



Monday, January 3, 2022, Issue 17

## JANUARY 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>3</p> <p>HMS Closed Due to Staff Shortages</p>	<p>4A (It is an A day!)</p> <p>After-School Programs Cancelled - No Late Bus</p> <p>Basketball Practice (2:44-4:44 p.m.)</p> <p>Team Leader Meeting (2:44 p.m.-3:44 p.m.)</p>	<p>5B</p> <p>After-School Programs Cancelled - No Late Bus</p> <p>Basketball Games Boys VS. Shelton Intermediate (Home)</p> <p>Girls VS. Shelton Intermediate (Away)</p> <p>HMS Equity Committee Meeting (2:44 p.m.-3:44 p.m.)</p>	<p>6A</p> <p>Cornell Scott Hill SBHC COVID Vaccination Clinic (Day 2)</p> <p>After-School Programs Ski Club (2:45-8;p.m.)</p> <p>Basketball Practice (2:44-4:44 p.m.)</p> <p>HMS Staff Meeting (2:44 p.m.-4:14 p.m.)</p>	<p>7B</p>

**BASKETBALL GAMES: REMINDER, HMS STUDENTS CAN ONLY ATTEND IF THEY ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT. ADULT SUPERVISION IS REQUIRED.**



## FACE MASKS

**Reminder: Students must wear a face mask everyday to school. The face masks should cover the person's nose and mouth. We recommend every student has extra masks in their backpacks.**

Are you growing tired of COVID safety reminders? We feel bad about the constant reminders in our newsletters. However, we need the support of parents and students. Face masks are required by all students both on school buses and during the school day. It is a strategy to ensure we remain healthy in the midst of the pandemic. We are asking all parents to help us by reviewing expectations to correctly wear an approved face mask. If students are not wearing their masks, we will communicate information to parents. Students who do not follow masking guidelines may be asked to work in an alternative location or stay home. Our goal is to keep all students and teachers safe at HMS. #MaskUp!

## WE LOVE PENCILS!



"The Mystery of Pencils" Many educators wonder about this phenomenon in schools... . Where do all the pencils go? We know parents buy pencils. We know teachers give pencils to students every day in school. We see students share pencils with each other. And, yet, there seems to be a pencil shortage. Parents are encouraged to send their children to school with basic supplies, including writing utensils. If you have extra pencils at home, please consider donating them to Team Leaders. They will collect pencils and create a station for borrowing them in each classroom. Our kids have problems to solve and stories to write. We can't let a lack of pencils get in the way of their learning. We appreciate your help.

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## SIGNS OF SUICIDE (Second Publication)

During this challenging year, school staff are working to teach students about mental health and how to seek help if they are worried about themselves or a friend. We are using a program called *SOS Signs of Suicide*. The program teaches students about this difficult topic and encourages them to seek help. We intend to introduce all students to this program starting in January through March 2022.

SOS has been used by thousands of schools over the past few decades. Studies have shown that it effectively teaches students about depression and suicide while reducing the number of students' self-reported suicide attempts. Through the program, students learn:

- that depression is treatable, so they are encouraged to seek help
- how to identify depression and potential suicide risk in themselves or a friend
- to ACT (Acknowledge, Care and Tell a trusted adult) if concerned about themselves or a friend
- who they can turn to at school for help, if they need it

Students will watch age-appropriate video clips and participate in a guided discussion about depression, suicide, and what to do if they are concerned about a friend. Following the video, students will complete a response slip which asks whether they would like to talk to an adult about any concerns. School staff will conduct brief meetings with any student asking to talk.

We understand this is a sensitive subject. We believe it is important to maintain open lines of communication with our students and families. Information regarding the SOS program will continue to be promoted in our school newsletter. **Parents who do not want their child to participate in the Signs of Suicide Lesson should communicate their wishes to Michelle Coogan at [mcoogan@hamden.org](mailto:mcoogan@hamden.org).**

**The first Signs of Suicide lesson will be presented to eighth grade students in House 2, Team Rocco on Tuesday, January 11, 2022.**

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## FOLLOW HMS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Please follow us on Instagram at [hms\\_dragons](https://www.instagram.com/hms_dragons). We post daily reminders and recognize our dedicated staff and amazing students. Information is also posted on FaceBook. Search for our Hamden Middle School group. Finally, parents can also check us out on Twitter [@HMSDragons](https://twitter.com/HMSDragons). Social media is an excellent communication tool. It is a quick, easy way to stay connected.

## A MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL COOGAN

Dear HMS Families and Students,

Happy New Year! I hope all of our students and their families had a wonderful holiday recess. It was a time for rest and relaxation with family and friends. It is also a time for reflection and goal setting. Setting resolutions is a positive way to start the year. I am optimistic that it will be an outstanding year for our community.

The global pandemic is a part of our lives, and we continue to navigate the challenges associated with COVID. As you know, we had to close our school today due to staff shortages. Please know our teachers are committed to working with your children. There are circumstances that prevent us from coming to work, such as being sick with COVID or having small children who are quarantined from daycares and schools. In addition, it is difficult to schedule testing or to obtain home tests. Closing school is a difficult decision, and our district will always do what is best for our students. Ultimately, our commitment is to offer a safe, positive learning experience with highly-qualified teachers. We will monitor all information and communicate information to families as quickly as possible.

Today, we heard from parents who inquired about communication. All parents should receive emails from the district and school. In addition, all of my communication is posted on our school website (<https://www.hamden.org/hms>). As mentioned earlier, we also post information on social media. If you are not receiving school emails and phone calls, please email me. I will help get parents connected as quickly as possible.

Stay strong, HMS! Our goal is to make 2022 a great year for all.

Your PrincipAL,

Ms. Michelle Coogan