



**HIGHTOWER TRAIL
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Welcome Parents



Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- PTSA Introductions
- Foundation Introductions
- Dr. Polk, Mr. Tischler & Ms. Salzman
- Questions & Answers



everychild.one voice.[®]

Hightower Trail Middle School PTSA

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2025-26 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Farrell Martin
VICE PRESIDENT: Lauren Hamilton
TREASURER: Amy Remmes
SECRETARY: Joanna Pinkham
PARLIAMENTARIAN: Kendall Willard

Become a member at htmsptsa.org

- Family / Individual options
- Online directory
- Donations welcome!

Be a Volunteer!

Complete the Volunteer Interest Form at htmsptsa.org



Additional HTMS PTSA Items

**Buy Spirit
Wear**

Get your rising 6th grader ready for school with HTMS spirit wear.

Purchase in front lobby, or order online and porch pickup.

**Join School
Loyalty
Programs**

Shopping through Kroger, and Publix can help HTMS PTSA.

For details on how to sign up, visit htmsptsa.org/Loyalty

**Join Our
FB Groups**

Hightower Trail Middle School PTSA

HTMS Rising 6th Graders (Pope High School Class of 2033)

**Reserve
Digital
Birthday
Messages**

Celebrate your child's birthday on our digital sign at the front of HTMS.

Available any day between Aug 15 through last day of school.

Order at htmsptsa.org

Husky 101

Camp for Rising 6th Graders

Saturday, May 2, 2026

Hightower Trail Middle School

Two sessions

Session 1: 9:00am-12:00pm OR

Session 2: 1:00pm-4:00pm





Camp Overview

- Students will embark on “scavenger hunt” to find new treasures and discover new places at their future school
- Sessions are led by HTMS teachers

Camp Objectives

- Providing a positive transition to middle school
- Helping your child feel more comfortable when changing classrooms
- Developing organizational strategies for middle school success
- Reinforcing good study skills



Husky 101 Registration

Registration opens: March 2nd

Deadline to register: April 5th

Cost: \$50

**Must register to be a PTSA member for 26-27 school year
before you can register for Husky 101**

Email questions to husky101@htmsptsa.org

Sessions will fill up!



Future Husky Sign



Optional Future Husky Yard

signs available for

on PTSA website



Husky Foundation

501c3 nonprofit volunteer organization

- Technology
- Academic Enrichment
- Campus Beautification



Request \$125/student





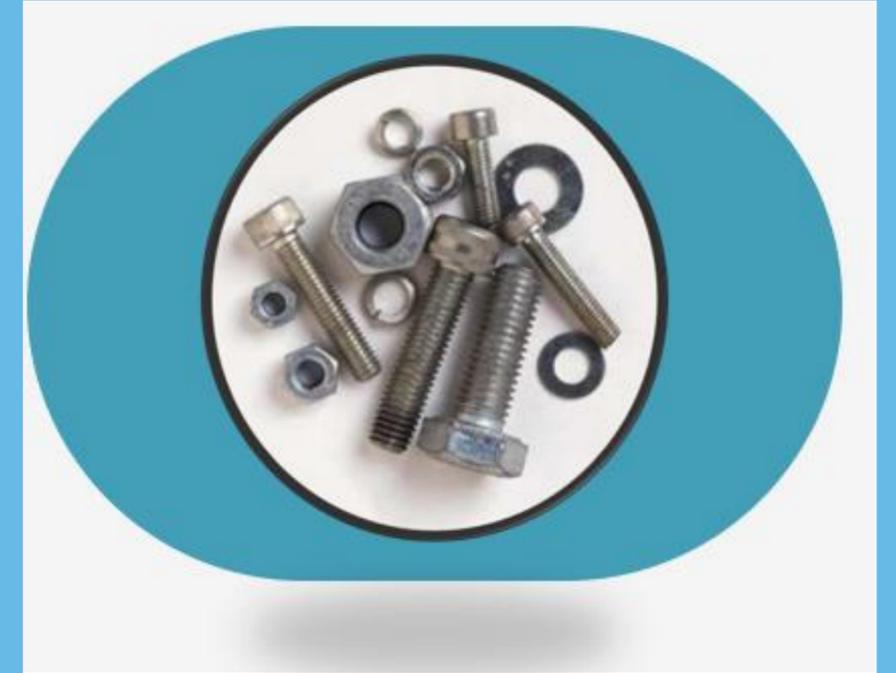
Husky Foundation



Request \$125/student



Nuts and Bolts



**School Hours
9:10 - 4:15**

**Travel to
Different
Classes**

**Attend 7
Classes**

No Recess

Middle School Classes

Academic Classes (5)

Math

Science

Social Studies

Language Arts

Reading

Total of 7
Classes Daily

All Classes
Meet Daily



Connection Classes (2)

Band, Orchestra, or Chorus

Health & Physical Education

Academic Connections

Engineering & Technology

Art

Band, Orchestra & Chorus year long courses

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Homeroom	8:45 - 9:15
Math	9:15 - 10:05
Language Arts	10:10 - 11:00
Science	11:05 - 12:30
Social Studies	12:35 - 1:25
Reading	1:30 - 2:20
Connection 1	2:25 - 3:15
Connection 2	3:20 - 4:10
Dismissal	4:10 - 4:15

7
Classes

Friday Extended Homeroom (Academic Opportunity)

- Every Friday
- Extended homeroom called AO
- Provides students with remediation or enrichment opportunities
- Based on individual needs
- Teachers invite students to attend various sessions during AO

Core Course Placement

- All students are placed in CORE classes using our AC matrix.
- The AC matrix is posted on the HTMS website: (Menu<curricular<advanced content).
- Students with an Individualized Education Plan are placed according to their plan.

Core Verification Sheets

Early May * Rising 6th Grade Students * Receive in Mail



The form is titled "Hightower Trail Middle School Student Course Request Profile". It features a logo on the top left and a "General Information" section with fields for Student Name, CCSD ID, and Gender (M). Below this is a "Course Requests" section with a table listing five courses: Lang Arts 6 Q1, Math 6 Q1, Reading 6 Q1, Science 6 Q1, and Social Studies 6 Q1.

General Information	
Student Name:	CCSD ID: ..
	Gen: M
Periods to Schedule: to	
Course Requests	
Course	
Lang Arts 6 Q1 (23.8110008)	
Math 6 Q1 (27.9210008)	
Reading 6 Q1 (23.8140008)	
Science 6 Q1 (40.9610008)	
Social Studies 6 Q1 (45.9070008)	

- List of your child's 5 CORE courses
- Based on the AC Matrix
- Parents can drop down out of an AC Course (Ex: student was recommended for AC Reading, but parents decide on-level Reading is the best option for their family)

Core Verification Sheets

Early May * Rising 6th Grade Students * Receive in Mail



The image shows a form titled "Hightower Trail Middle School Student Course Request Profile". It includes a logo on the top left and a "General Information" section with fields for Student Name, CCSD ID, and Gender (M). Below this is a "Course Requests" section with a table listing various 6th grade courses.

General Information	
Student Name:	CCSD ID:
	Gen: M
Periods to Schedule: to	
Course Requests	
Course	
Lang Arts 6 Q1 (23.8110008)	
Math 6 Q1 (27.9210008)	
Reading 6 Q1 (23.8140008)	
Science 6 Q1 (40.9610008)	
Social Studies 6 Q1 (45.9070008)	

- Parents cannot request to bump UP to an AC course
- Our goal is to expose as many students as possible to AC courses before moving to High School
- By delivering the forms in May it allows our administrators spring/summer to answer questions before the 1st day of school

Connections Course Placement

1st two weeks of school * 6th Grade Students * Rotate through all Connections

- Our 6th grade students begin the year ONLY enrolled in 5 CORE courses (1st - 5th periods)
- Throughout the 1st two weeks of school, they rotate through all our connections classes
- Primary purpose of deciding which (if any) music programs they wish to join (band, chorus, and/or orchestra)
- Although it is not a requirement, students are highly encouraged to join a music class in 6th grade (over 90% of our students do!)
- Students can join two music classes, but only one instrumental class (example: chorus/band or chorus/orchestra, NOT band/orchestra)
- Joining a music class will NOT interfere with being able to take our non-music connection classes (PE, Health, Project Lead the Way, and Art)

Why ELA and Reading ?

Local School decision based on specific student need

ELA

Grammar
Writing

READING

Reading
Research
Writing
Stories, Novels,
Poetry, etc.
Vocabulary

Benefits of Separate Reading Class:

- Vast majority of our 6th grade students already read on 8th grade (or higher!) reading level
- No need to push through 5+ novels during a school year just for the sake of doing it
- Instead? Focus on short stories, approximately 3 novels per year, and then provide students with the skills necessary to become better RESEARCHERS! (#1 skill lacking in 9th grade students when entering HS according to Pope, magnet schools, etc.)
- 2-3 research skills are taught each quarter:
 - Digital citizenship
 - In-text citations
 - How to find useful, helpful sources
 - Marking the text
 - Works cited

Benefits of Separate Reading Class:

Focus on Informational Literacy... rather than just being a good reader.

Allows us to help our struggling readers increase their actual reading and phonics skills necessary to be successful in all academic classes.

Note: in 8th grade (due to World Language classes), ELA and Reading ARE combined into 1 class (countywide)

Speaking of Reading?

- No required summer reading in East Cobb cluster for middle school students
- Beanstack challenge (with prizes!) will be offered for interested students/families
- Additionally, no required “summer math packet”
- CCSD will send out “summer math opportunities” via CTLS later this spring

No Lockers



- Increased instructional time due to shorter class changes
- Increased lunch time (break time, social time) due to shorter class changes
- Dramatically lower discipline numbers coming from hallway incidents
- Increased classroom grades since students always have their belongings

Additional Tips

Homework

- *An hour a night
- *Homework is included in academic average
- *Students receive an agenda to record assignments

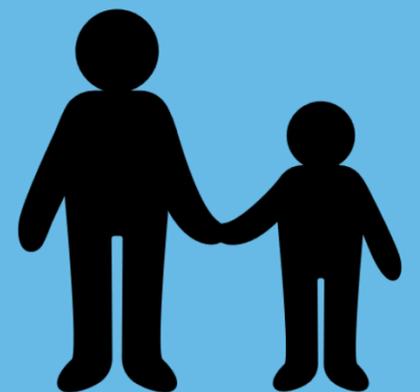
Report Cards

- *Four 9-week grading periods
- *ParentVue to view report cards
- *Academic Alert Letter
- *Conference week in October with one teacher

CTLs

Single Sign-in for classwork, assignments and announcements

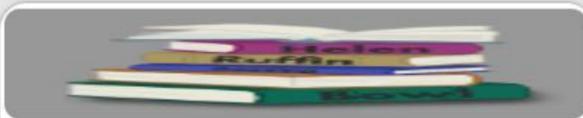
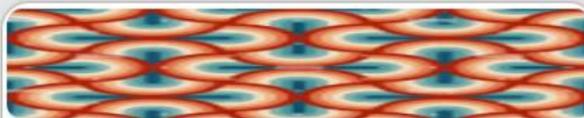
Communication is KEY!



CTLS---How to Navigate

- 1) Go to **my classes**. Your child will have a tile for all academic classes, connections classes, AND even club sponsors might have a tile created.
- **Your child should check CTLS daily!**

The screenshot displays the 'My Classes' section of the CTLS interface. A green icon with a calendar symbol and the text 'My Classes' is circled in black. Below it is a grid of 12 class tiles, each with a header image, title, and instructor information.

 AC Math 6 Instructor(s) Jaclyn Bonsecour	 AC ELA with Ripley Instructor(s) Ashley Ripley and Elin Griffin	 Findling AC Science Instructor(s) Maria Findling, Kimberly Rudick and Brent Fulton	 3rd period AC Reading Instructor(s) Elin Griffin
 6TH GRADE AC SOCIAL STUDIES Instructor(s) Johnny Chadwick	 6th Grade Chorus Instructor(s) Kati Stewart	 6th Grade Orchestra - 3rd Quarter Instructor(s) Michael Tompkins and Paul O'Keefe	 Harry Potter Club Instructor(s) Brent Fulton
 Taylor Swift Club Instructor(s) Lara Salzman and Ashley Ripley	 Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl 2024-25 Instructor(s) Marlie Sherer	 6th Grade Counseling Instructor(s) Lara Salzman and Sydney Brooks	 Learning Commons & Tech Tips Instructor(s) Inga Schorn, Amv Pease and Stacy Gibbs

CTLS---How to Navigate

2) Click on any class to get to **class board**. This is where the class agenda will be posted.

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a red underline. On the left, a profile icon is followed by the text "Quarter 3: Week 5". On the right, there is a search icon and the text "Search (2 character minim)". Below the navigation bar, the main content area is titled "AC Math 6 Agenda" with a subtitle "(Dates and Assignments are subject to change)". The agenda is presented as a table with columns for days of the week and rows for "Agenda" and "Homework".

	Monday 2/3	Tuesday 2/4	Wednesday 2/5	Thursday 2/6	Friday 2/7
Agenda	Expressions Test Review	Expressions Test	Equations and Inequalities Unit Starts TODAY Adding and Subtracting One-Step Equations	Multiply and Divide One-Step Equations	Solving One-Step Equations Classwork (open notes)
Homework	Top Ten #5 Due Friday (copy is in TOP TEN resources tab)	Top Ten #5 Due Friday	Top 10#5 Due Friday	Top 10 #5 Due TOMORROW	NONE

3) **Resource Tab** is where additional notes, copies of worksheets, or assignments for classes might be posted.

The screenshot shows the bottom navigation bar of the application. It contains four icons: a back arrow, a red home icon, a book icon, and a document with a pencil icon. Below the icons are the labels "Class Home", "My Resources", and "My Digital Resources". An arrow points from the text in the previous block to the "My Resources" icon.

Benefits of Failure

Grit and Resilience

Failure helps build resilience, perseverance, and the ability to overcome obstacles

Problem-Solving Skills

Children learn to analyze mistakes, identify solutions, and develop critical thinking skills

Learning by Doing

Experiencing failure firsthand is essential for true learning and growth



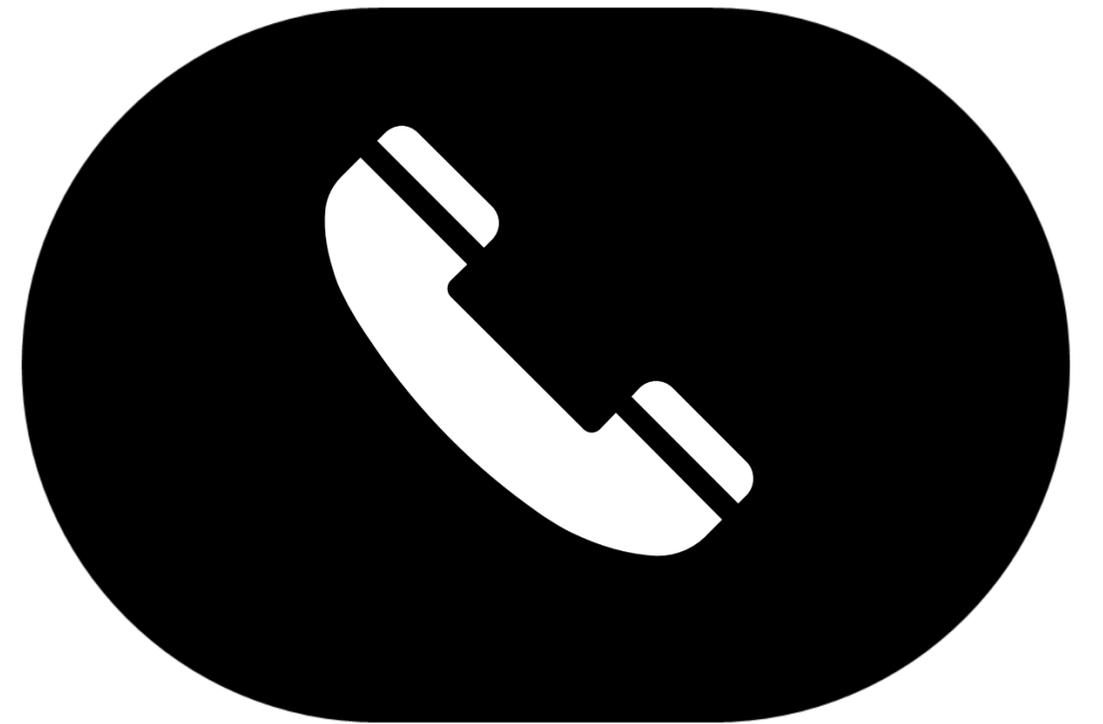
Dress Code

Students should dress in a way that supports a respectful learning environment: clothing should reach mid-thigh, have appropriate coverage and exclude items like pajamas, bandanas, hats, and sunglasses.



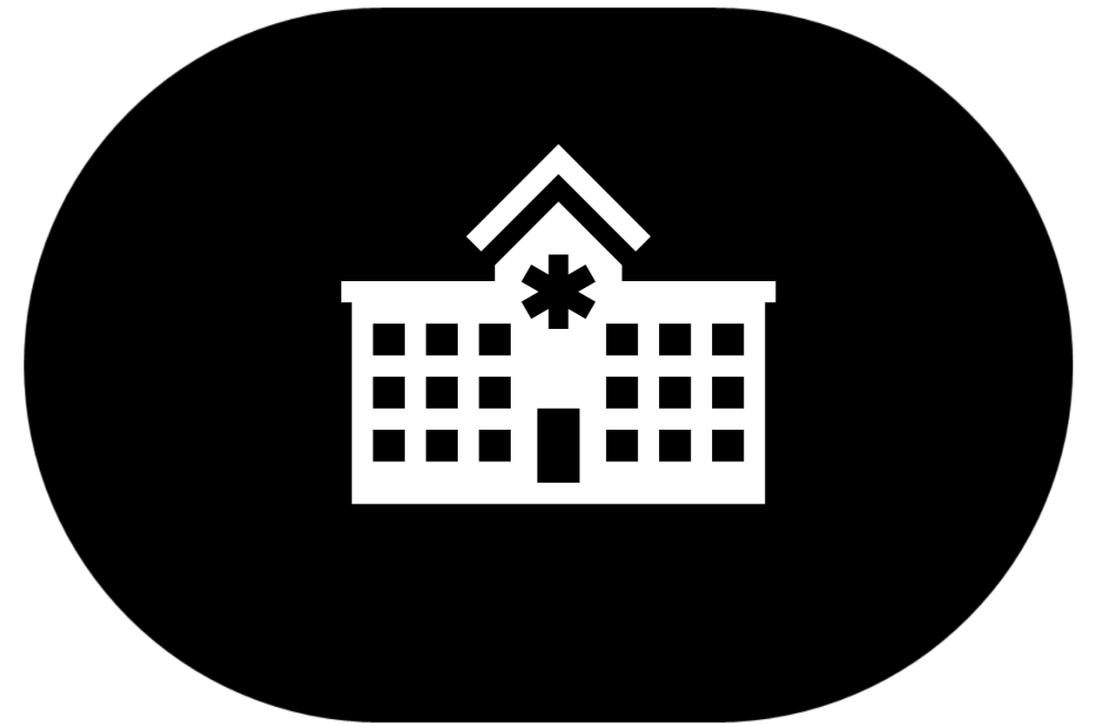
Cell Phones

- **New state law (business as usual at HTMS)**
- **Students cannot use cellular phones during the school day**
- **Phones are available in the front office**
- **Student cannot use laptops without teacher permission**
- **If in violation, phones and/or laptops will be taken to front office for parents to pick up. (Note: texting home about not feeling well)**



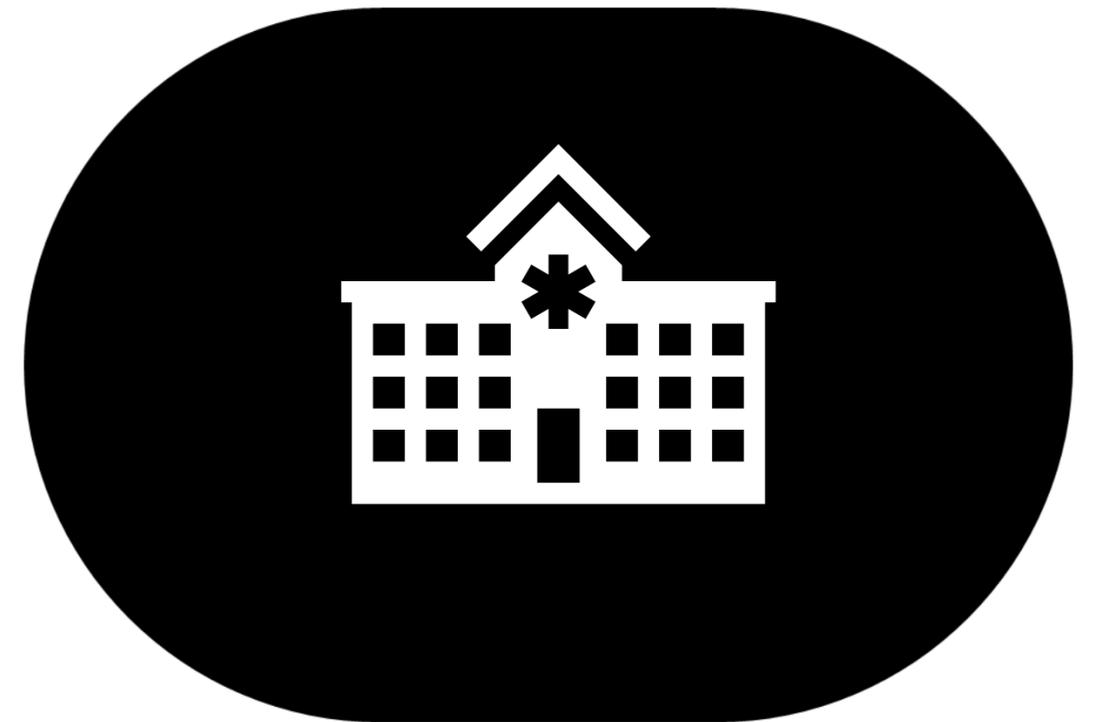
Absences

- Notes turned in within 3 days of returning to school:
 - Easiest is to respond to CTLS notice
 - Email Laura Shutt directly
 - Bring in a handwritten note
- Dropping off your child after school begins:
 - You do not need to come into the building if they have a note from the Doctor's office
 - If not, you can come in and sign with the reason
 - If reason is "just has an appointment," we need to know the type of appointment. medical or dental appointments are excused; hair, travel, and other non-medical appointments are not excused.



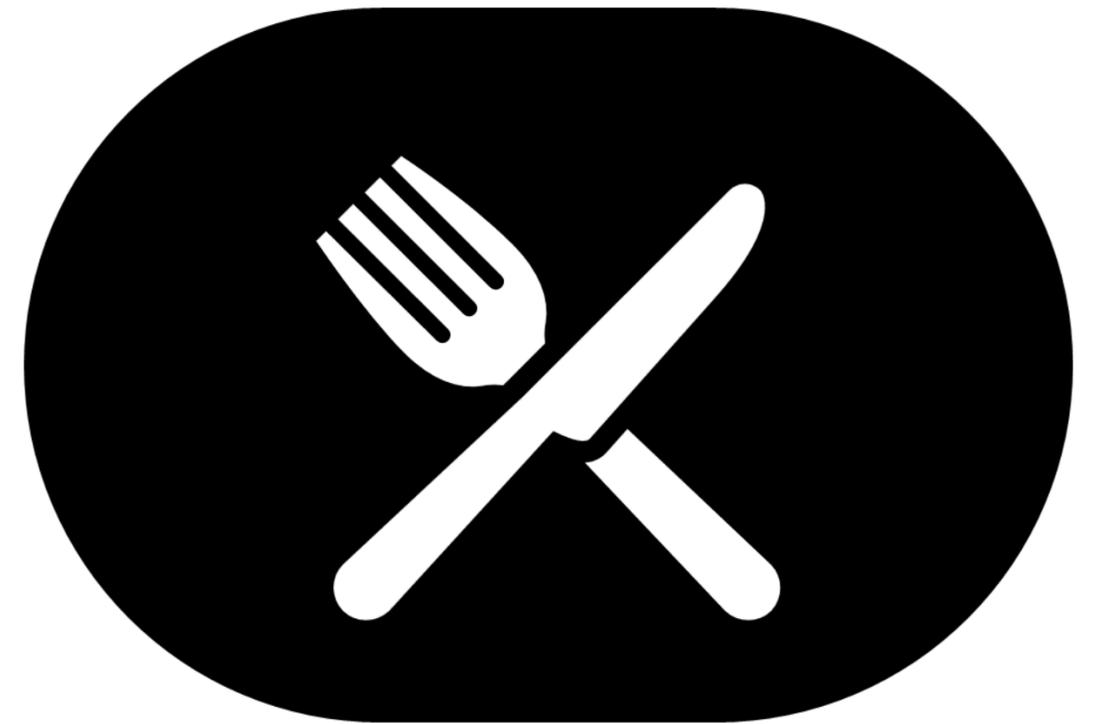
Absences

- **Leaving early for the day:**
 - **Student will drop off note to the front office before school**
 - **Parent must check out and provide identification (driver's license)**
- **We use class-period attendance rather than day-long attendance.**
 - **A student must be present for at least 50% of a class period to be counted as present for that class.**



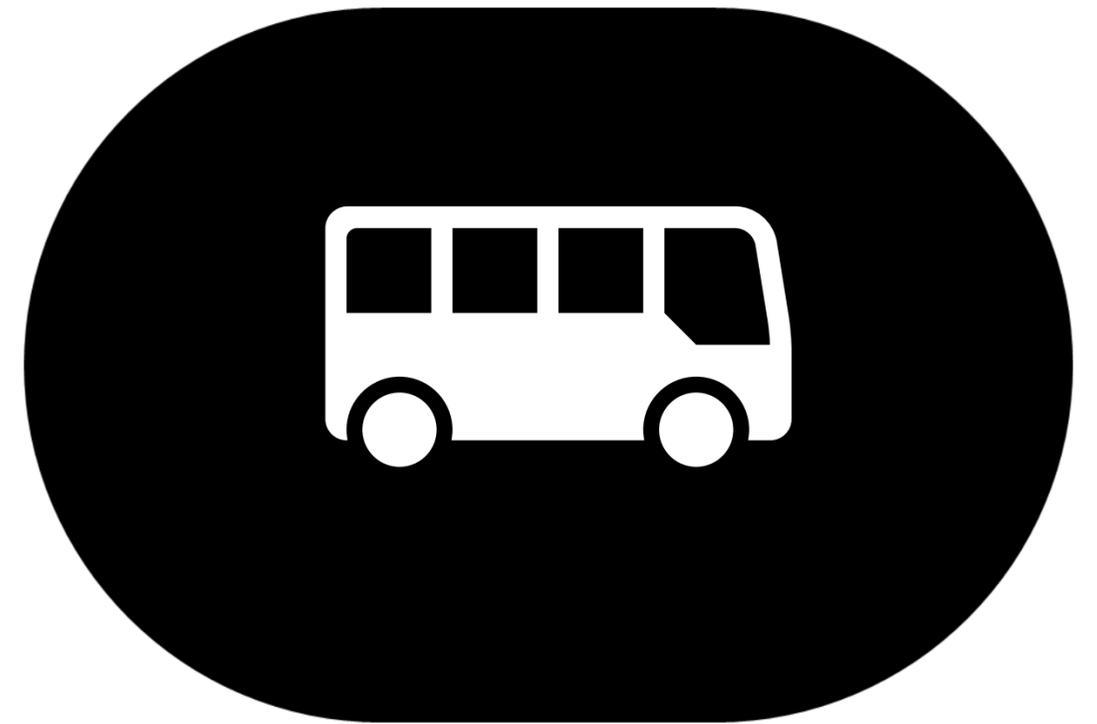
Cafeteria

- **Additional items are available, but not monitored**
- **Students are supervised by a teacher during lunch**
- **Extended lunch 35 minutes; sits with class**
- **No outside food or designated table for guests**
- **Visit CCSD website for menus and payment links**



Bus Routes

- **Bus routes posted before school begins. Check the county website.**
- **Have your child ride the bus the FIRST DAY of school so that they know their bus number and bus procedures.**
- **Students can only ride their assigned bus.**
- **Students do not need to bring in a note for after-school transportation. Please communicate directly with your child (example – staying for a club, driving home with a friend, etc.).**



Clinic

- **At the start of the year all students will complete a clinic form with contacts**
- **No beds in clinic**
- **Students can carry over the counter medication with proper form**
- **Be aware of growth changes**



Take a Picture

- **Front Office Number**

770-578-7225

- **Clinic Number**

770-578-7235

- **Counseling Number**

770-578-7228

Please Put Numbers in your Phone



Upcoming Dates

Transition Timeline for Rising 6th Grade Students

Date	Time	Event	Description	Location
February 24 th	6:45 p.m.	6th Grade Preview Night	All rising 6th grade parents	Hightower Trail Middle School
March 3 rd	9:00 – 10:00	HTMS visits Shallowford Falls Elementary	Mr. Tischler and Ms. Salzman visit with rising 5 th grade students	Shallowford Falls Elementary
March 5 th	9:00 – 10:00	HTMS visits Mountain View Elementary	Mr. Tischler and Ms. Salzman visit with rising 5 th grade students	Mountain View Elementary
March 18 th	9:00 – 10:00	HTMS visits Tritt Elementary	Mr. Tischler and Ms. Salzman visit with rising 5 th grade students	Tritt Elementary
March 19 th	9:00 – 10:00	HTMS visits Murdock Elementary	Mr. Tischler and Ms. Salzman visit with rising 5 th grade students	Murdock Elementary
March 31 st	9:30 – 11:00	Tritt visits HTMS	School Tour	Hightower Trail Middle School
April 1 st	9:30 – 11:00	Murdock/Shallowford Falls/Mountain View visits HTMS	School Tour	Hightower Trail Middle School
May 2 nd	a.m. & p.m. groups	Husky 101	Three Hour PTSA sponsored HTMS camp (registration required)	Hightower Trail Middle School



Questions?

