

Galway Elementary School



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Dorothea Fuller
Principal

August 5, 2024

Dear Galway Parents/Guardians,

I would like to welcome each of you to the 2024-2025 school year at Galway Elementary School. It continues to be an honor to serve the Galway community and I look forward to many years of working collaboratively with you to ensure your child's success!

I am very excited about the upcoming school year. To ensure a great start for each child, the staff and I have spent time learning about our students, analyzing student performance data, reviewing the school improvement data, identifying successful strategies for learning, and planning for an inclusive environment that benefits all students. Our staff continued professional development focused on the learning about the new reading curriculum, social emotional learning, differentiated instruction, and data driven decision-making. We reaffirm our ongoing commitment to make Galway an environment that reflects high expectations, embraces equity, provides a culture of dignity, and ensures access to challenging opportunities for all students.

Galway remains a *Title I* school and is now identified as a *Community School*. The benefits for Galway students from these two identifications include additional staffing, health and instructional resources, after school activities and transportation, and a school-wide STEM program. You will hear more about these and other school benefits at our parent meetings and at *Back to School Night* events.

This "*Welcome Back Letter*" includes information about how our school works. Please read it carefully. You will find a recommended school supply list, the MCPS calendar, updated bus routes for arrival and dismissal, and the parent reunification process should we have an emergency requiring parents to pick up their children. Finally, school policies are enclosed as well.

On behalf of the Galway Elementary School administrative team, and staff, I want to welcome you and your child/ children to a brand-new school year. Please know that we are committed to the education and success of each child and to establishing a strong partnership between home and school. Please feel free to call the school at 240-740-0140.

Fondly,

Dorothea Fuller, Principal

SCHOOL HOURS

Galway's student hours are from **9:25 a.m. to 3:50 p.m.** each regular school day. **Students should not be at school before 9:00 a.m.** If a student is dropped off between 8:15 and 8:55 a.m., parents will be called because adequate supervision is not available before that time. Students may enter the building at **9:10 am**. Students arriving after 9:25 a.m. are considered tardy. If your child arrives at or **after 9:25 am, they must be signed-in by a responsible adult.**

As a safety measure, we will continue to use the QRS code sign-in format for late arrivals and early dismissals.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT

Students will be able to find their classroom and assigned teacher the following ways:

- On **Tuesday, August 20**, your child's teacher will email a postcard to your email address and your child's email identifying the classroom location and teacher.
- You can attend our Open House "Sneak Peek" for your designated grade level.
- On **Monday, August 26**, the first day of school, staff will be available to greet students and families, and provide class and teacher assignments.

CEP (COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION)

Galway ES is one of the MCPS schools participating in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP). All students at Galway are able to receive free breakfast and lunch daily.

What are the benefits of CEP?

In addition to students receiving breakfast and lunch at no cost:

- Households with students at CEP schools only no longer need to complete and submit FARM applications
- Students at CEP schools will no longer incur student meal debt due to unpaid meal costs.

Will meal service be different?

No. Schools can expect the same operational meal service to continue. Monthly menus continue to be available from the Department of Food Services for review of meals for families each month. We encourage families to check out [menus here](#) and students to eat breakfast and lunch at school, fueling them to learn each day.

NOTE: If siblings attend other MCPS schools, the requirement to complete FARMS application at those schools remains the same.

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

- Students will enter the building in the following manner:
 - Kindergarten, Pre-K, and Learning Center will enter through the APR doors (Purple)
 - Grades 1st and 2nd should enter through the STEM doors (near the car loop) (Blue)
 - Grades 3rd, 4th, and 5th should enter through the main doors (Green)
- All students will choose their breakfast options when they enter their classrooms.
- Walkers exit the building through the side doors of the school by the gym (STEM hallway). They must leave school immediately. Do not ask students to wait for parents or siblings at the office.
- Car riders are escorted by an adult to the car pick-up area on the side of the school (STEM hallway) when their number is called. There will be a teacher on duty monitoring the pick-up process.
- Bus riders are dismissed from their classrooms when the bus number/animal is posted.
- Childcare students are lined up by their childcare provider in the STEM hallway and dismissed to the provider when they pull to their car-loop area.

Parent Pick-up and Drop-off

If you drop off and pick up your child (ren), remember to do so in the parking lot on the side of the school so that buses can safely load and unload students in the bus loop. Do not block staff cars in the parking lot since staff members may need to depart at dismissal. For the safety of all children, families who wish to park must do so in empty parking spaces. Teachers are not permitted to dismiss students directly to parents from the classroom. If you pick up your child before the dismissal time, complete the QR code, ring the doorbell and office staff will assist you. Main office staff will call into the classroom for your child. **You must arrive at the office by 3:30 for early pick-up.**

Bus Information (Arrival and Dismissal Schedules)

Bus information from the Transportation Office is located on the Galway website. Please review carefully the routes assigned for Galway Elementary. Route numbers, **not** bus numbers will be used again this year and will be displayed in the second window on both sides of all buses. Families should also be aware that road construction, poor weather conditions, and accidents are traffic issues in the Silver Spring area, so buses may be legitimately delayed when picking up students in the mornings. School buses experience the same traffic delays as the rest of us, sometimes even more since bus drivers tend to be more cautious than the average commuter does.

****Car Riders****

Students being picked up in a car will be assigned a number. Students will remain indoors until this number is called. Keeping students inside during carpool dismissal will ensure that inclement weather does not impact these procedures.

You will receive a car tag with a number to hang in your windshield for all to see. Please place your car tag on the rear-view mirror with the number facing away from the driver. This will enable the Galway staff to see the number and guide the student(s) to the car. Be sure that your car tag is always displayed. As you enter the carpool line, a member of the Galway Elementary staff will call your number and the student(s) will be assisted to your car. Parents choosing to walk up and pick up their child can continue that process but must display a number for the staff member.

The carpool numbers will be **given to students during Sneak Peak Open House or on the first day of school.** Parents will be sent the number by email to share with students before the first day and should place that number on a sheet of paper against the windshield when you enter the line. Current families with carpool numbers will maintain the same number during their time at Galway.

DISMISSAL CHANGES

If a family's plans require a change from their normal dismissal process, **changes must be made in writing** to the teacher. In the event of last-minute changes to a student's dismissal plans, please call the main office prior to 2:30 p.m. if possible. Email all main office secretaries with changes made after 1:00 pm.

DO NOT EMAIL TEACHERS WITH SAME DAY DISMISSAL CHANGES-PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE. Teachers do not always have the opportunity to read email during the student day. Send the changes by email to the office secretaries. State your child's name, the name of the individual they should be dismissed with, and your signature.

Any adult who comes to the school to pick up a child will be asked to show documentation to verify identification and ensure student safety.

The process for dismissal remains the same during inclement weather.

VISITORS

All visitors must enter the building through the main entrance, stop at the main office to sign in, and wear a visitor's badge while in the school. All visitors must present an ID that is scanned through the Visitor Management System. For the safety and security of all individuals, we need to be aware of the presence and location of all visitors in the building. Any individuals without a visitor's badge will be asked to report to the office. Please help us keep all students in our school safe by following this important procedure!

We ask for your support in maximizing instructional time for students. As a result, students will not be released from class for telephone calls or to wait in the office to be picked up from school.

We ask that you **schedule all visits** to the classroom ahead of time by contacting your child's teacher. Thank you for your consideration ☺

HEALTH ROOM

The school health room is staffed by a health tech and a nurse every day. This is a benefit of being a *Community School*. The health room staff assess the health needs of students, provide sick and emergency care, monitor to assure immunization compliance, administer medications and treatments to students who have authorized health care provider's orders, and maintain student health records.

When students are running a fever or showing any symptoms of a contagious illness, parents will be called to pick them up from the health room. The health room is unable to keep students for an extended period. It is important that we have current phone numbers for these types of

emergencies. If a parent is unable to be reached after 30 minutes, listed emergency contacts will be called to assist with student pick-up.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

To maximize student instructional time, teachers will only be available to speak by telephone before or after the student day. Calls for teachers should be made between 8:45 a.m.-9:10 a.m. and 3:55 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. You may leave a message on their answering machines or send an email to the teacher. We will do our best to return all phone or email messages within 24- 48 hours. In addition, teacher email addresses may be found on the Galway website.

COMMUNICATION

Consistent communication will occur through the principal's newsletter, *The Galway Chronicle, Weekly Update* which will be posted on our Galway webpage weekly. Parents will be able to translate the newsletter in multiple languages. Paper copies are also available in the school office. Other methods of communication will include Remind, Synergy emails, Class Dojo, and the school website. The "*Sunday Night Weekly Update*" will continue with weekly events each Sunday evening. The newsletter will be attached to all email addresses linked to the student.

Twitter is a social media tool used by the principal to share school-wide events, classroom learning, changes in schedules and student activities. The twitter site can be found on the school website, and you can follow us @galwayprincipal. Both *Twitter* and the school website feature Galway activities and students throughout the year. You may opt out of your child being featured on either site by completing the family, educational rights, and privacy act form (FERPA) or contacting the school.

CELL PHONES

Students are not to have cell phones on or visible during the day and should not use them to take pictures at any time of the school day. Phones should be kept in the student's backpack. The school cannot accept responsibility for any lost or damaged phones. If a phone is on during the school day and/or is used by a student, it will be confiscated, kept in the office and returned at the end of the day for the first offense. If the phone is on or in use a second time, the phone will be returned to the student's parent or adult guardian only.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday parties are not held at school. We celebrate birthdays at school by announcing them during morning announcements and giving each student a birthday pencil and sticker. **Please do not send treats, cupcakes, or goodie bags to the classroom for your child's birthday.**

FOOD SOURCES FROM OUTSIDE SCHOOL

The Division of Licensure and Regulatory Services of the Montgomery County Health Department are concerned about food prepared in the home and brought to schools to be served. While we do not attempt to provide a completely allergen-free environment for our students with food allergies, we strive to create a safe and respectful atmosphere for all students. We strive to keep classrooms with students that have life-threatening allergies to peanuts and tree-nuts free of

these allergens. We ask that you remind your child that **sharing** or **trading** of food at lunch or at any other time is **not permitted**. All foods provided for school events must be store bought and not home-made. If there is a student in your child's classroom with a severe allergy to peanuts or tree-nuts, or another food allergy you will be notified at the beginning of the school year. **If your child has a known food allergy, please notify the school immediately!!**

STUDENT TEACHER INTERNS

Galway Elementary is fortunate to host student interns from the University of Maryland, College Park and Bowie State University. This partnership allows prospective teachers an opportunity to complete their final field experience at Galway before entering the teaching profession. The core beliefs of our staff include collaboration, reflective practices, and peer observations which makes Galway a perfect place to train new teachers.

ACTIVITY BUSES

Title I and *Community School* funds provide activity buses for after-school programs at no cost to parents. After school programs are from 4:15-5:15 pm on Tuesday and Thursday. The bus leaves promptly at 5:15 pm, but does not follow the regular school bus schedule, making 7-9 stops in the Galway attendance area. In the fall, due to the time change, the bus departs from school when it is dark, therefore, kindergarten and first grade students are only permitted to ride the bus with an older sibling who is also riding the bus. A parent or an adult must be available to meet their child when the activity bus arrives. Stops for the activity bus are published in the parent newsletter and posted on the Galway website when activities begin.

OPEN HOUSE "SNEAK PEEK"

Galway Elementary will hold our popular "*Open House Sneak Peek*". This short visit is an opportunity for students to meet their teachers and find their classrooms before school begins. Prioritizing safety for staff, students and parents and parking needs mandates a restructuring of our traditional *Open House*. Teachers and classrooms will only be available during these designated times.

What: **Open House**

Who: For **parents** and **students** in Grades K-5

When: August 21-August 22

Day	Grade	Time
Wednesday, August 21	Kindergarten & 5	3:30-4:15
Thursday, August 22	Grade 1 & 4	9:00-9:45
	Grade 2 & 3	3:30-4:15

Open House/"Sneak Peek" is not a time to conduct a conference with teachers. Teachers are still busy preparing and planning for the opening of school. Instead, enjoy a walk through the school, a brief visit to your child's classroom, drop off school supplies, and socialize with new classmates for the coming year.

PTA

The PTA serves an important role at Galway, supporting students, parents, and staff. They provide funding for cultural arts assemblies, support staff appreciation activities, and help with events like the Back-to-School picnic and Kindergarten Orientation. I want to encourage you to become a member of our PTA. Your attendance at PTA meetings is an important part of learning about our school. The PTA will have tables out during Open House “*Sneak Peek*” and Back to School Night.

SCHOOL IMMUNIZATIONS

The Maryland Department of Health released updated school vaccine requirements for the [2024-2025 school year](#). Families of incoming kindergarten students, new students, and 7th and 8th graders may need additional vaccines to start the school year. For students whose required vaccines are incomplete, updated vaccine records must be submitted by the first day of school; proof of exemption or a vaccination visit must be submitted within 20 days. School staff are reviewing records and contacting families of students with incomplete vaccination records. Not sure if your student is up to date? Contact your child’s health care provider or access their immunization records [online](#). Students 18 years old and younger eligible for the Vaccines for Children program may obtain free vaccines through the county’s [Immunization Program](#).

BACK TO SCHOOL FAIR

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will host its annual Back-to-School Fair on Saturday, Aug. 24 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Westfield Wheaton Mall. MCPS invites all students and their families to kick off the new school year by attending the fair. “The event is a wonderful opportunity for families to learn about the school system and county programs and services, while enjoying family-friendly activities, entertainment, free immunization clinic and more,” according to MCPS webpage for the event. This year’s vendors include KID Museum, Glenstone Museum, Imagination Stage, Montgomery County Recreation and much more. There will also be an immunization clinic. MCPS will offer free shuttles from Paint Branch High School starting at 9:00 am.

ATTACHMENTS

[Bus Schedules](#)

[School Supply List](#)

IMPORTANT DATES

Day	Galway Open House/Sneak Peek	Grade	Time
Wednesday, August 21		Kindergarten & Grade 5	3:30-4:15
Thursday, August 22		Grade 1 & 4 Grade 2 & 3	9:00-9:45 3:00-3:45
Saturday, August 24		Back to School Fair	
Monday, August 26		First Day of School for Students	
Monday, September 2		Schools Closed-Labor Day	
Tuesday, September 10		Back-To-School Night (Grades K-2)	6:30-8:15 p.m.
Thursday, September 12		Back-To-School Night (Grades 3-5)	6:30-8:15 p.m.
Friday, September 27		Early Dismissal	
Wednesday, October 9-11		Fall School Pictures	

FIRST DAY PROCEDURES

Our staff members will be available on the first day of school to help students find their classrooms. Students in grades 3-5 should enter the building through the main doors. Students in grades 1-2 should enter the building through the doors at the end of the building near the ESOL wing. Kindergartners, Pre-K and Learning Center students will enter through the APR doors. (Parents will be allowed to walk students to their classrooms.)

FIRST DAY NAME-TAGS

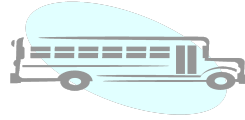
School begins this year on **Monday, August 26, 2024**. This will be a regular, full-day session and buses will begin their regular routes on that day.

For our younger students,

- Tags should be cut out, completed, and **pinned to your child's shirt and the inside of the backpack.**
- Using the bus schedule, please be sure to write your child's route number in the box.
- Please indicate if your child goes home as a walker, bus rider, car rider, or to childcare.
- These information tags will help our staff and volunteer parents make the first few days of school organized and safe.

******Name Tags are enclosed on the last page******

****Please complete and pin to your child's shirt and the inside of their backpack.****



My Name is: _____

I am in Grade: _____

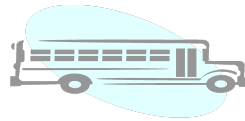
My teacher's name is: _____

I go home by: Bus

Parent Pickup Walker

Academy Other _____

My bus number is: _____



My Name is: _____

I am in Grade: _____

My teacher's name is: _____

I go home by: Bus

Parent Pickup Walker

Academy Other _____

My bus number is: _____