

# Small Talk August 2021

A Fort Smallwood Elementary Community Newsletter

## Dear Fort Smallwood Community,

Welcome to the 2021-School year at Fort Smallwood Elementary, an EGATE School. I am looking forward to seeing EVERYONE in person. It's hard to believe that this is my second year as Principal here. I feel like I know so many of you, yet so few of you. I am excited to truly immerse myself into the community and move our community school forward. It is an exciting time to be at "The Fort".



This is my 7th year as a Principal in the county; every single year has provided me with experiences from which to learn and grow but also to solidify my "why" - children's growth and success as learners and citizens. My work cannot be done without the support of an amazing staff and community. Together, we will continue to work together to build a better Fort Smallwood Elementary school, community, and world. I look forward to working collaboratively, as a Fort Smallwood family, to ensure that every student's school journey is successful.

One of my many goals is to ensure that school is a warm and inviting place that inspires a love for learning in a safe environment. This is exactly what we set out to do each and every day with our students and with our community. Our classrooms are built on respect, responsibility, learning, and love. These are the cornerstones for ensuring all students grow and succeed.

Our community has lived through a very challenging time this past school year. We adapted and changed and adapted again. However, through it all we survived, and most importantly, thrived. The Staff and I are determined to put the pieces of what we learned during the pandemic together with the vast knowledge of teaching and learning we already had pre-pandemic, in order to make this the very best year for your child and for our community school.

Be sure to check out the AACPS School Reopening site. It contains the latest information regarding the opening of schools. It can be found here: <https://www.aacps.org/fall2021>

One final thought - My door is always open to listen, problem-solve, reflect or just to vent. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [bkesecker@aacps.org](mailto:bkesecker@aacps.org)

Cheers to fabulous 2021-2022 school year.

In Partnership,  
Mrs. Bobbie Kesecker, Principal



## Masks Required

Prior to entry to the building, and at all times while in the building, masks will be required by all staff, students, and visitors. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

## Sneak-A-Peek, New Student Orientation and Back-to School Night - September 2

Mark your calendars for these important events on September 2!

Currently, schools are being asked to limit the number of people in the building at any given time for large events such as Sneak-A-Peek, Orientation, and Back to School Night. *Please note the limitations for each event.*



### ORIENTATION:

Pre-K and Kindergarten Orientation will take place in the classrooms on **Thursday, September 2 at 1 pm**. *Please limit your visit to one adult and one student only.*

New Student Orientation for any incoming first grader who attended school virtually last school year AND all new students to the building in grades 1 to 5 will take place in the Media Center on **Thursday, September 2 at 1 pm**. *Please limit your visit to **one adult and one student only**.*

A school tour will be provided at the end of all Orientation Sessions.

### Sneak-a-Peek:

Students are invited to drop-in during the specified times below to meet the teacher, peek at the seat & desk and talk with friends on Thursday, September 2. *Your support in adhering to the scheduled time is most appreciated:*

2:00 - 2:30: Pre-K (if needed) and Grades 1, 3 and 5 only.

2:30 - 3:00: Kindergarten (if needed), ECI and Grades 2 and 4 only

\*At this time, parents are not permitted to escort students to a classroom on the first days of school. Sneak-A-Peek is the perfect time to capture treasured back to school pictures.

### Back to School Night (BTSN):

This important event will take place on **Thursday, September 2 at 6 pm. *One family member/caregiver per student*** is invited to attend a Back-to-School session with the homeroom teacher. We kindly ask that students not be in attendance to limit the number of people in the building. BTSN is intended to give our Fort parents/caregivers an opportunity to make connections and get acclimated with the school staff and to better understand expectations for the 2021-2022 school year.

Prior to the event, a video message featuring the Principal, School Counselor, and other staff will be shared with all families. Please be sure to watch that message ahead of time.

Back to School sessions are scheduled for Thursday, September 2.

6:00 - 6:40 pm: Session 1

6:45 - 7:25 pm: Session 2

Please note that parking will be limited. Parking in the fire lane (bus lane) is strictly prohibited and subject to towing at the owner's expense. You may use Poplar Ridge Park for overflow parking.



## Building Access

We continue to limit access to the building, including the front office. The office will be open from 8 to 4 Monday through Friday. Prior to coming to the building, please make an appointment by calling the office at 410-222-6450.

If you need to drop something off, such as a forgotten lunch bag or instrument, we will continue to ask you to use the basket placed outside the front door. Simply ring the bell to let us know that you have left an item.

Because access to the building is limited for the time being, our need for volunteers will also be greatly reduced. We thank you in advance for your understanding.

## Chromebooks

**IMPORTANT for ALL FAMILIES:** All students in grades 3-12 should plan to bring your AACPS Chromebook to and from school daily in the fall. You will be using your Chromebook as a learning tool at times during the school day and will need it at home to complete assignments in the evening. All students in grades preK-2 should keep their AACPS-issued Chromebook at home for use there. When at school, there will be Chromebooks available in primary level classrooms for student use.



If you have a Pre-K or K student, you will be assigned a Chromebook at orientation on September 2. Pre-K, K, and ECI students who do not attend orientation will be assigned a Chromebook at

All other students should call the office to make an appointment to pick up a Chromebook. Students cannot be assigned a Chromebook unless an adult signs a User Agreement.



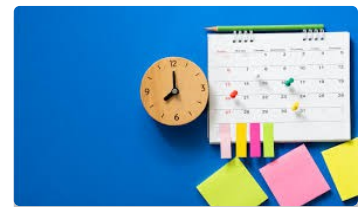
## School Supplies for 2021-2022

All students will be provided supplies for the coming school year. Caregivers will only need to provide a:

- backpack
- lunch box (if not getting a cafeteria lunch)
- a sport-top water bottle

## AACPS Calendar

Here is the link for the 2021-2022 school calendar. Please note that school starts for students in Grades 1 to 5 on Wednesday, September 8.



<https://www.aacps.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=29639&dataid=76053&FileName=202122%20School%20Calendar-rev4821.pdf>



## ECI, Pre-K, and Kindergarten Information

Students in ECI, Pre-K and Kindergarten follow a different entry schedule. Caregivers of these students will be invited to a conference prior to student entry. Students in pre-K and K will then start school on a staggered schedule. Due to ongoing health and safety concerns, conferences will be limited to one caregiver per student. We kindly ask that you adhere to this.

Please see below for specifics about each grade:

### ECI:

*Conferences:* September 8, 9, and 10

The first day for all ECI students is September 13.

### **ECI Hours:**

AM Session: 9:10 to 11:45

PM Session: 1:00 to 3:35

### **Pre-K and Kindergarten:**

*Conferences:* September 8 and 9

## STAGGERED ENTRY DATES:

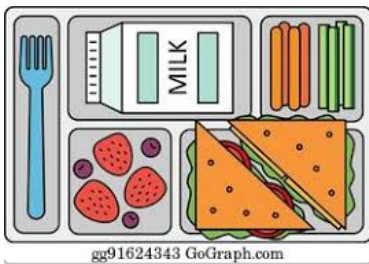
Students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten will start school on a staggered schedule. The staggered days are September 10, 13, and 14. The first day for ALL pre-K and kindergarten students in September 15.

Information about teacher assignment, conference date and time, and staggered start date will be sent to each family by mail and e-mail in the coming days.

## Teacher Assignments

Postcards will be sent to each student with their teacher assignment. Look for those in the mail beginning the week of August 30.

Classlists will also be posted at 1 pm on September 2.



## School Meals

All school meals (breakfast and lunch) are **FREE** to all students effective September 8, 2021, through the last day of school in June 2022.

**Meal Benefit Applications are still required by the State and will be made available beginning August 2021.** Although meals are free, we are required to collect Meal Benefit Applications for programming and funding.

To complete a Meal Benefit Application for SY 2021-2022, log onto: <https://aacpschools.org/nutrition/apply-for-free-or-reduced-price-meals/>

If you have any questions regarding the school meals program, please email [jrisse@aacps.org](mailto:jrisse@aacps.org) or call 410-222-5900.

## Arrival and Dismissal

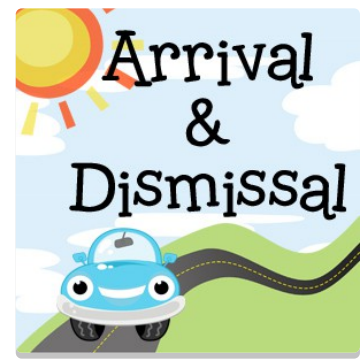
Busses:

Bus Schedules will be posted by the County.. Please watch for an announcement from the County. Here is the link to access the site: <https://busstops.aacps.org/>

As a reminder, students must ride the bus assigned to their home address unless you request Exceptional Transportation. We cannot put students on a different bus based on a parent note.

Car Riders:

We strongly encourage the use of busses. The car rider pick up and drop off line can be very long causing a log jam in the parking lot and spilling out onto Poplar Ridge Road.



If you are choosing to self-transport, we kindly ask that you remain in your car when dropping off and picking up. Please do not park in the lot for pick up. Thank you for your understanding.

Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals:

If a student arrives after 9:10 am, they must be accompanied to the building and office by a caregiver to be signed in for the day. Please do not drop off students after 9:10 without bringing them into the building.

If you are picking up students early (before 3:35), we kindly ask that you provide us with a note alerting us to the early dismissal. Changes to a student's dismissal after 3:00 cannot be honored as this is a very busy time of the day and message may not be relayed to teachers in time. Thank you for your understanding.



## Enrollment and Registration

Registration for the 2021 – 2022 school year is open. Registration may be completed online at <https://www.aacps.org/enrollment>

Please note: once you begin the online registration portal you will be unable to save your progress and return to it later. To expedite the enrollment of your student the following documents should be uploaded at the time of registration:

- Student Birth certificate
- Parent/Guardian proof of identity
- Required residency documents
- Physical packet (link below) to be completed by your student's doctor
- Record of Physical Exam; Immunization Record; Lead Certificate

Income Guidelines for Pre-K have changed. When registering for Pre-K, please be sure to provide documents related to income.

For any enrollment questions, please call Mrs. McPherson at 410-222-6450.

If you are transferring to or from another school, please be sure to complete the withdrawal form and contact both schools. That form



- Fri., Oct. 29: FSES Costume Parade and Trunk or Treat (an after school event)
- Fri., Nov. 5: Race for Education
- Nov. 5 - 11: Book Fair (in school)
- Nov. 11 or 12 (2-hr early days): Snacks for Teachers & Staff



## Popsicles with the PTA

This event will happen, for sure. If you are new to the Fort, please join the PTA for popsicles immediately following orientation (2 pm) at the Pavilion in the fenced in area to the side of the building. You can learn more about the PTA and ways you can get involved. It also gives students an opportunity to meet others.

## Vision and Mission

Our vision, to have each and every student achieve his or her individual potential in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment; and our mission to create a rich educational environment where every student will succeed and become a responsible, caring citizen will only be achieved by creating thoughtful, student-centered, standards-based, learning experiences that are facilitated by a group of caring teachers.



## NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE - NOTICE OF POLICY @ AACPS

Anne Arundel County Public Schools NON-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE:

Anne Arundel County Public Schools prohibits discrimination in its educational programs, and in employment, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, or disability. This prohibition pertains to enrollment in courses and program offerings, participation in school-sponsored activities, hiring, promotion, compensation, job classification, assignment, and all other functions and activities of the school system affecting either its student population or its employees.

For inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies, please contact:

Asha Smith, Senior Manager, EEO Compliance; Title IX Coordinator

[asmith93@aacps.org](mailto:asmith93@aacps.org)

2644 Riva Rd., Annapolis, MD 21401

410-222-5286 or 410-222-5279 (fax)



