



# Amherst County Public Schools

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## Solar Eclipse Information

### Amherst County Public Schools Notification

Over the last few days, questions have been raised about the solar eclipse, and the school division's position on the matter. Central Virginia will experience a brief total eclipse on August 21, 2017. For two minutes and 40 seconds the moon will completely cover the face of the sun. For the Amherst area, the start of a partial eclipse will begin at 1:14 p.m. and will end at 4:05 p.m. The maximum part of the eclipse for the Amherst area will occur at 2:42 p.m.

**As result of this, Amherst County Public Schools will dismiss school 15 minutes later than normal on Monday, August 21, 2017. This would mean 3:00 p.m. for middle schools and the high school, and 4:00 p.m. for elementary schools. All bus routes will be delayed by that amount of time. To determine when children should arrive home by bus, simply add 15 minutes to their usual arrival home time. This action is taken out of an abundance of caution in regard to the eclipse. The delay in school dismissal will take place regardless of weather.**

The upcoming solar eclipse is an opportunity for all educators to discuss with students this natural solar eclipse. NASA will be live streaming the event at their web site entitled: [NASA Eclipse 2017 Live - Streaming Video of August 21 Total Solar Eclipse](#). Teachers are encouraged to provide students an opportunity to watch the event using the NASA Live Streaming link. As a part of utilizing the link, teachers are to ensure that all students have been provided information on the dangers of looking directly at the sun during any eclipse event.

Nothing official in the way of viewing the eclipse live will take place. Teachers may determine to use the event as lesson plan material, but without sanctioned live viewing. Parents may "check" their children out of school for a school-approved instructional opportunity. The half day absence beginning at noon will be considered excused. No students are to be permitted outside the respective schools beginning at noon on the 21<sup>st</sup> through the end of the school day. As has been noted even limited, unprotected viewing can cause permanent damage to the eyes.

I am most supportive of extraordinary learning opportunities for our students. In the case of the solar eclipse, I must take into consideration the possibility of permanent injury to a child. Given the risk to children's eyes, school division/ school sanctioning, facilitating, or promoting live viewing during school hours in any way opens the school division to considerable liability. As the Superintendent of the school division, I must be concerned about the best ways to limit exposure to risk. I want to do all I can to promote the safety and well-being of the 4,000+ individuals in my care. I appreciate your understanding and support.

Dr. Steven Nichols  
Superintendent