



DIOCESE of FALL RIVER

# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ALLIANCE

## **Structured Alternative Learning Day Policy**

**In cases of weather-related or other school cancellation, Diocesan high schools/middle 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 policy has been adopted by 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 secondary and post-secondary 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 digital (or other) instruction via articles, textbooks, videos, chat or other teacher-provided input. The SAL sub-committee has shared ‘best practices’ guidance to administrators and teachers.

#### Performance

Students complete performance tasks associated with teacher-provided instruction. The SAL sub-committee has shared ‘best practices’ guidance to administrators and teachers.

#### Communication

Teachers and students will be available to interact via discussion thread, chat, email, or other digital conversation tools. The method of electronic communication and the time frame for teacher availability is determined by the teacher and noted in the assignment directions. The SAL sub-committee has shared ‘best practices’ guidance to administrators and teachers.

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 enact SAL days only where power outages are expected to be minimal or non-existent.
- 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 day's learning outcomes and be completed within a reasonable timeframe, e.g. the normal duration of the class period.
- Teachers shall not require students to be online at a particular time (However, students may be required to participate in online communication).
- Teachers shall be available to students via email and/or forum or chat. Such availability will be at designated times.
- Students shall review instruction and produce performance tasks by the subsequent class meeting, unless otherwise directed.
- Performance tasks shall be assessed and graded by teachers.