

Dear Snowden Farm Families,

We are excited to welcome you to the start of the 2024-2025 school year at Snowden Farm Elementary School! Our school's leadership team has worked hard this summer to help put plans, processes, and procedures in place that will lead us toward continued excellence. We can't wait to reunite with our returning students and families and meet the new students and families joining our community. Mark your calendars for an unforgettable first day on August 26th. We're gearing up to make it our best year yet!

### **MCPS Priorities**

Our academic, behavioral and social emotional program is aligned to the priorities of Montgomery County Public Schools: Academic Excellence, Well-Being and Family Engagement, and Professional and Operational Excellence. It is our mission to provide students with a positive learning environment to ensure that they achieve their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

Join us for Back to School Night on Wednesday, September 4th to learn about our innovative programs, including Restorative Justice, Zones of Regulation, and Harmony curriculum. Discover how we're fostering a community of empowered learners ready to make a positive impact now and in the future. We'll also discuss exciting updates to our instructional program including our new reading curriculum.

### **How to Be Active In the SFES Community**

At SFES, we believe in the power of community and warmly invite you to get involved. Your participation is vital to your child's success. Whether you volunteer, join our PTA, or support school events, your engagement makes a difference. Together, we can ensure that every student reaches their highest potential.

### **Welcome to Our New Stallions!**

We are delighted to welcome the following new Stallions to embark upon this journey with us:

- Ms. Ciana Cheung, SESES Para Educator
- Ms. Karen Khazi, 3rd Grade Teacher
- Ms. Maghan Parrott, 5th Grade Teacher
- Ms. Angelica Ortiz, Para Educator
- Ms. Courtney Schafer, Social Worker

- Ms. Nora Simcox, Behavior Support Teacher
- Ms. Mary Veroxie, Special Education Teacher
- Ms. Melannie Villaran Zariquiey, 5th Grade SESES Teacher

### **Goodbye to Our Departing Stallions!**

While we are thrilled about the new year and the onboarding of new staff, we will miss our Stallion family members who have moved on to other opportunities.

We would like to extend well wishes to:

- Ms. Justine Dix, Leave
- Ms. Kiara Fuller, 12 month social worker
- Ms. Joanne Jamison, Monocacy Elementary School
- Mr. James Lewis, Watkins Mill High School
- Ms. Naja McAdams, Stonegate Elementary School
- Ms. Adriana Murphy, Wilson Wims Elementary School
- Ms. Latoya Thompson, Leave
- Mrs. Rabia Syed, will be teaching in Virginia
- Ms. Jessica Vargas, Mill Creek Towne Elementary School
- Ms. Raleigh Welsh, Frederick County Public Schools

We know that you all will do amazing things for students and your communities in the future. Once a Stallion always a Stallion!

### **Our Daily Schedule**

Our day begins with morning announcements and instruction promptly at 9:00 AM, therefore, all students should arrive no later than 8:55 AM, so they have time to unpack and prepare for the day. Keep in mind that supervision of students is not available prior to 8:45 AM. Please monitor the time that walkers leave for school and ensure that car riders remain in your vehicle until an adult is on duty to prevent students from being unsupervised.

### **Homeroom Teacher Assignments**

Students are very excited to find out who their homeroom teacher will be for the upcoming year. Each teacher will send a postcard to the student's address on file. Postcards should arrive no later than Wednesday, August 21st. If any students or families are unsure of their teacher, school staff will be available during Open House and on the first day of school to provide assistance.

### **Open House - August 22nd**

Open House is a time to visit the classrooms, meet teachers as well as classmates for the 2024-2025 school year. At that time, families will have the option of taking a tour of the building.

- Our Open House will be held on Thursday, August 22nd, from 4:30 to 5:30 PM. Students will conclude their visit by meeting with the administrative and counseling teams on the playground, where they can enjoy a popsicle.
- If you are unable to come to the Open House, signs will be posted as well as staff members stationed throughout the building with class lists to ensure that students know where to go on the first day of school.

### **New Family Orientation**

Our ***New Family Orientation*** will be held on Friday, August 9th, from 10:00 to 11:00 AM, and again on Friday, August 16th, from 3:00 to 4:00 PM. This meeting, facilitated by our counselor, Mrs. Lockett, is an opportunity for families with children in **grades 1-5** who are new to Snowden Farm Elementary School to become familiar with the building before Open House.

This is for **new families of students in grades 1-5** as we have welcomed our Kindergarten families through a separate orientation.

### **School-Home Communication**

We are excited to get to know all our Stallion families this year. We know how important it is to have good communication between school and home, so we are working hard to improve our methods. I encourage both students and parents to stay in touch, sharing both happy news and any concerns.

While email continues to remain the easiest and most efficient means of communication, you can also call the main office at 240-740-5800 and leave a message with your name, phone number, and your student's name.

- **Blackboard Connect Ed Messages:**
  - This newsletter will be sent home every Sunday evening through email and posted in the principal corner on our webpage to keep you informed of what is happening at the school.
- **Remind:**
  - Schoolwide messages and messages from individual teachers will come through Remind.
    - Caregivers will receive messages as texts.
    - Some parents also choose to download Remind as an app on their device.
  - Adjust your account settings for Remind at [www.remind.com](http://www.remind.com).
  - Choose “Sign up” and enter your phone number. Your account as an MCPS parent will come up and will allow you to edit your communication settings.

- **ParentVue:**
  - Please make sure that you have updated the emergency information and ensure to include your email.
  - Please click here to log in, [ParentVUE](#)
- I will also be tweeting about our school accomplishments so please follow me by searching X for @SFES\_Principal
- Join the PTA!- The PTA is a great way to stay connected and support the school!

### **Monthly Celebrations**

Each month we will take time to honor and recognize the diversity of our community. Our first celebration is in September for Hispanic Heritage Month. Families of Central American, South American, Spanish, and Caribbean backgrounds: we would love to celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of your families.

- Please send in photos that showcase your amazing culture. We will share it on the screen hanging in the main entrance of the school building.

### **Family Preparation for the 1st Day of School-August 26th**

- Please begin talking with your child(ren) of how they will go home after school (walk, bus, car rider, or BAR-T).
  - If your child typically takes the bus, please have them ride on the first day of school.
- Label your child's supplies.
- If your child completed the summer enrichment activities, please have them return the cover sheet to their teacher during the first week of school.
- Please label any donations for the grade level with the teacher's name.

### **School Cash Online**

MCPS offers a School Cash Online payment system for parents and guardians to make payments for field trips, yearbooks, merchandise, and donations.

- If you have not registered and set up your account, we encourage you to do so today. Use this [School Cash Online \(SCO\)](#) link and follow the steps.
- Parent guides are linked below as well.
  - [SCO Parent Guide \(English\)](#)
  - [SCO Parent Guide \(Español\)](#)
  - [SCO - How to register](#)
  - [SCO-Auto Subscription Multi Guardian User Guide \(English\)](#)

- [SCO-Auto Subscription Multi Guardian User Guide \(Spanish\)](#)

### **Breakfast and Lunch**

Beginning the first day of school, breakfast and lunch will be served in the cafeteria. Breakfast hours will be from 8:45 a.m. - 8:55 a.m. We will make concessions for those students who arrive late due to bus issues.

- The cost of school breakfast is \$1.30.
- Menus are sent home monthly and can be found on the MCPS's website: [Elementary Menu](#)
- Hot lunches are served daily with alternate choices. Lunch is \$2.55 including milk. Milk may be purchased separately for 60 cents.
- Parents are highly encouraged to start a Myschoolbucks account for their child.
  - [English](#) | [español](#) | [中文](#) | [français](#) | [tiếng Việt](#) | [한국어](#) | [አማርኛ](#)
  - MySchoolBucks is an optional service for parents to view recent purchases and make prepayments to your child's cafeteria account for breakfast, lunch and a la carte meals via the Internet with a credit/debit card. This service is offered as a convenience for interested families. By creating a secure online account, parents can manage their child's account.
- Checks should be made payable to Snowden Farm School Cafeteria.

### **Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) Applications Are Now Open**

Every year, students must apply and be approved to receive FREE breakfast and/or lunch. The Division of Food and Nutrition Services (DFNS) is excited to provide regular meal services during the 2024-2025 school year.

- Students in Maryland who qualify for reduced-price meals will not be charged for meals! Breakfast: Regular Price: \$1.30; Reduced Price: No Cost, Lunch: Regular Price: \$2.55, Reduced Price: No Cost
- Apply before school starts. One application covers the entire HOUSEHOLD. Translations in other languages are available through the online application.
- Apply now at [www.MySchoolApps.com](http://www.MySchoolApps.com)
- Here is a video about how to apply:
  - English Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJUapGLarBo>
  - Video en Español: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsdCrtCIFJc&t=4s>

### **FERPA Annual Notice**

Each year, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is required by law to inform parents/guardians of the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA), P.L. 93-380, and

its implementing regulations, as well as their rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. 1232h and its implementing regulations 34 C.F.R. Part 98 (PPRA). PPRA requires educational institutions to notify parents/guardians of their rights concerning the district's conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

- The PPRA notice for distribution to parents/guardians can be found online and is available in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Portuguese.
- FERPA requires MCPS to give parents/guardians the opportunity to request that directory information be withheld.
- MCPS Form 281-13, Annual Notice for Directory information and Student Privacy, contains the appropriate information and is available online in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Portuguese.
- Parents/guardians may direct the principal not to release any or a specific part of the directory information if they return the completed form by **Thursday, September 12, 2024**.
- If parents/guardians choose to change their decision at a later date, they must contact the school directly.
- Parents/guardians and school staff must understand that if they withhold directory information, the decision affects all lists of or references to students distributed or used outside MCPS, whether prepared by the school, organizations, or any combination of parents, teachers, and students of a school, or central services.
- The form remains in effect until the end of the school year on Monday, June 30, 2025. See More information HERE.

#### **Upcoming Important Dates**

- Friday, August 9th from 10:00-11:00 AM or Friday, August 16th from 3:00-4:00 PM-New Family Orientation
- Thursday, August 22nd from 4:30-5:30 PM- Open House
- Monday, September 2nd- No School
- Wednesday, September 4th-Back to School Night

#### **Additional Back to School Forms and Information**

- [Annual MCPS Pest Management Notice](#)
- [Annual MCPS Asbestos Notice](#)
- [Bus Route Information](#) (will be posted by August 15th)
- [Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Reporting](#)
- [24-25 Supply Lists](#) .

Please enjoy the remainder of the summer and we hope to see you at Open House on August 22nd. We can't wait to embark on this incredible journey with you and your children. Here's to a fantastic year ahead at Snowden Farm Elementary School!

With Gratitude,

Mrs. Michelle Fortune, Principal and Ms. Kayla Gross, Assistant Principal