

SOUTHERN MIDDLE SCHOOL

APRIL 2017 NEWSLETTER

9615 HG Trueman Road, Lusby, MD 20657
Main Office (443) 550-9250

<http://smsweb.calvertnet.k12.md.us/>

Mandy Blackmon, Principal
Travis Mister, Vice Principal
Rachel Couchenour, Dean

Tammy Frawley, Counselor (A-K)
Stephanie Goldstein, Counselor (L-Z)

Dear Southern Middle School Community,

Can you believe we are in the 4th and final quarter of the school year? The students are continuing to focus on academic growth. Remember the SMS goal is to maintain a 70% or higher in all classes. Please try to monitor grades on HAC biweekly as a minimum. Please encourage your student to do their best at all times through the 180th day of school.

We have briefly interrupted the one-hour lunch, our “Nest” time, to focus on some character education lessons. Please have conversations with your students on some of the topics they were collaboratively working on with their peers. We are focusing on being good citizens at SMS, treating one another with respect, and learning how to agree to disagree when needed. We will return to our “Nest” after the lessons are completed.

As the weather begins to heat up, we need to remember the dress code and make sure our young men and young ladies are dressed appropriately for the school setting. The air conditioning temperatures may vary depending on the classroom and time of day the sun is shining on the building. Some rooms may be a little warmer than we would like, while other rooms may be a little cooler than we would like. Clear water bottles with water only may be carried throughout the school day.

We have some fun and exciting events coming up to look forward to. PARCC assessments will begin after we return from Spring Break. Please encourage your child to do their best. We want our results to truly reflect the academic growth our students have made through the year. The first week of May is Teacher Appreciation Week; please encourage your child to offer their teachers a few kind words during this time. Please come out May 18 and 19 to support the SMS drama club in their production of “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown.” The PTSA is working to put together some amazing activities for our eighth graders to let them know how much we care about them and support them in their transition to high school.

Thank you for all that you do for SMS,

Mrs. Mandy M. Blackmon, Principal
Southern Middle School

Important Upcoming Dates at SMS!

4/12 – Baseball & Softball game: SMS vs. WHMS

4/13 – 4/18 – Spring Break – no school

4/19 – School reopens

4/19 – Toby's field trip Ms. Foster & Mr. Humphreys' classes (7th & 8th grade students)

4/24–28 – PARCC Assessment

4/25 – Baseball & Softball game: SMS vs. NMS

4/27 – Baseball & Softball game: SMS vs. MCMS

New Numbers...

Calvert County Public Schools is in the process of implementing a new phone system. When contacting

Southern Middle School

please use the following number...

443-550-9250

(Effective: 2-22-17)



GO EAGLES!



April 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

There are many paths to addiction. The face of addiction has changed radically in the past 10 years. Addictions affect people of all ages and from all walks of life. New heroin users are not necessarily troubled or poverty stricken persons from inner city environments. Those affected are of varying economic means and increasingly from rural areas.

Consider these frequent paths to opioid dependence...

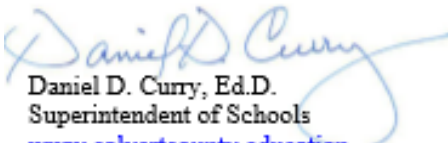
John, a 9th grader, tries a prescription drug he found in the medicine cabinet to see how it makes him feel. Soon an experiment turns into a need. Last year Calvert County Health Department conducted a survey of high school students. Of students who reported using opioids to get high, more than half steal them from family members' prescription bottles. Of all students surveyed, 45% report that they could access other people's medications because family members failed to store their prescriptions in secure, locked containers.


Emily's addiction started after she sprained her ankle playing sports. Her mom gave her some pain medication she had left over from her back surgery. According to studies performed at the Mayo Clinic, parents are often unaware of the dangers of sharing prescription medication with others. Even a few pills can start people toward addiction.

Please join the community-wide effort to stop prescription pain medication misuse in our community. Just a few simple precautions can reduce prescription drug misuse. These include:

- **If a family member absolutely needs a medication that has the potential for addiction, talk to your doctor about limiting the use to no more than 3 days.**
- **Lock up all prescriptions**
 - o Inexpensive lock boxes can be purchased at a number of local stores.
- **Dispose of unused and expired medications**
 - o There are two 24/7 drop boxes located at the Calvert County Sheriff's Office (30 Church Street, Prince Frederick) and Maryland State Police, Barrack "U" (210 Main Street, Prince Frederick)
 - o Crush pills and mix with coffee grounds or other food waste, then throw it in your household trash.
- **Monitor prescriptions given to your child.**
 - o Ask your doctor to consider alternatives to addictive pain medications.
 - o Provide your child only the dose that is prescribed.
 - o Do not allow your child to keep their prescription in their room, backpack or purse.
- **Learn about the adolescent brain and healthy coping techniques on May 2nd.**
 - o Upside-Down Organization trainings held at the College of Southern Maryland, Prince Frederick Campus:
 - 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. – "Giving a Fish a Bath: The Untold Story of the Adolescent Mind"
 - 6 to 9 p.m. – "Change Your Language, Change Their Lives: What Adults Can Say Differently Today to Transform the Tomorrows of our Youth"

Preventing prescription drug and alcohol abuse and addiction requires vigilance. Educate yourself by participating in local workshops, such as the "Let's Talk" Series sponsored by the Calvert Alliance Against Substance Abuse. Visit their website at www.co.cal.md.us/CAASA to find an updated list of events. Other helpful resources include websites, such as www.drugabuse.gov and www.drugfree.org.


Daniel D. Curry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
www.calvertcounty.education
443-550-8000


Dr. Laurence Polsky
Health Officer
www.calverthealth.org
410-535-5400

Note: This IS a Test!

Testing season is upon us! The PARCC (ELA and Math- all grades) will be administered April 24–May 12

To have a successful testing session, it is very important that students come to school daily. Please make sure students are getting a good night's sleep and are eating breakfast. Students can find practice tests online at <http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/practice-tests>. Practice tests will allow students to feel comfortable with using the testing format and practice answering questions. Sixth grade students have the testing app on their laptops that can also be used for practice.

Science Fair Success!

Congratulations to the Southern Middle winners in February's Calvert County Science Fair! Zachary Childress won \$100 from the Calvert County Agricultural Commission and \$50 from Southern Maryland Resource Conservation. Jasmine Delong won \$50 from The Patuxent Partnership and a County award of merit with \$25. Isabelle DuBois won \$25 from Johns Hopkins University, \$50 from The Patuxent Partnership and a 3-month scholarship to Mathnasium of Dunkirk. Isabelle was also the Grand Award winner receiving a plaque, \$100 from the County and another \$100 from Educational Systems Credit Federal Credit Union. Also, congratulations to Isabelle and Jasmine for their excellent performance at the regional Science Fair in Prince George's County on March 18! Well done, Eagles!



Buy Your Yearbook Today!

Yearbooks are on sale now! Until May 15, the cost is \$38, and after May 15, the price goes up to \$40. Yearbooks can be ordered online at jostensyearbook.com, or students can pick up an order form from the office. Make checks payable to Southern Middle School. Reserve your memories today! Thank you!

Counseling Corner

HAC

We continue to encourage you to monitor your student through the Home Access Center. It takes a very short amount of time and will provide you with important information regarding your child's grades, attendance, and more. If you are experiencing difficulty accessing HAC or navigating the website for HAC please feel free to contact the counseling office during school hours for assistance.

Career Café

Please encourage your student to attend our monthly career café opportunities in which they are able to listen to members of the community present different careers during their nest time. Students may sign up either with their first period teacher or in the counseling office.

Free Online Homework Help

Free online homework help is available (with your library card) through the Calvert County Library. Real, expert tutors are available from your library or home computer in all core subjects (grades 3-12). Tutors are available from 2-11 pm daily. You can access this service at www.calvert.lib.md.us and the COSMOS link.

Thank you!

Mrs. Frawley, counselor for students with last names A–K
frawleyt@calvertnet.k12.md.us or by phone at 443-550-9250

Mrs. Goldstein, counselor for students with last names L–Z
goldsteinsj@calvertnet.k12.md.us or by phone at 443-550-9250

ATTENTION 6TH GRADE PARENTS New Immunization Requirements

The Tdap and Meningococcal vaccines are required before the first day of school for all students entering the 7th grade.

Students without a shot record at school **will not** be allowed in school until it has been received.

Parents/guardians, call your student's doctor to see if they have received the shots. Be sure that the record of those shots is on file with the school.

If you have any questions, please contact the school at (443) 550-9250 and ask for Mrs. Terry Porter, LPN, School Nurse.

Career Café Volunteer Sign Up

If you are interested in volunteering to present to our students about your career during our 1 hour lunch period, please fill out the form below and return to the counseling department.

Top of Form

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Career Job Title: _____

Company: _____

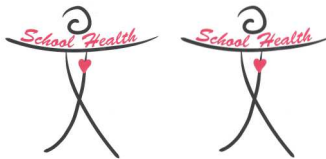
Email: _____

Phone (Best number to reach you during school hours):

Do you have a child that attends SMS? _____

Do you have any special needs for your presentation?

Bottom of Form



HEAD LICE FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

Lice are very, very small insects. In fact, they are so tiny that you can barely see them! Each louse (the name for one of the lice) is brown and gray and only about the size of a sesame seed.

When lice start living in hair, they also start to lay eggs, or nits. Lice can survive up to 30 days on a person's head and can lay eight eggs a day. Lice attach their nits to pieces of hair, close to the scalp. If you see a small, oval blob on a strand of hair, that's probably a nit. If these little eggs are yellow, tan, or brown, the lice haven't hatched yet. If the eggs are white or clear, the lice have hatched.

Who is at risk for getting head lice?

Anyone who comes in head-to-head contact with someone who already has head lice is at greatest risk. Occasionally, head lice may be acquired from contact with clothing (such as hats, scarves, coats) or other personal items (such as brushes or towels) that belong to an infested person. Preschool and elementary-age children, 3-11, and their families are infested most often. Girls get head lice more often than boys. In the U.S., African-Americans rarely get head lice. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

Where are head lice most commonly found?

They are most commonly found on the scalp, behind the ears and near the neckline at the back of the neck. Head lice hold on to hair. Head lice are rarely found on the body, eyelashes, or eyebrows.

What are the signs and symptoms of head lice infestation?

- Tickling feeling of something moving in the hair.
- Itching, caused by an allergic reaction to the bites.
- Sores on the head caused by scratching (sores sometimes become infected).
- Irritability.

How can I treat a head lice infestation?

The most important step in treating a head lice infestation is to treat the person and other family members with head lice with medication to kill the lice. Wash clothing and bedding worn or used by the infested person in the 2-day period just before treatment is started. If you have treated your student for head lice, please notify your school nurse so the student can be checked before re-entry to school.

Treat the infested person: Requires using an over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medication. Follow these treatment steps:

1. Before applying treatment, remove all clothing from the waist up.
2. Apply lice medicine, also called pediculicide (*peh-DICK-you-luh-side*), according to label instructions. If your child has extra long hair (longer than shoulder length), you may need to use a second bottle. Pay special attention to instructions on the bottle regarding how long the medication should be left on and whether rinsing the hair is recommended after treatment.
***WARNING:** Do not use a cream rinse or combination shampoo/conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not re-wash hair for 1-2 days after treatment.*
3. Have the infested person put on clean clothing after treatment.
4. If a few live lice are still found 8-12 hours after treatment, but are moving more slowly than before, do not retreat. Comb dead and remaining live lice out of the hair. The medicine may take longer to kill lice.
5. If, after 8-12 hours of treatment, no dead lice are found and lice seem as active as before, the medicine may not be working. See your health care provider for a different medication; follow treatment directions.
6. Nit (head lice egg) combs, often found in lice medicine packages, should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft. Many flea combs made for cats and dogs are also effective.
7. After treatment, check hair and comb with a nit comb to remove nits and lice every 2-3 days. Continue to check for 2-3 weeks until you are sure all lice and nits are gone.
8. If using OTC pediculicides, retreat in 7-10 days. If using the prescription drug malathion, retreat in 7-10 days **ONLY** if crawling bugs are found.

Treat the household: Head lice do not survive long if they fall off a person and cannot feed. You don't need to spend a lot of time or money on housecleaning activities. Follow these steps to help avoid re-infestation by lice that have recently fallen off the hair or crawled onto clothing or furniture.

1. To kill lice and nits, ~~machine wash~~ machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that the infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment. Use the hot water (130°F) cycle. Dry laundry using high heat for at least 20 minutes.
2. Dry clean clothing that is not washable, (coats, hats, scarves, etc.) **OR** Store all clothing, stuffed animals, comforters, etc., that cannot be washed or dry cleaned into a plastic bag; seal for 2 weeks.
3. Soak combs and brushes for 1 hour in rubbing alcohol, Lysol*, or wash with soap and hot (130°F) water.
4. Vacuum the floor and furniture. The risk of getting re-infested from a louse that has fallen onto a carpet or sofa is very small. Don't spend a lot of time on this. Just vacuum the places where the infested person usually sits or lays. Do not use fumigant sprays; they can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

PTSA News

It's time to start thinking about next year's PTSA! First up, PTSA needs a nominating committee for board positions. What's the nominating committee? It's a group of three people who recruit and nominate people to run for executive positions (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) of PTSA. This is a short-term commitment with long-term effects, and we really need the help! Please e-mail Heather Jackson at rehtaeh45410@yahoo.com if you can help.

Did you miss the Mixed Bag Designs paper catalog order? No problem! You can still place an order that helps support SMS PTSA online! Just be sure to enter SMS's fundraiser ID, 186868, at the checkout on www.mixedbagdesigns.com. As always, thank you for your support!

The feedback from teachers concerning the last staff meetings has been so happy & thankful! The teachers really appreciate having great snacks for the monthly after-school staff meetings. A big Thank You to all the parents that bring in snacks & goodies—they are much appreciated!! The next staff meeting will be in April and we are calling all volunteers to help!! The staff meeting usually is about 65 people. We are asking for baked goods—cookies, cupcakes, muffins, banana or pumpkin bread—as well as veggie trays & hummus, fruit or fruit trays, cheese platters & crackers, chips & dip, and grab 'n go snacks. Parents who would like to volunteer can contact Nicole Chigounis (smsvolunteer@comcast.net) or Mary Serra at ms27742@gmail.com. We really appreciate all the help with food donations!

In our most recent Box Tops collection, our school raised \$149! We have another big collection coming up so please keep sending your Box Tops in through the end of May. This is such an easy way to support our school and each homeroom teacher has a collection envelope for your child to turn their Box Tops in. So please look for Box Tops on the items including many foods and paper products. Each Box Top is worth \$0.10 and they really do add up. Some of the stores will even print out Bonus Box Tops vouchers and they can also be turned in to our school. Thanks so much to the NJHS at SMS for helping to gather and count the Box Tops. We are so appreciative of their help with this great program!



SMS SPIRIT MAGNETS

Don't wait, order yours today.

The magnets are in and they look great! Buy one for your car or to use on your fridge or buy multiple magnets. At only \$5 a piece they are a budget friendly way to support SMS PTSA. Email any questions to smsptsapresident@yahoo.com

Please turn this portion in to the office. (Checks payable to SMS PTSA)

Name: _____ Grade: _____

7th Period teacher: _____

Number of Magnets: _____ Total amount due: _____

For internal use:

Date received: _____ Paid with: Cash _____ Check# _____

Date taken to school: _____ By: _____

THE SMART TALK QUICK GUIDE

How to set ground rules for your kids and their devices

Every kid wants a smartphone. And a tablet. And all the other popular technical devices. So, how do you know when it's time to get them one? How do you set ground rules you can actually enforce?

With a few helpful tips, you can figure out if your kid is ready and keep them safe and savvy when they go online.

What's the right age to get a kid a smartphone or other device?

The short answer: there really isn't an exact age that's best. It's different for every kid. One thing parents can do is consider their kid's maturity level. Here are some questions to help determine if your kid is ready:

- Does your kid show a sense of responsibility, such as letting you know when they leave the house? Do they show up when they say they will?
- Does your kid tend to lose things, such as backpacks or homework folders? If so, expect they might lose an expensive(!) phone, too.
- Does your kid need to be in touch for safety reasons?
- Would easy access to friends benefit your kid for social reasons?
- Do you think they'll use cell phones responsibly — for example, not texting during class or disturbing others with their phone conversations?
- Can they adhere to limits you set for minutes talked and apps downloaded?
- Will they use text, photo, and video functions responsibly and not to embarrass or harass others?

DID YOU KNOW?

75%

of children age 8 and under have access to some sort of smart mobile device at home.

How do I set ground rules to make sure my kids use their devices responsibly?

That's where The Smart Talk can help. Go to www.thesmarttalk.org with your kid by your side and we'll ask you a few questions to answer together. Some will help you agree on healthy limits. (Yep. You read that right. We said agree.) Some of the questions are meant to be conversation starting so you can more easily discuss online safety and privacy issues. We even ask a couple extra credit questions to make this a custom experience.

When you're done, you'll have a personalized, official family agreement that you and your kid can feel good about. Just print it out, sign it, and put it on the fridge for everyone to see.

Ground rules are great, but how do I stay on top of technology and this ever-changing subject matter?

Common Sense Media offers articles full of research, insight, and tips that can help you and your family manage all the challenges that come with technology. Here are just a few links to their best information.



Safety & Privacy — Covers how to protect your kid's privacy, how to make sure your kid isn't over-sharing on social media, which are the best privacy settings for your computer and smartphone, and more. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/privacy-and-internet-safety



Screen Time — Covers how much screen time is ok, how to get kids to put down their devices, what to do if your kid is constantly texting, and more. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/screen-time



Social Media — Covers social media basics, how to help your kid avoid digital drama, the right age to join Facebook and other sites, and more. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/social-media



Apps & Downloads — Covers how to tell if an app is good for learning, video games you can say yes to, how to download smarter and cheaper, and more. Visit <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/learning-with-technology>



Texting & Calling — Covers how to balance the need for social interaction with problematic phone use. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/cell-phone-parenting/my-kid-texts-constantly-what-can-i-do



Reputation & Respect — Covers what you should teach your kid about safe online behavior, cyberbullying prevention, how to report cyberbullying if necessary, and more. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/cyberbullying



Online Videos & Cameras — Using YouTube as an example, this video explainer covers how kids are not only watching all kinds of online videos, including advertising, they're also putting their own videos on the Internet—for all the world to see. Visit www.commonsensemedia.org/videos/parents-guide-to-youtube

More From Common Sense Media

Parent Concerns in General: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/parent-concerns>

Advice Videos: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/video/advice>

Parent Blog: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog>

Family Guide to Essential Apps: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/guide/best-first-kids-apps>

Healthy Media Habits Infographic: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/pediatricians>

DID YOU KNOW?

68%
of teens text
everyday

DID YOU KNOW?

51%
of teens visit
social networking
sites daily

Parent or Guardian-Teacher Conferences

As a parent or guardian, you are your child's first, best and most important teacher. Parents/Guardians and Southern Middle School staff have this in common: We both want your child to grow and succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are a great way to start a conversation about your child, his/her progress at SMS, and how you and the SMS staff can work together to benefit your child. If you want to schedule a conference with all of your child's teachers, call SMS at (410)535-7877 and ask for the Guidance Department.

Tips for Successful School Conferences

BEFORE...

- Look through your child's notebooks, tests, and grades. All of your child's grades are on the Home Access Center (HAC). If you do not know how to access HAC, let the Guidance Office know when you call for the conference. HAC information can be given to you at the conference.
- If you are insecure about your ability to communicate, bring someone with you to help you. For example, if English is your second language, you can bring someone who can translate for you. Sometimes, it is helpful to have one person taking notes and the other talking, so you have a reference later.
- Make a list of questions you have about your child. This list may include (but is not limited to) academic strengths and challenges, social growth, and emotional well-being. For ideas, see list



AFTER...

- Start with your plan right away.
- Contact teachers two to three weeks after the conference to see if there have been positive changes.

DURING...

- Stay positive. Remember that we both want your child to grow and succeed!
- Talk and listen. Share what works at home with your child when you are trying to change behaviors. Let the teachers know if there are issues at home that might affect your child's performance/behavior in school. The issues raised in conferences are confidential and will not be shared outside of the conference.
- Write down things you can do at home to help your child succeed in school. Write down what the teachers will do at school to assist your child. Ask about the best way to contact teachers for follow up communication. Leave with a plan!

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Examples of Questions to ask: What are my child's strengths? Is my child performing below/above/at grade level? How is he/she doing as compared to the other students in the class? Do you see any behavioral problems in class that are affecting his/her progress? What programs/services does the school offer that could be of assistance to my child? Is my child working up to his/her ability? What can we do at home to support our child academically? How does my child get along with classmates? How does he/she work in a group? How should I contact you to check on my child's progress after this conference?

Calvert County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, familial status, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or genetic information or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Director of Student Services
Director of Human Resources
1305 Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
410-535-1700

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit the Office of Civil Rights Complaint Assessment System at: <http://ocrcas.ed.gov> or call 1-800-421-3481.

Anti-sexual, Anti-racial and Anti-disability Harassment Statement

Discrimination can manifest itself in behaviors such as bullying, harassment, or intimidation of individuals.

Calvert County Public Schools does not tolerate any form of harassment including, but not limited to, sexual, racial, or disability. Any individual (student, employee, or community member) who believes that he or she has been subjected to any form of harassment is encouraged to report the allegation of harassment. Students, parents and community members may report allegations of harassment to:

Ms. Kimberly Roof
Director of Student Services
Calvert County Public Schools
1305 Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Employees may report allegations of harassment to:

Dr. Vicky Karol
Director of Human Resources
Calvert County Public Schools
1305 Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Calvert County Public Schools is committed to conducting a prompt investigation for any allegation of harassment. If harassment has occurred, the individual will be disciplined promptly. Disciplinary actions for students found to have engaged in any form of harassment may result in suspension or expulsion. Disciplinary actions for employees found to have engaged in any form of harassment may result in suspension or termination.

Calvert County Public Schools encourages all students, parents, employees, and community members to work together to prevent any form of harassment.