

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**JANUARY 24, 2019**

## **Harford County Public Schools Announces New Timing for Attendance Calls**

*New automated attendance system helps support safety measures*

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) continues to make the safety and security of students a top priority and invest in new features and measures to support this goal. HCPS is happy to announce that with the use of an automated attendance system, it can now inform parents/guardians much sooner when their child is not in school.

“We have heard from our community members that they want to be notified earlier in the day when their child is absent from school,” said Superintendent of Schools Sean Bulson. “We are listening to your concerns, and we are making every effort possible to address them.”

In the past, attendance was manually entered by an administrative assistant at the school, which was a time-consuming process, especially in the larger schools. With the available software, homeroom teachers input student attendance at the start of the school day and the attendance report is generated automatically and much faster.

Until now, attendance calls were sent at 5:00 p.m. each day, due largely in part to the manual process in place.

Beginning Monday, January 28, attendance calls to parents/guardians will be sent at the following times:

- High schools and North Harford Middle School – 9:30 a.m.
- Middle schools – 10:00 a.m.
- Elementary schools and the Alternative Education Program – 11:00 a.m.
- Afternoon Pre-K – 2:00 p.m.

The school system notified HCPS families of this change via a call on January 23 and has shared the message on its social media pages as well.

Parents/guardians are reminded that while the benefits of an earlier call far outweigh the cons, there may be times when they receive a false call. With attendance submitted electronically at the start of the school day, those students who arrive late will have already been marked absent and may receive a call before it is corrected in the system.

“Please be aware and understanding that if your student is late to school, you may receive a call indicating he or she is absent,” said HCPS Manager of Communications Jillian Lader.

Additionally, parents/guardians are encouraged to verify that the contact information on file with their child’s school or in their Blackboard Connect5 Parent Portal account is up-to-date and accurate.