



August 30, 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The 2023-24 school year begins for students Tuesday, September 5. Back to school also means that there is a great deal of information to share with parents and guardians. Thank you for your understanding of this long email as we seek to meet New York State parent notification requirements and make sure you have the information needed as we begin the school year.

School Meals

We are pleased to report that our application to the USDA for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) has been approved, and as a result, **there will be no charge for breakfast or lunch for students in grades PK-8.** Students in grades PK-8 in our schools are eligible to receive one complete lunch and one complete breakfast free of charge. Students will pay for any a la carte items, a second entrée, or a second meal. Selection of three side items (including milk) constitutes a meal, so students who bring their lunch to school can receive free items by selecting three sides. For more information on what constitutes a complete meal, contact our Food Services Office at 607-739-6360.

For grades 9-12, we are continuing to advocate for the USDA to adjust the CEP eligibility requirements so that we may extend the program. We expect the USDA to announce a final ruling later this fall. If approved, we will communicate with parents/guardians of high school students. In the meantime, please [click here](#) for the Free/Reduced Meals Application. For information and the link to the PaySchools Central prepayment system, [click here](#).

For more information on Food Service programs, including free/reduced meal eligibility, please visit the Food Services link on our website: <https://horseheadscafeteria.gstboces.org/> or contact the Food Services Office at 607-739-6360 or rocole@gstboces.org.

Schooltool and Student Schedules

Schedules for students in grades 7-12 are available on the Schooltool Parent Portal. If you have a Parent Portal account, [click here to sign in](#). If you do not have a Parent Portal account and would like to register for an account, [click here](#). **Please note: students are unable to log on to Schooltool until school begins when they sign in on a district device and agree to the Acceptable Use Policy.**

Bus Information

Bus information has been emailed to parents/guardians who requested transportation for their children. As the school year begins, keep in mind that the listed pickup and drop-off times are preliminary at this point until we can establish ridership on each bus. We thank you for your patience as we work to finalize times and routes during the first weeks of school.

If you did not request transportation but that changes at any point during the year, please contact our Transportation Department at 607-739-6338. They will do all they can to get your child on a bus as soon as possible, but we do ask for 48 hours' notice in order for the district to adjust our transportation routes.

If you have any questions about transportation, please call 607-739-6338.

School Resource Officer Program

This year, the district is partnering with the Chemung County Sheriff's Department for our School Resource Officer program. We are looking forward to this partnership as we continue to make safety a priority.

New Visitors to School Procedure – please bring ID

As we reported last year, we are implementing a new procedure for all visitors to our schools. Our new visitor management system will improve safety and security in our buildings. All visitors to our schools, including parents and guardians, will be asked to present a photo ID such as a driver's license, passport, or other government ID. The ID will be scanned into the visitor system, and once cleared, the visitor will be given a pre-printed badge with the visitor's photo, which must be worn at all times while in the building. The visitor may only go to the approved location. Before leaving the building, the visitor must return to the office to sign out.

This new system improves safety and security in our buildings by checking custodial orders, restraining orders, and a national database of registered sex offenders. It also allows us to know who is in our building and where.

If you do not have a government-issued ID, you can still visit our schools. We will ask for a non-government ID along with a second form of identification, with at least one of these including a photo. If you are simply dropping off an item for your child, you do not need to present your ID.

More information on our new visitor procedures is at the end of this communication.

PK-6 Dismissal for the First Week of School

During the first week of school, our elementary and intermediate schools will begin the dismissal process a bit earlier than the usual dismissal time. The first week of school can be very busy, and by doing this we will have more time to ensure a smooth dismissal on these days. As a result, if your child rides the bus, your child may arrive at their bus stop early as well. We will begin normal dismissal times on September 8. PK-6 parents and guardians will be receiving a separate email with dismissal details for the first week of school. We also wish to help our middle and high school dismissals be more timely.

Student Photos

Throughout the year, our school and district may photograph, videotape, and/or interview students for its publications or broadcasts, which include school and district newsletters, videos, and social media. Additionally, local newspapers and TV stations sometimes attend school events and photograph, videotape, or interview students about events and issues. These stories will also appear on the media's websites and social media platforms. If you do not wish your child to be photographed or videotaped for school publications or the media, please contact your school office or send an email with your child's name and school to hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com. Note that student photographs will still be published in school yearbooks, and they may be photographed at public events such as sporting events.

School Supplies

School supply lists can be found on our website at this link: <https://horseheadsdistrict.com/supplies.cfm>.

Safe Schools Line

We would like to remind everyone that if you have a safety issue to report or if you hear a rumor, we ask that you contact us directly. Contact your child's school or a district office or call our **Safe Schools Line at 607-795-2044 or 1-800-305-4984**. We ask that you provide as much detail as possible. Additionally, so that we may fully research issues of concern, we ask that you provide us with your name and phone number when you call. This will help in any investigation that the district and/or law enforcement conduct. The information will be kept as confidential as possible under the law. Sharing your contact information allows the district to respond to you directly for more information.

Immunizations and School Physicals

New York State requires that students have all state-required immunizations within 14 days of the start of school. For a list of the required immunizations and grade levels, click here:

https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370_2024.pdf.

Additionally, parents/guardians must submit a school health examination (or physical) within 30 days of the start of school. School physicals are required for grades PK or K, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. Physicals must be done by a New York State provider and documented on the state's required Health Examination Form, which can be found here: [Required New York State School Health Examination Form \(horseheadsdistrict.com\)](https://horseheadsdistrict.com/RequiredNewYorkStateSchoolHealthExaminationForm).

For more information on Health Services, please go to our website at this link:

<https://horseheadsdistrict.com/health.cfm>. If you have questions regarding requirements for your child, please contact your school nurse.

Census

This fall, the district will be doing a formal census of our community in order to revise elementary boundary lines to prepare for the move to three elementary schools in the 2025-26 school year. You will be receiving information very soon on how to access the online census form. We ask that every resident complete this census so that the district can establish balanced attendance boundaries for our new elementary zones.

Calendar

The district is using Google Calendar to share events and activities this year. To view events happening at your child's school and in the district, please go to our website at <https://horseheadsdistrict.com/fullcalendar.cfm>. If looking at the page from a device, the calendar icon is at the bottom of the page, second from left. On a desktop, the school's calendar is on the right side of the page. For the single page calendar for 2023-24, click here. [2023-24 Calendar.pdf \(horseheadsdistrict.com\)](https://horseheadsdistrict.com/2023-24Calendar.pdf).

Federal Affordable Connectivity Program

We have received information on the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to help families pay for internet service. The program provides eligible households \$30 per month assistance for internet service if they meet eligibility criteria. Eligible families can apply for the program, and once approved, contact a participating provider to select a plan. Information on eligibility and how to apply is at the end of this communication.

Board of Education

Board of Education meetings are open to the public. For more information including the 2023-24 board calendar, agendas, minutes, please go to this link: <https://go.boarddocs.com/ny/horse/Board.nsf/Public>. Board meetings are live streamed at <http://ideas.gstboces.org/hhds/>. Additionally, you may wish to "like" the district's Facebook page or follow us on Instagram at hhdsschools or on X (formerly known as Twitter) at @HhdsSchools for monthly announcements of Board of Education meetings.

School Web Pages

Links to our school web pages are below:

[Big Flats Elementary \(horseheadsdistrict.com\)](https://horseheadsdistrict.com/BigFlatsElementary)

[Center Street Elementary \(horseheadsdistrict.com\)](https://horseheadsdistrict.com/CenterStreetElementary)

[Gardner Road Elementary \(horseheadsdistrict.com\)](https://horseheadsdistrict.com/GardnerRoadElementary)

[Ridge Road Elementary \(horseheadsdistrict.com\)](https://horseheadsdistrict.com/RidgeRoadElementary)

[Horseheads Intermediate School \(horseheadsdistrict.com\)](https://horseheadsdistrict.com/HorseheadsIntermediateSchool)

[Horseheads Middle School \(horseheadsdistrict.com\)](https://horseheadsdistrict.com/HorseheadsMiddleSchool)

[Horseheads High School \(horseheadsdistrict.com\)](https://horseheadsdistrict.com/HorseheadsHighSchool)

Required Notifications

The district is required to share certain policies and other information with parents and guardians. You may have already received this information from your school, so this is simply a reminder of these policies and information. If you have questions, please feel free to contact your school or email hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com. Click on each item to read the information:

[Policy 4526: Network and Internet Acceptable Use](#)

[Policy 4526.2: Email Acceptable Use for Students](#)

[Regulation 4526.2R: Email Acceptable Use for Students/Regulation](#)

[Policy 4750: Promotion and Retention of Students](#)

[Policy 5100: Comprehensive Student Attendance](#)

[Exhibit 5300E: Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Student Code of Conduct – Required Plain Language Version](#)

[Policy 5500: Student Records](#)

[Notification of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)

[Free/Reduced Meals Application](#)

[Policy 8505: Charging School Meals](#)

[Exhibit 8635-E: Parents' Bill of Rights for Student Data Privacy and Security](#)

[Important Notifications \(APPR, Teacher Qualification Requests, DASA, Child Find Notice, Non-Discrimination Notice, Section 504 Notice, Homeless Student/Students in Temporary Housing Notice\)](#)


[Emergency School Closings/Delays](#) (This link includes information on opting in to text messaging for closings/delays.)

[Pesticide Application Notification](#)

Please [click here](#) for the public notice regarding [asbestos](#), and [here](#) for the public notice regarding [fire inspections](#).

If you have questions on this or any school information, please contact your school's main office, or email the district at hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com. We are looking forward to the start of the new school year, and we hope you and your family are as well. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools



New Visitor Management System

The district will be using the Raptor Visitor Management System in all schools beginning in the Fall of 2023. The new system will strengthen safety in our buildings. The system will better allow us to screen visitors, contractors, and volunteers in our schools and provide us with a safer environment.

What to expect:

- Upon entering the building visitors will be asked to present a photo ID such as a driver's license or passport.
- Your ID will be scanned into the visitor management system.
- Once cleared, you will be given a pre-printed badge with your photo on it.
- You will then be directed to the appropriate location. You are only approved to go to the specific location requested. You should not go to any other area of the building without approval from the Main Office.
- The badge must be worn at all times while in the building.
- When leaving the building, please return to the office and turn in your printed badge to sign out.

What does the new system do?

- The system can check for court issued custodial orders, restraining orders, and other alerts as established by the district.
- The system can also check to ensure that registered sex offenders are not entering our school campus. The system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders.
- No other data is gathered or recorded, nor is the information shared with any outside agency.
- Once entry is approved, the system will issue a badge that identifies the visitor, the date and time, and the purpose of the visit. The badge must be worn at all times when in the building.

What if I do not have a US Government ID?

- If a visitor does not have a US government-issued ID for any reason, the visitor can use an alternate photo ID.
- In this case, the visitor must present their non-US government issued ID as well as a second ID with their name on it, such as a bank card or credit card.
- As long as we have two forms of identification, one with a photo, we will manually enter the visitor's name into the system.

What if I am just dropping off something for my child?

- Badging is only necessary when a visitor is entering the school building. Identification will not be necessary for dropping off items for your child. Please follow your school's protocol for dropping off items.

What if I am picking up my child early?

- This process will not be necessary when picking up your child early. Please follow your school's protocol for picking up early from school.

What about evening events?

- We will not be scanning IDs for events held after school hours. Follow your school's protocol for after school or evening events.

If you have questions, please contact your school. Thank you for helping to keep our schools safe.

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

HELPING HOUSEHOLDS CONNECT

The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service.

The Affordable Connectivity Program provides:

- Up to \$30/month discount for broadband service
- Up to \$75/month discount for households on qualifying Tribal lands
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider if the household contributes more than \$10 but less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

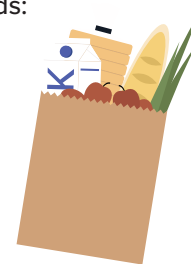
The Affordable Connectivity Program is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per household.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?



A household is eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program if the household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or if a member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:

- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year
- Participates in the Free and reduced-Price School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income internet program
- Participates in one of these assistance programs:
 - SNAP
 - Medicaid
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - WIC
 - Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits
 - or Lifeline;
- Participates in one of these assistance programs and lives on Qualifying Tribal lands:
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
 - Tribal TANF
 - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
 - Tribal Head Start (income based)



Check out [fcc.gov/ACP](https://www.fcc.gov/ACP) for a Consumer FAQ and other program resources.

TWO STEPS TO ENROLL

Step 1: Go to [AffordableConnectivity.gov](https://www.AffordableConnectivity.gov) to submit an application or print out a mail-in application.

Step 2: Contact your preferred participating provider to select a plan and have the discount applied to your bill.

Some providers may have an alternative application that they will ask you to complete. Eligible households must both apply for the program and contact a participating provider to select a service plan.



Call 877-384-2575 or find more information about the Affordable Connectivity Program at:

FCC.GOV/ACP

