

July 9, 2019

Chief Operating Officer

Opening Windows and Doors

To: All Staff

From: Anissa Brown Dennis, Chief Operating Officer

The Howard County Public School System is committed to promoting safety and wellness for its children and employees. It is important to keep all windows and doors closed for the equipment to perform properly in order to honor this commitment.

As part of our procedures to manage risk at a system level, please be mindful of the following:

- Open windows and doors can allow a number of pests to enter the building, including dangerous ones like wasps and bees. Birds, bats, rodents and snakes may also enter open windows or exterior doors when propped open.
- Open windows and doors during the spring and summer months can inadvertently introduce unfiltered outdoor air containing grass, pollen, fungi and mold. This can negatively affect occupants with allergies and induce asthma.
- The heating and cooling systems have filters that deter moisture and pollutants from entering the occupied areas. With open windows and doors, the outside air is not forced through these filtration systems. While this alone wastes the energy to treat that air, it also changes the space temperature and potentially the air quality. These systems work much harder to maintain the temperature. This waste of energy is compounded by the fact that the air pressure designed for the units to run optimally will be compromised.

Our school and office buildings were designed and built to secure closed and locked entryways, including the windows on upper floors. The Office of Safety & Security recommends that all exterior/perimeter doors and windows remain closed and secure at all times. Maintaining a secure perimeter will minimize opportunities for people who do not belong in the building from gaining access, which helps to prevent potential incidents. When doors are open, it is important that the access way be monitored by a staff member so it can be closed immediately. This will ensure that students and staff are safe and secure during their time in our facilities.

We hope you find these procedures easy to follow. If you have any questions regarding this circular, please do not hesitate to call the Office of the Chief Operating Officer at 410-313-1550.

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