

ECSD Guidelines for Viewing the Partial Solar Eclipse August 21, 2107

On Monday, August 21, Escambia County, FL, will experience a partial eclipse of the sun from 11:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. While this presents an excellent learning opportunity for all students, safety has to be the main concern in planning any outdoor activities during that time period. With safety in mind, Escambia County schools will conduct all outdoor school activities (PE classes, recess, etc.) indoors. Regular dismissals will take place as scheduled.

“Because the time period of the eclipse occurs includes dismissal times for many ECSD schools, we ask parents of students who walk, bike or ride the bus to and from school to further reinforce the dangers of looking at the sun while they are on their way home on Monday, August 21st.,” said ECSD Superintendent Malcolm Thomas. “We also ask parents to use an abundance of caution while driving during the time of the eclipse, and to be especially careful in the parent pickup area at school to avoid distracted drivers, students and pedestrians.”

Teachers who have made prior arrangements and have obtained permission from the principals, and have obtained written permission from their students’ parents or guardians to take their students outside to safely observe the solar eclipse as part of their instruction, may do so, if they follow these guidelines:

1. Verify parental permission has been received for all students participating. A permission slip was provided to schools for this purpose.
2. Provide students with certified, eclipse viewing glasses while viewing the eclipse. Glasses must have been purchased by the school and must meet the international safety standard, with “ISO 12312-2” directly on the eclipse glasses along with the ISO logo and manufacturer name and address printed on the product. Information regarding certified viewing glasses can be found at: <https://eclipse.aas.org/resources/solar-filters>
3. Provide safety training for students prior to going outside to view the eclipse, emphasizing the importance of keeping their glasses on during the viewing event.
4. Provide instruction to students regarding the science behind the phenomenon of eclipses prior to and after viewing the eclipse.
5. Provide close supervision of students to ensure safe viewing of the eclipse.
6. Allowing viewing time to occur 10 minutes before or after the maximum eclipse of the sun, which occurs at 1:35 p.m. in Pensacola.
7. Limit viewing activities to approximately 10 minutes (longer time periods must be approved by the principal).

Safety is very important, as it will NOT be safe to view ANY part of the solar eclipse without proper eye protection.

- Even looking directly at a small part of the eclipse is too dangerous, as the normal squint response will not occur and the eye will be exposed to dangerous amounts of UV light.

- There is no pain involved and by the time the damage is done it is too late.
- The damage can be permanent and may not occur until the next day. To safely view an eclipse of the sun, wear eclipse glasses or use hand-held solar viewers. Do NOT look at the uneclipsed or partially eclipsed sun with the naked eye or through an unfiltered camera, telescope or binoculars. Sunglasses or handmade filters are NOT safe methods for viewing an eclipse and may damage your eyes.

For planning lessons and advance explanations of what to expect, visit: <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov> This site has a countdown clock and offers a variety of resources, items to be downloaded, an interactive map, eclipse maps for individual states and information on safety.

For anyone NOT going outside to view the eclipse on Monday, it can be viewed via live stream from NASA at: <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/eclipse-live-stream>

Here are some additional links that might be useful in planning eclipse day lessons:

- *Eclipse 101* <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/safety>
- *NASA livestream of eclipse:* <https://www.nasa.gov/eclipselive>
- *Get Ready for the 2017 Solar Eclipse* (NASA video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jaxiha8-rY>
- *Watching the Friendly Skies* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_GdK8y0Pyl (NASA safety video)
- *How to Make a Pinhole Projector* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWMf5rYDgpc> (NASA video)
<https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/2d3d-printable-pinhole-projectors>
- *Eclipse 101* <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/safety>
- *NASA livestream of eclipse:* <https://www.nasa.gov/eclipselive>
- <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/DiscoveryNow/greatamericaneclipse.cfm>

Another resource for parents, or anyone who will be with children on Monday, to help start a conversation about the eclipse, and the safety concerns associated with one, is this article from Scientific American, “Science Says Why We Can’t Look at the Sun” by Rachael Rettner (Copyright 2017 Live Science). It outlines the risks of looking directly at the sun. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/science-says-why-we-cant-look-at-the-sun/>.

Media queries about Escambia County School District topics should be directed to Kim Stefansson, at [850-469-6219](tel:850-469-6219) or kstefansson@escambia.k12.fl.us. Like ECSD on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ecsdf

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