

August 16, 2017

Dear Families,

On Monday, August 21, 2017 the shadow of the Moon will sweep across the Earth producing a solar eclipse. The Great American Eclipse will range from a total to partial eclipse depending on location. In Central Virginia we will experience a partial eclipse, which will begin at approximately 1:14 p.m. and end at approximately 4:02 p.m. The maximum viewing time for the eclipse will be at 2:41 p.m.

Last week we distributed a letter that stated that we would not allow students to observe the eclipse for safety reasons. Since that time, we have obtained generous community donations that enabled us to purchase NASA-endorsed eclipse glasses for each student and staff member. These glasses provide the necessary protection for safely viewing the eclipse. For that reason, our school has made the following plan for learning about and observing the eclipse:

***On the day of the eclipse and leading up to the eclipse students and teachers at Bedford Primary School will be completing a variety of activities to learn about the eclipse and safety. All activities will be completed indoors. These activities will include reading books, watching videos, creating art projects, and completing literacy activities including reading an individual book they will be able to bring home to keep on the day of the eclipse. On the day of the eclipse, the students may watch portions of the eclipse on the NASA website in class and will be provided eclipse glasses to wear during dismissal. In addition, on the day of the eclipse it will be “Hat Day” at BPS. Students and staff are encouraged to wear their favorite hat throughout the day.***

Bedford County Public Schools also recognizes the eclipse will coincide with dismissal time and that there may be other times students typically go outside during the day. Because of these safety concerns, other precautionary measures will be taken to protect students:

* All teachers will be provided links to educational resources to help educate students about the eclipse and related safety risks.
* P.E. classes and recess during the eclipse event will be held indoors.
* All students will be instructed to wear safety glasses while loading or riding the bus or cars at dismissal when directly looking at the sun.
* Bus drivers will remind the students of the safety risks.
* All families who do not want their children to participate in observing the eclipse must complete the enclosed opt-out form and return it to the school by **Monday morning, August 21, 2017.**
* Any parent may check their children out of school early to observe the eclipse as a family without attendance consequences.

More information about the 2017 solar eclipse can be found on NASA’s website at <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/>.

A solar eclipse is a terrific learning opportunity.  Taking precautionary measures to educate our students and staff will ensure a memorable and safe experience.

Sincerely,

Lisa L. Dellis, M.Ed.

Principal

**Eclipse Viewing Opt-out Form**

Our school community is providing NASA-endorsed eclipse observing glasses for all students and staff. Our plan for eclipse viewing is outlined in the attached letter. **Students will be included in these activities unless parents/guardians sign below.**

BCPS staff will provide the glasses, instruct students in their use, and supervise students when wearing them.

Student safety is our top priority. At no time should students or participants remove their eclipse glasses and look directly at the sun as it could cause permanent eye damage. There is no way to guarantee that your child will not remove their eclipse glasses so please speak with your child about the importance of keeping their eclipse glasses on at all times during this event.

**Only sign and return this form should you not wish for your child to participate in the event.**

I do not want my child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to go outside for eclipse viewing activities on August 21, 2017.

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Parent Signature