



DIOCESE of FALL RIVER

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Structured Alternative Learning Day Proposal

In cases of weather-related or other school cancellation, Diocesan elementary schools may institute Structured Alternative Learning (SAL) days that satisfy school day requirements.

Rationale

In an effort to minimize learning disruption caused by cancellation days, the following is being proposed to the Diocesan School Board. Due to unpredictable weather and significant distances amongst regional schools, cancellation days due to inclement weather, in some cases lasting multiple days consecutively, have increased. Furthermore, the current practice of assigning make-up days at the conclusion of the school year is problematic; some families have work, travel, or other commitments that conflict with an extended school year, and add-on days at the conclusion of the year are routinely experienced as less effective.

As a result, student learning is interrupted and negatively impacted. Protocol where Diocesan schools provide structured alternative learning during such days allows student learning to continue. Additionally, schools will be training students and families in the digital skills they will undoubtedly experience in future learning environments.

Policy

In cases of inclement weather, local school leaders have the discretion to institute a SAL day that meets the following expectations:

Instruction

Teachers provide instruction and assignments in digital or other format (e.g. prepared folder/packet/bag of assignments for each student). Teachers will provide assignments for each class that would meet that day.

Performance

Students complete assignments as directed by teachers and turn the assignments in according to the teacher's directions.

Communication

Teachers will communicate to parents and/or students the directions for SAL day assignments in digital or other format, and will also be available for parents for communication regarding assignment completion and directions. The method of electronic communication and the time frame for teacher availability during the SAL day is determined by the teacher and noted in the assignment directions.

Specific understandings governing SAL days:

- School leadership shall announce SAL days at the earliest possible opportunity following a cancellation. It is entirely within the discretion of local school leaders to enact or decline to enact SAL days.
- School leaders shall be mindful of power outages associated with inclement weather and,

if they decide to enact a SAL day and power outages are problematic, prepare for work completion and participation in learning activities based on availability of power and/or electricity.

- School leaders may modify SAL day expectations based on practicality; i.e. musical ensembles, or other courses where online work is impossible or impractical.
- Instruction/Performance/Communication expectations shall accomplish the learning outcomes of the particular unit and be completed within a reasonable timeframe.
- Teachers shall not require students to be online at a particular time (However, students may be required to participate in online communication according to the teacher's directions).
- Teachers shall be available to students via email at designated times to support and guide student learning.
- Students shall turn in assignments and work within 1-2 school days, or at the discretion of the school leader depending on the type of assignments given.
- All assignments completed and by students shall be assessed and graded by teachers.

The attached Guidelines and Recommendations for Elementary Schools contains suggested types of assignments, best practices, and information for schools to use when planning to enact SAL days. The guidelines are meant to be flexible so that any teacher in any school can utilize them if the school leader chooses to enact a SAL day.