

# Harpswell Community School Newsletter

*Inspiring students to successfully navigate the world*

## From the Principal...

*How can it possibly be that we're approaching the end of 2022 already?! As I reflect on the past year, I'm grateful for many things:*

*~ A community that supports its students in so many ways, big and small*

*~ Parents who are finally able to come into school again*

*~ Resilient kids who are making great gains after the pandemic knocked everyone off course*

*~ Teachers and staff who put their hearts and souls into everything they do, putting kids first always*

*I hope everyone finds just what they need during vacation: time with family and friends, time for fun, time to relax, time to do whatever brings you joy! Stay safe and healthy!*

*~Anita Hopkins*



### Every Wednesday

...is a late start day, with school starting one hour later than usual. School start time is 9:10 on M,T,Th,F, and 10:10 on Wednesdays. Bus dismissal is at 3:25 each day, followed by dismissal of children being picked up by families.

**LEGO Club** is from 3:30 - 4:15 every Tuesday that school is in session, unless otherwise notified. Families are responsible for pick up at 4:15. Please contact your child's teacher or the main office for more information or a permission form.

**Chess Club** is from 9:15 - 10:00 every Wednesday that school is in session, unless otherwise notified. This takes place in the Art Room. As Wednesdays are late start days, students need to be dropped off at the main door of the school at 9:15.

**Thursday, December 22**  
Spirit Day - Pajama Day!

**Friday, December 23 thru Monday, January 2**  
School Vacation

**Tuesday, January 3**  
First day of school in 2023!

**Wednesday, January 4**  
Water Safety Lessons begin for Grades 3 & 4

**Thursday, January 12**  
4:00 - 5:00 - PTO Meeting in the Learning Commons

**Monday, January 16**  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No School

**Save the Date!**  
**Wed., January 18**  
HCS will be hosting a Family Math Night from 6:00 - 7:00! Lots of fun things are in the works - Stay tuned for more details!

## If you need support...

*Please know that you're not alone. Many people are struggling these days, for many reasons. Please consider these resources if you or someone you know could use some help...*

### W.I.N.G.: The Food Pantry at Mt. Ararat Middle School

Hours for the 2022-2023 School Year:

**Wednesdays 3:15 pm to 5:15 pm**

W.I.N.G. is open weekly with fresh produce, dairy, frozen foods, and hygiene items available to any MSAD 75 family. If you have special requests or would like your order packed in advance, please call 729-2950 x7202 and leave a message with your name and phone number, and a volunteer will give you a call back. If accessing the pantry is a hardship, please let us know. We're happy to work with any family to make alternate arrangements.

 Find **FREE** and confidential Help  
211 is where to start. It's **FREE** and confidential.  
You call - We listen  
**CALL 211**  
TEXT your zip code to 898-211  
VISIT [211Maine.org](http://211Maine.org)

**SUICIDE PREVENTION & CRISIS LIFELINE**  
**CALL OR TEXT 988**  
AVAILABLE 24/7 

## Letter from the Superintendent...

**This letter from Mr. Connolly was recently posted on the district website:**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

During the past several days our schools have experienced a high number of absences due to respiratory illness. The Federal and State CDC recommends schools and families focus on early identification and exclusion of ill students and staff. Our school medical staff and office personnel are reporting a significant number of students coming to school ill. A child with symptoms of **respiratory illness, such as cough, fever, or sore throat, should stay home** and follow the CDC recommendations as outlined below.

If individuals test positive for COVID-19, they should isolate for 5 days and may return with symptom improvement, while masking for days 6 through 10. More information can be found here: [Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19](#).

If your child has an **uncontrolled cough, difficulty breathing, or persistent fever**, you should consider a medical evaluation. There are many respiratory illnesses that cause these symptoms (e.g., COVID-19, Pertussis, Influenza, RSV). Most illnesses of this nature are spread from person to person.

Germs can be easily spread by:

- Coughing, sneezing, or talking;
- Touching your face with unwashed hands after touching contaminated surfaces or objects; and
- Touching surfaces or objects that may be frequently touched by other people.

Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to prevent yourself and your loved ones from getting sick, especially at key times when you are likely to get and spread germs. Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

Covering coughs and sneezes, keeping hands clean, and staying home when sick can help prevent the spread of serious illness. If your child has become ill with respiratory illness and you have not already alerted your child's school, please contact the school and provide as much information as possible regarding the illness.

Thank you for your continued assistance in keeping our schools and communities healthy.

Sincerely,

Steve Connolly

Superintendent of Schools

Click [here](#) to see Mr. Connolly's most recent video. He interviews Tara Crossman, who will be competing soon in the Junior Iditarod in Alaska!

## ...And yet, regular school attendance is so important!

A big thank you to all families and students for everything you do to support our school community. We also appreciate the work of our teaching staff and community volunteers who help make our school a great place for exploration and learning.

As you think about your family arrangements, we want to stress the importance of sending your child to school every day possible. It is valuable for students to maintain consistent attendance, arriving to school on time and staying until regular dismissal every day. Your support for your child's education truly makes a difference.

Learning is each student's job so that they can gain life-long skills. Just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused absences, can add up to too much lost learning time and put your child behind in school. Excessive absences also put an extra burden on teachers, including interventionists, who are doing their best to provide students with the education they need - it's very hard to juggle missed instruction for students while moving instruction forward for students who have not missed school.

This is as true in kindergarten as it is in 5th grade. Put simply, too many absences at any age can affect a student's chances for academic success, not to mention their opportunities to maintain strong, positive peer relationships. Research tells us that missing as little as 10% of school can lead to long-term negative outcomes. We've had about 75 days of school so far this year, so if your child has missed more than 7 days of school in this school year, they're over that threshold, and are considered "chronically absent."

HCS staff want the very best for every child, just as their families do. When a child is truly sick, it's easy to make the call to stay home. When a child has been sick for an extended time or is often sick, it's probably time to consult a doctor. As Superintendent Connolly's letter points out, lots of illnesses are hitting lots of people pretty hard. If you have any questions about whether or not your child should come to school, please reach out to our nurse in the HCS health office.

## V-A-C-A-T-I-O-N!

**Thursday, December 22nd is a full day of school. We'll be on vacation from Friday, December 23rd through Monday, January 2nd. We'll return to school in 2023 on Tuesday, January 3rd!**

## If you celebrate...



**...or something else, have a safe, healthy, wonderful holiday season! If none of these apply to you, have a safe, healthy, wonderful school vacation!**