

**Park Hall
Elementary School**



Park Hall Eagles

**Parent Handbook
2016-2017**

OUR SCHOOL

Park Hall Elementary School is part of Saint Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) and has Pre-K through 5th grade classrooms. Our school website has a wealth of information and links to just about everything you might be looking for. Our website is located here: <http://schools.smcps.org/phes/> .

Park Hall is a Title I school, which means we receive state allocated federal funding. To find out more information about Title I, please view the presentation at: <http://schools.smcps.org/phes/title-i-information> .

OUR STUDENTS & SCHOOL DAY

Kindergarten through 5th grade students attend school from 8:45AM – 3:30PM. Arrival after 8:45AM is considered tardy and a parent must sign the student in at the main office. Morning Pre-K class is from 8:45AM-11:30AM. Afternoon Pre-K is from 12:30PM – 3:30PM.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Early Dismissal hours are from 8:45AM - 1:30PM. On these days, Pre-K students will not have school.

EMERGENCY & WEATHER CLOSURES

There are several ways to be informed of weather closures.

- The SMCPS website posts a banner on the front page at www.smcps.org
- Make sure you are on the school's "All-Call" list. Usually, phone numbers of new students are collected at the beginning of the year and added to this list. If you are not, contact the school office to be added. They will send a phone message when a decision is made to close school or have a delayed opening.
- You may choose to sign up for notifications from School's Out. This is an independent website and not part of SMCPS. To sign up, go here: <https://www.schoolsout.com/schools/232> .
- Most Local Radio and Television stations will post and announce school closings. A few of them are 630AM, 1090AM, 98.3FM and 102.9FM; WRC-TV Channel 4, WJLA-TV Channel 7.

For more information about inclement weather closures and delays, please go here: <http://www.smcps.org/dss/school-closing-information?highlight=WyJ3ZWFOaGVyIl0%3D> .

DELAYED OPENING

Delayed Opening means a **two-hour delay**, meaning our school day will begin two hours later than our regular schedule, so that would be 10:45AM. Add two hours to bus schedules as well. Dismissal time will be regular time. On delayed opening days morning Pre-K class is not held, but afternoon class will be open and will go by their regular schedule.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

You will be asked to sign a form at the beginning of each school year indicating whether your students will be primarily Car Riders or Bus Riders. For information about bus stops, please go here:

<http://www.smcps.org/dss/transportation/bus-stop-school-locator> .

MORNING CAR RIDER DROP-OFF PROCEDURE

- Students may not arrive prior to 8:30AM.
- If you intend to walk your student into the school you must park your car in a parking space.
- If just dropping off students, parents will stay in the driver's seat so as not to slow down the drop off line.
 - ✓ Car rider drop off is only in the circle at the front of the school.
 - ✓ Pull forward as far as possible before unloading.
 - ✓ Please try to position seats so that students unload from the passenger side or safety and swift departure.
 - ✓ Do not pass other cars that are unloading.
 - ✓ Do not park in the Parent-Drop Off lane and never leave car unattended.
 - ✓ Exit the Parent-Drop Off promptly after unloading children.
 - ✓ Students arriving between 8:30AM-8:40AM will report to the cafeteria until they are released to go to class at 8:40AM.
- Arrival is after 8:45AM is tardy. The adult is required to walk students into the main office and sign them in.

AFTERNOON CAR RIDER PICK-UP PROCEDURE (often referred to as "Parent Pick-up")

- This procedure is very similar to morning drop off.
- Please do not exit your car at any time or leave your car parked in the pick-up lane.
- Parents (or pick-up person) will line up cars starting at the farthest edge of the circle in front of the school.
- Around 3:15PM, two staff members come out with a clipboard and sign out sheet for parents to sign out their children for dismissal.
- Parents will then pull forward to the trailers, where car rider students will be dismissed from the trailer ramp.
- To exit, please use the farthest row in front of the trailers to loop around to exit the school parking lot.
- Please yield to buses as they exit the bus loop.

OCCASIONAL DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

You may choose to pick up your student at school anytime. However, if you are not on the regular everyday pick-up list, then **you MUST either send a written note to school or call the school prior to 2:00PM** to have your child put on the "Parent Pick-Up List." Then, you will follow the above procedure for pick up.

MORNING & AFTERNOON BUS RIDER PROCEDURE

Students should arrive 5 minutes early to the bus stop in the morning to ensure they do not miss the bus or hold up the bus by not being at the stop on time.

If you have Pre-K or Kindergarten students who will be bus riders, please be aware that Saint Mary's Country Public Schools requires a parent, guardian, or designated person over 13 that will also be on the student's emergency contact list, to be at the bus stop with the students in the morning, as well as at drop

off in the afternoon. If a designated person is not at the bus stop at drop-off, Pre-K and Kindergarten students will be driven back to the school and parents will be called.

LATE ARRIVAL & EARLY PICK-UP

If students arrive at school at any time after 8:45AM, an adult must accompany the student to the main office and sign them in.

If you are picking your student up before 3:25PM, a parent or adult on your approved emergency contact list, must come into the school and sign the student out.

BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROGRAM

A healthy breakfast and lunch are important to a child's attention to learning. A menu with both breakfast and lunch daily choices will be sent home monthly. However, it is also available online here:

<http://www.smcps.org/dss/food-services/school-menus> .

- **Breakfast:** As a Title I school, our school provides free breakfast to every student who attends our school. Please make sure your students eat breakfast either at home or at school each day.
- **Student Meal Account:** You may send money to school with your student in a sealed envelope with "your child's name, student ID, and lunch account" written on it. You do not need to send money daily. You can send any amount and it will be applied to their account. At lunch time, students give their student ID number to the cashier and their meal is deducted from their account.
- You may also pay electronically online using **MySchoolBucks**. You can pay online or download the app and pay from your phone or tablet at :
<https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/login/getmain?requestAction=home> .
- **Meal Prices: Lunch:** Free or Reduced for qualifying students. Reduced lunch is \$0.40. Regular lunch price is \$2.55.
- Qualifications for free and reduced meals will be determined by applications completed each year as this benefit does not roll over from year to year. School system personnel must verify all information. We encourage all families to apply.

COMMUNICATIONS

We have a variety of ways in which teachers, administrators, and PTA communicates with parents. This is some of the ways we keep parents informed:

- **Classroom folders.** Some teachers include behavioral charts. Others send home flyers for events, permission slips for field trips, book order forms, and completed schoolwork and projects.
- **Class Dojo App.** Teachers can use this app to send private messages to individual parents as well as whole class messages. It also allows teachers to send pictures of class events or projects. There is also a behavior component to this app where parents can view their child's daily behavior and see what they earned points for and/or lost points.
- **Weekly All-Call from the Principal.** Each week (and sometimes more than once a week if there is an update), the Principal will send a recorded message to all parents on the call list. If you are not on it, contact the school office.

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences.** We provide opportunity for conferences at the end of First Marking Period. However, we welcome parents to make an appointment to meet with their child's teacher or the counselor at anytime throughout the school year, so teachers can listen to and address your questions and concerns. Teachers are not available for drop-in appointments due to their teaching schedule and planning and preparing for lessons.
- **Monthly All-School Calendar.** Every event going on at our school during that month is on this calendar. A copy of it is provided every month to each student in their folder. It is also available online at:
<http://schools.smcps.org/phes/2013-09-05-03-43-38#year=2016&month=6&day=17&view=month>
- **Peachjar emailed Flyers.** These flyers can be events going on in our school, in our district, or events in the community.
- **Phone calls.** Our teachers and staff frequently make phone calls to parents.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

At Park Hall, we appreciate those who choose to volunteer their time to assist our staff and students at school and at home. All potential volunteers must complete a SMCPs volunteer application online here:

<https://bib.com/SecureVolunteer/St-Marys-County-Public-Schools/> .

- The applicant will be initially screened through National Sex Offender Screening website. It will then be forwarded to the SMCPs Security Office for final background screening. This process can take several weeks.
- If you do not receive word about your application after three weeks, please contact the school and ask about your application.
- **Approved registered volunteer applications are good for five years.**
- According to the SMCPs policy, preschool age or younger children may not accompany a parent volunteer.
- **A volunteer training session is required** for all potential SMCPs volunteers and will be conducted as needed by school personnel. All volunteers are required to take this training **each school year** as some information may change.
- Volunteering may include supervising a learning activity in your child's classroom or working as a general volunteer making copies or bulletin boards for anyone at school. It could also include supervising events such as Field Day or chaperoning Field Trips with your students.

VOLUNTEERING WITH PTA (Parent Teacher Association)

The PTA assists the school by organizing and scheduling volunteers for some of the school events. PTA also plans and sponsors many events and activities at the school during which volunteers are needed to assist in supervising activities, selling concessions, planning activities, working the Book Fair, among many other opportunities.

You must fill out the volunteer form above and be approved to be a PTA volunteer (one application covers both of these volunteer opportunities at school). However, you do not need to be a PTA member to volunteer at one of their events. Please consider attending a meeting!

You can **contact Park Hall PTA** at ParkHall.PTA@gmail.com and put in a request to join the PTA Facebook Closed Group (closed for privacy and safety). <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParkHallPTA/> .

SCHOOL EVENTS PARKING (daytime)

- Please do not park in the handicapped spots unless you have a handicap license plate or placard.
- You may park in the bus area as long as you will not be parked there from 8:25 – 8:45AM when our buses arrive, or after 3:10PM.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT & PARTICIPATION

- Parents are invited to visit the school or to contact administrators and/or teachers from time to time to talk about students' progress.
- Parents are invited to become members of the **School Improvement Team (SIT)**. The School Improvement Team monitors progress toward school goals; addresses issues of building needs through the capitol improvement process, and shares information about educational issues that impact our students. ‘
- Each grade level offers several evening workshops and several daytime classroom activities to offer parents and guardians the opportunity to come and be a part of their student’s learning experience at school. We hope many of you will attend these special events.

HOME ACCESS CENTER (HAC) INFORMATION

The Home Access Center program helps parents monitor their children’s academic performance from any computer or Internet capable device. HAC can be used to monitor student progress, note due dates for assignments and tests/quizzes, and also to monitor attendance. Parental access passwords to the program are available from the main office and an ID is required. If you forget your password, you will need to come to the school’s main office and request the password or that your password be reset. Please allow three (3) working days for your HAC account password to be reset. It is recommended that you check HAC with your child weekly. Park Hall Elementary School uses HAC starting in third grade when students begin to receive letter grades.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The primary goal of Park Hall Elementary School is the safety and security of each child. During the school day all of the doors to the building will be locked to the outside except for one door in the front of the building. The second set of doors will all be locked, causing every person who enters the building to have to go into the office upon entering the school. If a guest or volunteer are staying for an activity or event, they must sign in at the computer in the office and their ID will be checked by someone at the desk.

SAFETY DRILLS

Throughout the school year, a number of drills will be practiced to prepare for any type of emergency. Fire drills are conducted monthly. Evacuation drills, lockdown drills, and weather drills are practiced various times during the school year. When the school conducts a lockdown drill, the school doors are locked, classroom doors are locked, and no one is allowed in or out of the building. In a real emergency requiring lockdown, a procedure is in place for retrieving children at the front door with proper identification. Please know that the school makes every effort to protect the children’s safety, as well as respect the rights of the parents. Buses practice one front door and one rear door evacuation drill each year while the buses are parked in front of the building.

ATTENDANCE

- Students make the most progress when they attend school every day.
- Parents who set a goal of regular attendance for their children are modeling their belief in the importance of education.
- Help your child make a plan each night to be prepared for school.
- Talk about school attendance as your child's work and responsibility.

STUDENT ILLNESS

- Students who are sick should remain at home. Parents can report a child's absence on Park Hall's website HERE: <http://limes.smcps.org/index.php?sid=58751&lang=en> OR, when the child returns to school, Parents can send a signed note with student's name, date of absences, and state the reason for the student's absence.
- SMCPS policy states that a student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance four (4) hours or more of the school day. A student is counted present for one-half (1/2) day if in attendance for at least two (2) hours.

MEDICINE

If medicine is required during the day, like a regular prescription, or medication such as inhalers or Epipens, parents must obtain a medical form from the nurse and take it to your child's doctor for authorization. This form must be on file in the nurse's office in order to keep those medications at school.

Medicine must be brought to school by an adult as it CANNOT be transported on the bus with the student. Please contact the school nurse by email at nurse@smcps.org or by phone at 301-863-4054 at extension 15106.

STUDENT SAFETY & AWARENESS

Some students have severe allergies that can be life threatening. Please help keep all children safe by reminding your students that sharing or trading food in the cafeteria is not allowed. Eating and drinking on school buses is also not allowed. When sending items to school for snacks and events, please check the ingredients beforehand and advise teachers or staff of any items that may contain peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, or other common allergies.

LOST & FOUND

- PLEASE LABEL ALL OUTER CLOTHING, LUNCH BOXES, BACKPACKS, NOTEBOOKS, etc, so we can return them to your student! Masking tape and marker work just fine.
- When jackets, coats, sweaters, hats and gloves do not come home with your student, PLEASE encourage them to check the Lost & Found area inside the cafeteria. Lost & Found items will be checked each week and returned if labeled. If not labeled, items will be tagged. After items have been in the Lost & Found for 30 days, those items will be donated.
- Please also remind your students to try to remember their items after recess or after school program. Those two activities make up the majority of items in the lost & found.