

Alternative Learning Days – Blizzard Bags

The Big Stone City School will be piloting the use of **Alternative Learning Days** in the 2019-20 school year. The BSCS calendar has two built-in snow days. Beginning on the 3rd school cancellation day and continuing for each subsequent cancellation day, students will complete Blizzard Bag project assignments.

Alternative Learning Days allow Big Stone City School to extend learning into the home while keeping staff and students safe during school cancellations. They are designed to reduce the number of additional school days beyond the required calendar days of a school year, and to minimize disrupted learning by weather related emergencies.

We recognize regular-scheduled school days within classrooms are the optimal educational experience, yet acknowledge an Alternative Learning Day provides opportunities for learning to continue outside of the school environment in the event of inclement weather. While students often welcome sleeping in, shoveling snow, and helping with household tasks, this alternative learning program provides a continuation to the learning happening in the classroom, limits the disruption by school cancellations, and prevents less optimal instruction during summer. The BSC School Board still has the discretion to determine the number of snow days to make up at the end of the school year.

BSCS will survey students, parents, and staff after this school year and review completed projects. This will guide our decisions for the 2020-2021 school year. Please contact the school with additional questions regarding alternative learning days.

Guidelines for Students for completing Blizzard Bags

Students will receive their blizzard bag assignments from teachers following the second school cancellation day. Teachers will work with students to support their efforts in experiencing Blizzard Bag project assignments. BSCS encourages students to use this as an opportunity to further their learning.

Guidelines for Parents for supporting Blizzard Bags

The assignments that have been developed by our teachers are intended to expand on learning that has taken place in the classroom. In the same way that homework is meant to practice learning, Blizzard Bag assignments involve concepts and skills to which students have already been introduced. For this reason, parents should not need to provide a great deal of support. Parents can provide access to technology if able, time and space to work on assignments, and encouragement to engage and persist with assignments.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much time is needed to complete the Blizzard Bag assignments? We have asked our teachers to provide assignments for 2-3 hours per day. These are estimated totals, and we understand that student work rates will vary.

When will the assignments be provided to students? Teachers will explain project assignments to students no later than after the second snow day. Students will be provided with specific instructions. The assignments will be posted on school websites and hard copies will be sent home with students.

What if my child does not complete Blizzard Bag Day assignments? Because the Blizzard Bag Days represent school days, they will be assessed in the same way that other required assignments are assessed in their classroom.

If my child does not do the work will they be marked absent? Yes. Attendance is based on participation by completing the assignment. However, if there is an extenuating circumstance, our policy on absences will be followed and students will be given additional time to complete the assignments.

What if students need help or have questions on Blizzard Bag Days? Your child should be able to complete most activities independently, though parents or students can email or message their teacher. Teachers will check email from home and will be able to respond to student and parent questions. Teachers will be available during the day to: clarify directions, answer questions, make suggestions for additional resources, and to explain concepts.

When are teachers available? Teachers will be available from 8:30 to 12 pm. Teachers are available for students via ClassDojo in grades K-5 and all teachers are available via email.

What if the students can't do projects on the Blizzard Bag Days because of child care arrangements? All blizzard bag activities should be able to be completed at whatever location students spend their day. However, arrangements can be made with the teacher for students to complete the projects on weekends, evenings, or other scheduled time off from school.