

Parent/Student Handbook
CHAPEL FORGE SPECIAL CENTER
12711 Milan Way
Bowie, Maryland 20715

Main Office (301) 805-2740
Health Room (301) 805-2735

Infant-Toddler Office (301) 805-2734
Head Start (301) 408-7100

FAX (301) 805-6672

Office hours: 8:00 to 4:30

Student hours: AM Session: 9:15 to 11:50 PM: 12:50 to 3:25 All Day: 9:15 to 3:25

Our web site is: <http://www.pgcps.org/~chapel>

Principal: Elyse Hurley

Coordinator: Donna Ruyter

Front Office Secretaries: Peggie McDaniel, Bonnie Pellicot

Infant/Toddler Secretary: Paula Ogle

School Nurse: Helene Siedel

Counselor: Erin Zeit

School Psychologist: Robert Marino

Emergency Information

The children at Chapel Forge are very young and require extraordinary communication between home, school, and daycare providers to ensure their safety at all times. This is especially so during emergencies that may affect the health and safety of our children. It is essential that school personnel be able to reach parents and/or their designated emergency contacts at a moment's notice. Parents should ensure that the phone numbers that the school has on file are current and make certain that the persons designated to make decisions in their absence are willing and able to take the necessary steps on their child's behalf. **Parents should keep the office informed each time numbers or designated emergency contacts are changed.**

Bus Information

Transportation to and from Chapel Forge is provided through Prince George's County Public Schools. Our students are provided door-to-door service to and from their homes or daycare. Parents provide all address information to Chapel Forge secretaries who enter it into the school system main computer. Transportation personnel require approximately 10 working days to add new children or make an address change. The parent or daycare provider is responsible for meeting the child's bus everyday at the door of the bus. Bus drivers and aides must remain on the bus at all times. In the event that no one is waiting for the child, the bus driver will attempt to return the child to school or to the bus lot. Parents will then be required to go to the location to get their children. Parents should let the bus lot know if their child will be out of school for several days and when to resume transportation by calling the bus lot early in the day. Parents will receive a warning notice when their child is returned to the school. When a child is returned multiple times over the course of a school year, bus service may be interrupted.

In Case of Illness

When children have fevers or are contagious to others, they may not attend school. When parents are called to come to school to take a sick child home, they must come **immediately** or send someone who can act on their behalf. Buses cannot transport sick children. Chapel Forge cannot send sick children home in taxicabs or with adults that do not have prior written permission on file at the school. Also, the child cannot spend the day in the Health Room as the nurse must be available to treat other children throughout the building.

Should a child require medications to be administered at school, the parent should contact the school for the "Permission to Give Medication" form to be completed by the physician.

Dosages and schedules must match the physician's orders.

Personal Property

Names should be written on all items sent to school-especially on coats, hats, boots, and notebooks.

Supplies

Each teacher provides parents with a list of items to be sent to school. An extra set of clothing should be kept at school in case a child becomes wet or muddy. Children who require diapers or pull-ups must have a supply at school.

Please do not send a backpack on wheels as it poses a danger to all of our children.

Meals

Breakfast is available to all children arriving in the morning. A lunch program is available to full-day children only. If parents believe their child qualifies for a free or reduced-priced meal, they may request an application to apply to the program. Prices are:

Breakfast	Full price: \$1.25	Reduced: \$.30
Lunch	Full price: \$2.00	Reduced: \$.40

Parents may pre-pay lunches and breakfast. An account is created for each child.

If parents wish their child to receive a light snack at school, they may send it in or ask the teacher about snack fees.

Lunch prices are subject to change.

Communication with Staff

Parents are encouraged to provide a notebook in their child's book bag for communication with staff. **Parents should check their child's book bag every night** for messages from staff, Chapel Forge Newsletters, classroom letters, PTO information, and other flyers of importance, such as activities in the community. Parents are encouraged to visit in their child's classrooms and therapy sessions to observe how staff works with the children. Parents are requested to let teachers know in advance if they plan to visit or need a conference. In order to ensure that each child receives the complete attention of the teachers and therapists, it is necessary to hold conferences and phone calls outside of class time. If you need to contact your child's teacher by phone, please do so from 8:30 – 9:10, 12:00 - 12:50, and 3:40 - 4:00 unless it is an emergency.

Meetings

Throughout the year parents are invited to participate in meetings to review assessments, develop and review their children's Individualized Educational Programs and Individualized Family Service Plans, and to determine services and program placement needed to meet their children's needs. Some meetings are informal discussions with teachers or therapists while others require participation of several school staff. Parents are encouraged to participate in these important decision-making processes, and to respond to invitations and permission forms.

Inclement Weather

Parents should listen to local TV and radio stations when poor weather conditions may force a school cancellation, a late opening, or an early school dismissal. Chapel Forge follows the announcements given for the Prince George's County School System. Channel 96 on the cable network will broadcast a "crawl" message. Parents may also go to www.pgcps.org or www.schools-out.com/ on the Internet. When schools open late, there is no school for half-day children. Schools may close early as weather conditions deteriorate. It is very important for parents and daycare providers to monitor weather reports and remain available to receive children from the buses as they arrive at their normal "drop-off" addresses. Parents must have a plan to have someone meet the bus in the event that the bus must arrive at an earlier or later time than normal. Parents should plan for the possibility they might find themselves in traffic and unable to meet their child's bus. Schools may also be closed due to extreme heat or power outages.

Student Records

Chapel Forge provides parents with copies of assessment reports, Individualized Education Program (IEP), Individual Family Service Plans, and other documents for meetings. Parents are encouraged to retain their copies in a file for future reference. Physicians, therapists, and outside agencies often request that parents provide these papers for their review. These documents are often many pages long. Requests for copies of student records may be made to the school. The cost is \$.25 per page and may take up to two weeks to prepare.

Safety

- All parents and other visitors to Chapel Forge must sign in at the front office **every** time they enter the building and leave and may be required to present identification. They must wear a visitor's pass during their stay. Parents must do this even if they are just bringing their child to school. **There are no exceptions to this rule.**
- **No one is allowed to walk between school buses.** Visitors and staff must always walk in front of the first parked bus at the curb when entering or leaving the school. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Parent Support and Information

Many opportunities for parent support and information are offered at Chapel Forge or through nearby programs. Many are presented at no cost to the parents. This information is sent home weekly in children's book bags.

The Chapel Forge website provides many immediate links to special education and disability association resources. It also offers information on the School Improvement Plan, and staff suggestions for recreational and therapy activities. This website is maintained regularly to provide the latest information.

Parent-Teacher Organization

Chapel Forge has an active Parent-Teacher Organization that supports programs for all of our children. Parents are encouraged to participate by attending meetings on one evening of each month, volunteering to help with a particular activity, or enjoying special family events.

Reporting Absences

Illness is the major reason for absences which can be considered excused. Parents must send a note to school with the reason for the absence as soon as the child returns to school. When a child is out for several days and under the care of a physician, the doctor's note can serve as the excuse note. If a child has an illness (such as chronic asthma) which requires frequent, on-going, but intermittent absences, the school team can meet with the parent to design program strategies to help maintain the child's progress. If a child has a surgical procedure, please provide information regarding any restrictions or limitations upon the child returning to school.

Facts

- Chapel Forge is located in Zone III - Director Mrs. Helen Coley
- Chapel Forge serves delayed and disabled children from as young as a few weeks old through age four. There are approximately 110 staff members who service nearly 500 children a year. We have two Head Start inclusion classes. Our students come from one-fourth of the total county area.
- Each child has an Individual Family Service Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed in a team of staff and parents. Chapel Forge follows the Early Childhood Center Curriculum, The Prince George's County Pre-K Curriculum, and the Voluntary State Curriculum.
- Chapel Forge is funded through the PGCPSS and is supported by several charitable organizations, churches, and businesses. The contributions of these groups and individuals provide our children and their families with immeasurable resources.
- The Chapel Forge mascot is a bear holding crayons. Our school colors are royal blue and white.

Problem Solving

Parents are encouraged to discuss concerns with their child's teachers and therapists. If a problem arises that cannot be satisfactorily resolved, parents or staff may ask for the intervention of an administrator. Disagreements over a child's program may be addressed through the formal IEP Team Meeting processes. Parents are provided the document entitled *Procedural Safeguards: Parental Rights* yearly. This document specifies formal procedures for resolving disagreements.

Code of Student Conduct

Parents and teachers must work together to teach appropriate behaviors which permit our children to access the educational programs provided to them. The PGCPSS Code of Student Conduct serves as a framework for acceptable behaviors. Enforcement of the Code must be individualized and focused on assisting the child in acquiring desired behaviors.

Homework

Teachers and therapists often offer parents activities which reinforce what children are presented during the week. Such "homework" provides additional practice and a bridge between the home and the school. Chapel Forge also offers "Homework Bags" which help target specific goals a child might have. Research shows that parents who make it a habit to read to their children every night increase their children's chances of learning to read. Children will imitate what they see adults doing. If the adults read, their children will look at books.

Report Cards

Each preschool child's program is based on an Individualized Education Program. Progress on each short term objective is reported to parents at least three times per year. Head Start students receive a report card two times per year.

In Case Of Emergencies

It is extremely important that the school have current address, phone numbers, and two emergency contact persons on file. Parents must make sure that this information is always current. Should a phone be temporarily disconnected, parents must inform the school of other numbers where they can be reached.