



OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

## Guidelines for Viewing the Solar Eclipse

A solar eclipse will move across the United States on Monday, April 8, 2024. This is a rare and exciting learning opportunity for students. We want all our learners and adults to have a positive experience, and so it is strongly recommended that schools plan accordingly and communicate risks, precautions, and expectations to students, families, and staff ahead of the solar eclipse. To help you with this communication, the OSSE Division of Health and Wellness is sharing the following information:

- **TIMING:** In the District of Columbia, the solar eclipse will occur Monday, April 8 between 2-4:30 p.m., with nearly 90 percent of the sun covered at 3:20 p.m.
- **NEVER LOOK DIRECTLY AT A SOLAR ECLIPSE WITHOUT PROPER EYE PROTECTION:** Permanent eye damage can occur when a solar eclipse is viewed directly without proper eye protection. Eye damage is immediate, but damage may not appear until 4-6 hours afterwards, with visible damage [gradually getting worse](#) in the following days.
  - Sunglasses, unfiltered telescopes, and polarizing filters are not safe for viewing a solar eclipse. All solar glasses or viewers, including telescopes, must meet the International Organization for Standardization of 12312-2, according to the American Astronomical Society. More information on safely viewing a solar eclipse is available from the [American Astronomical Society](#). If your LEA is distributing eclipse glasses to students, please be aware of [counterfeit and fake eclipse glasses](#).
  - DC Public Libraries are distributing individual eclipse glasses to residents through April 8. Families can obtain the eclipse glasses from their neighborhood library while supplies last. This opportunity is available to individual families and not meant as bulk supply to entire classrooms. More information available [here](#).
  - If students do not have eclipse glasses, the solar eclipse can be viewed using an indirect method that does not involve looking directly at the sun, such as a pinhole projector (for example, a hole punched in an index card) that projects an image of the sun onto the ground or a nearby surface. It is strongly recommended to demonstrate and practice this method with students ahead of time, with repeated reinforcement to never look directly at the solar eclipse. More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).
- **SKIN PROTECTION:** During a solar eclipse, the sun will be very bright. It is recommended to take precautions to prevent skin damage, including wearing sunscreen, a hat, and protective clothing with SPF ratings.
- **INDOOR ENGAGEMENT:** Schools may choose to keep students indoors during the solar eclipse. NASA will air a live stream of the solar eclipse online. More information is available [here](#).

- **DISMISSAL AND AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:** If students are dismissed from school during the solar eclipse, it is strongly recommended to communicate expectations, risks, and precautions ahead of time. This may include practicing and demonstrations protective eye and skin safety with students. Expectations should also be communicated to all after-school care, clubs, activities, and athletics.

No matter how your LEA chooses to engage students during the solar eclipse, it is strongly recommended to communicate expectations ahead of time. If your LEA plans to allow students to safely view the solar eclipse outdoors, it is recommended to inform parents/guardians and allow them opt-out if they choose. For questions, please contact [OSSE.SchoolHealth@dc.gov](mailto:OSSE.SchoolHealth@dc.gov).

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