

Dear Parent:

On April 8th, a total solar eclipse will make its way across North America. With such a monumental event occurring during the school day, some of our schools are planning "viewing events" for students, faculty and staff members who wish to participate. We want parents to be aware of the precautionary steps that are being taken, and we want to offer as many options as possible to parents and students as plans are made for this historic event.

Safety Precautions for Students and Parents

- Participating schools will be supplying those who wish to participate with glasses specifically designed for eclipse viewing. Principals will ensure that the glasses conform to the transmission requirements that are set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Homemade or ordinary sunglasses are not sufficient ways to view an eclipse, as the reflectivity and polarization are not high enough for viewing in a safe manner.
- If your child's school is sponsoring a viewing event and you DO NOT want your child to participate, you must complete the opt-out form that was provided to you. Students who have been opted-out will not be allowed to participate; however, the principal will attempt to offer an alternative viewing experience through online programs or television coverage.
- If parents choose to allow their child to participate in the viewing event, parents are encouraged to go over safety guidelines with their child in advance. The eclipse glasses must be kept on at all times during viewing and removing glasses, even temporarily, may have serious effects on the participant's eyes. Students should be encouraged to take breaks and look away from the sun to give their eyes a rest. Even with eclipse glasses, students should not stare continuously at the sun.
- Parents are encouraged to contact their child's optometrist or ophthalmologist if they have concerns about their child's participation.
- If your school or your child is not participating in this event, we still want to encourage parents to talk to their children about safety precautions regarding the eclipse. The totality of the eclipse will begin about 12:30 p.m. and end around 3:10 p.m. Even if a parent does not want their child to participate in a viewing event, students could be outside during class changes, recess, athletic practices, school dismissal, etc. during this 2.5 hour period. As a result, parents should review safety procedures with their children and remind them to never look at the sun without special eye protection.
- For more information relating to overall safety viewing during an eclipse, visit <https://science.nasa.gov/eclipses/future-eclipses/eclipse-2024/safety/>

Parental Involvement

- Parents who wish to experience this event with their child at an off-site location will be allowed to check-out their children as an excused absence for an "educational experience". Normal check-out procedures will be in effect on April 8th.

- Parents may want their child to be absent for the entire day on April 8th because of the eclipse viewing. If you plan for your child to miss the entire school day, please provide a parent note regarding the absence so your child can be excused for an "educational experience". Normal absentee procedures will take place on April 8th.
- Schools are not required to participate, and each principal will make all decisions regarding participation on his/her campus. If you would like more information about eclipse activities planned at your child's school, feel free to contact the school directly.

The eclipse will be a historic occasion, and we want you to have as many options as possible regarding how you want your child to experience this event.