



## James McHenry Elementary School

Thomas Rivers, Principal | [thomas.rivers@pgcps.org](mailto:thomas.rivers@pgcps.org)  
8909 McHenry Lane | Lanham, MD 20706 | (301) 918-8760 |  
[www.pgcps.org/jamesmchenry](http://www.pgcps.org/jamesmchenry)

August 20, 2021

Dear James McHenry Elementary Families,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year! As you are winding down your summer vacation, I hope you are relaxed and recharged as you prepare for the start of a new school year. I am so delighted that you are part of our amazing learning community. I am anticipating seeing the smiling faces of our Cougars as you prepare for the return to school. Listening to the chatter in the hallways, academic discussions in the classrooms, and morning greetings from students have truly been missed. What was thought to be a brief interruption from the school year has proven to be an unexpected long-term event. Despite that, I am excited about this school year. Our staff will continue to provide a learning community that empowers our students to be successful members of our diverse community. Parents and students, I would like to thank you for your diligence, patience, and support as we navigated the global pandemic together as a school community.

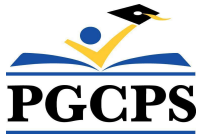
Our school theme this year is “One School, One Team; Empowering our Scholars for Success”. Throughout our school community we will commit to **Transformation, Change, and Innovation** as we collaborate to achieve success for all students. This year we will be committed to excellence in all that we do, as we seek to provide world class instruction daily with the expectation that all students can learn and succeed. Now, more than ever, we must unite to ensure students receive the very best education possible. We look forward to partnering with you to guarantee that goal is met. Our focus on learning and the social emotional well-being of students will not be compromised.

I look forward to building relationships with all stakeholders throughout this year and encourage you to become active members of the Parent Teacher Organization (P.T.O.) and the Cougar family. As a parent, you play a critical role in the academic success of our school, hence, school-parent communication is crucial. I look forward to working with you and your children this school year, as we partner together to empower our Cougars to succeed!

With Cougar Pride,

Mr. Rivers, Principal

*Mr. Rivers, Principal*



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### Parent Information

#### Staffing Updates

I am pleased to announce the newest members to the James McHenry Family, please welcome the following staff members: **Primary Instructional Lead Teacher: Dr. Jamaal Thomas, First Grade: Ms. Miya White, Second Grade: Ms. Aja Ruffin, Special Education: Ms. Chelsea Moore, ESOL Paraprofessional: Ms. Cindy Vanegas, Paraprofessional: Conrado Taguba, Two Night Cleaner: Ms. Dakota Wright and Mr. Cordell Thomas.** What a wonderful addition to our School Community. Within the coming weeks strides will be made to secure teachers for the following positions; Third Grade (Math and Science), Fourth Grade (Math and Science), Fifth Grade (Math and Science), Music, and Physical Education.

#### Returning to School

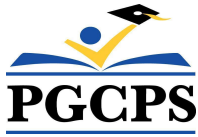
To ensure the safety of all we will begin school with many of the safety protocols from spring in place. Students will be **required to wear masks for the full day**. Please make sure you practice this with your child/children prior to the start of school. Arrival and Dismissal procedures will be adjusted to ensure social distancing. Students will have lunch in the cafeteria or classrooms to allow for social distancing during lunch. During recess students will be allowed to play with their classmates in designated spaces on the playground and the back field. Specials will be held in the classrooms of specialists or the classroom of the teacher. Students will have a normal day of teaching and learning with varied instructional strategies and use of technology throughout the day. Safety precautions will be in place to limit the spread of symptoms related to illness. Please join me in a Question and Answer Session on Thursday September 2, 2021.

#### Immunizations

All students must have up-to-date immunizations on file with the school to return. Back-to-School Immunizations are provided by the Prince George's County Health Department. For more information, please click [here](#) or visit: <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/2052/Immunizations>. Should you have questions regarding your child's immunization record, please contact the school at (301)918-9760 or email Mrs. Terry Shriely at [terry.shirley@pgcps.org](mailto:terry.shirley@pgcps.org).

#### School Office Hours

The school office hours are from **7:15 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.** If you are in need of assistance you must schedule an appointment for support. To schedule an appointment please call (301)918-8760 or email Mrs. Terry Shirley at [terry.shirley@pgcps.org](mailto:terry.shirley@pgcps.org). Per PGCPS policy, all visitors must ring the doorbell and show their identification to the camera to gain access into the school building. If you are in need of assistance you must schedule an appointment for support. Visitors will not be allowed in the building if an appointment is not scheduled.



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### **School Hours**

It is essential that students arrive at school on time each day to engage in instruction. School promptly begins at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 1:55 p.m. To receive the full benefit of the instructional program it is important to be present and on time every day. Students are not allowed to enter the building prior to 7:15 a.m. Before that time, there is no adult supervision for students. Schedules will be provided specific to respective classes during Orientation and Back-to-School Night sessions.

### **Afternoon Dismissal**

It is important that the dismissal process be as smooth as possible. As such, the early dismissal cut-off is at 1:30 p.m. Following 1:30 p.m. parents must wait for their children to be dismissed at the regular time of 1:55 p.m. Emergency exceptions will be considered. Ensuring the safety of our students is a top priority and it is imperative that we know the intended dismissal procedure for each student. Dismissal information will be shared during orientation and Back-to-School Night sessions.

### **Class Assignments**

It is kindly asked that parents/guardians model positive actions when sharing class assignments with their children. The determination of student class assignments are a result of an intentional and thoughtful process, hence; changes to class lists are not made once released.

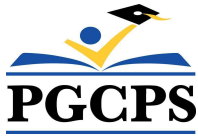
During the dates of [Friday, August 27](#) and [Monday, August 30](#), teachers will extend communication to the families of their students to welcome them to the start of a new school year. Parents can also check your child's assigned teacher using Schoolmax Parent Portal.

### **School Meals**

All students will receive free lunch regardless of their meal benefit status, for 2021 - 2022 school year. Meals include breakfast, lunch, and a pre-packaged supper for students to take home. It is extremely important that all parents complete the meal benefit application online by clicking [here](#) or visiting: <https://www.pgcps.org/offices/food-and-nutrition/free-and-reduced-meals>. Responses will determine eligibility to qualify summer 2022 P-EBT benefits. Students are welcome to bring lunch to school each day!

### **SchoolMax Family Portal**

All PGCPS Parents are encouraged to register to gain access to the PGCPS SchoolMax Family Portal. The Parent Portal is open now for information updates; if your information has changed, please access the portal to update. This is important to ensure that you receive district-wide and school-wide updates. Classroom assignments will be available via the PGCPS SchoolMax Family Portal prior to the start of school. To access the PGCPS SchoolMax Family Portal, please click [here](#) or visit: <https://family.sis.pgcps.org/schoolmax/family.jsp>.



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### Emergency Contact Form

Please click [here](#) to complete the 2021-2022 Emergency Contact Form. It is imperative that an Emergency Form is on file for each student. You can also use this link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdVPxZ4TknEmtiPfxIft2znNOokozIyiQBcTf\\_sAdc4dLDgNw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdVPxZ4TknEmtiPfxIft2znNOokozIyiQBcTf_sAdc4dLDgNw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

### **Parent Communication**

At James McHenry Elementary School, we value Parents as our Partners and prioritize keeping all informed. As such, the following platforms will be utilized to communicate with families; Google Classroom, Class Dojo, Email, School Website, School Messenger, and Twitter:

- [Class Dojo](#)

Class Dojo is a platform that allows educators to communicate with families remotely, through the sharing of photos, videos, and messages. The school Class Dojo account houses an account for all teachers and enables the school community to remain connected. Teachers will provide invitations for parents to join.

- [Email](#)

Emails will be shared with families throughout the course of the school year as a means to ensure that all remain informed.

- [SchoolMessenger](#)

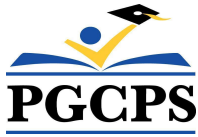
School Messenger is replacing GovDelivery, which was the notification system previously used to send PGCPS emails, text messages, and newsletters. To sign up to receive messages from PGCPS please click [here](#) or visit: <https://www.pgcps.org/offices/newsroom/schoolmessenger>.

- [Twitter](#)

Twitter is a social networking service. It is highly encouraged for parents to subscribe to Twitter as a way to receive district-wide and school-wide updates. Follow us [@JMESCougarPRIDE](#) on twitter.

### Important Dates

Event	Date	Time
Q & A with Principal Rivers	Thursday, September 2	5:00 - 6:00 pm.
Mock Day/Orientation (In-Person) (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade)	Friday, September 3	Pre K and Kindergarten 9 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.  First Grade 10:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.



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<i>Supply Drop Off "Greet and Go" Visit</i>   JMES Cougars are invited to the school to meet their teachers and drop off school supplies. This event is only for James McHenry Elementary students and parents. Though we love siblings, it is kindly requested that they remain home out of request of adhering to safety protocols.		
Supply Drop Off "Greet & Go" Visit	Tuesday, September 7	Pre K - 1st Grade 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.  2nd - 3rd Grade 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.  4th - 5th Grade 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.
First Day of School	Wednesday, September 8	All Day
Back to School Night (Primary Students - Grades PK - 2)	Wednesday, September 22	5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Back to School Night (Intermediate Students - Grades 3 - 5)	Thursday, September 23	5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Schools Closed for Students	Friday, October 1	All Day
Schools Closed for Students	Friday, October 15	All Day