (MKES)	October 6	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
	Fall Harvest Dance	October 23	6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Nov.	Family Reading Night	November 18	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
December	PTA meeting (PCES)	December 1	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
	Winter Concert (BHS)	December 16	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
January	Family Math Night	January 20	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
February	PTA meeting (MKES)	February 2	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
	Cupid's Arrow Dance	February 12	6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
March	EL Golfo Family Night	March 3	5:00 – 9:00 p.m.
April	PTA meeting (PCES)	April 13	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
	International Night	April 14	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
May	May Fair	TBD	TBD
	Spring Concert: Chorus	May 5	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
	Spring Concert: Band and Orchestra	May 12	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
June	PTA meeting (MKES)	June 1	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
	Talent Show	June 3	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
	Promotion (BHS)	June 14 or 15	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**** Dates/times are subject to change ****

Welcome to Our "New"
Pine Crest Family Members

Staff Member	Position
Jason Levine	Assistant Principal
Amanda Foust	Art (.1)
Carl Moore	Building Service Worker (.5)
William Neal	Instrumental Music (.1)
Martha Zanger	Physical Education (.1)
Pending	Special Education (.5)

Interims/Report Cards

<i>Marking Period Ends</i>	<i>Distribution</i>
October 30	September 30: Interims Parent Teacher Conferences: Report Cards
January 22	December 9: Interims February 3: Report Cards
March 26	February 24: Interims April 14: Report Cards
June 16	May 12: Interim June 23 (mailed home)

MSA (State Testing)

March 8 - March 17

Sneak Peak

August 28, 2008; 2:15–3:15 p.m.

Students and their families are invited to stop by the school and meet their teachers. If you are unable to attend, class lists will be posted on the front windows over the weekend.

We look forward to seeing you!

