



INSTRUCTION

Religious-related Activities and Practices

The board recognizes that views and opinions regarding the relationship of the schools and religion are diverse. While community opinions are important in shaping policy, the board must give primary credence to the United States and Washington State constitutions and the decisions made by the respective courts when establishing guidelines for making decisions regarding religious-related activities and practices. The board further accepts the declaration of the State Board of Education that "all students ... possess the constitutional right to the free exercise of religion and to have their schools free from sectarian control or influence." To this end, the board hereby establishes the following guidelines to preserve the rights of all students within the framework of the respective constitutions.

- A. Instruction about religious matters and/or using religious materials shall be conducted in an objective, neutral, non-devotional manner and shall serve a secular educational purpose.
- B. A student may decline to participate in a school activity that is contrary to his/her religious convictions.
- C. A student may distribute religious literature under the same conditions that other literature may be distributed on the campus provided that such distribution does not intrude on the operation of the school.
- D. Material and/or announcements promoting religion may not be distributed by non-students or on behalf of groups or individuals who are not students.
- E. Religious services, programs or assemblies that contain elements advocating or disparaging religion shall not be conducted in school facilities during school hours or in connection with any school sponsored or school related activity. Religious groups may rent school facilities under the policy providing for facilities rental. Activities of such groups shall be clearly separated from school sponsored activities so that the school district does not support or appear to support the establishment of religion.
- F. Musical, artistic and dramatic presentations which have a religious theme may be included in course work and programs on the basis of their particular artistic and educational value or traditional secular usage. They shall be presented in a neutral, non-devotional manner, be related to the objective of the instructional program, and be accompanied by comparable artistic works of a nonreligious nature.
- G. A student, upon the request of a parent, may be excused to participate in religious instruction for a portion of a school day provided the activity is not conducted on school property. (Credit shall not be granted for such instruction.)

- H. Upon receipt of a parent(s) request, a student shall be excused from attending school in observance of a religious holiday.
- I. Students may wear religious attire or symbols provided they are not materially and substantially disruptive to the educational process.
- J. An invocation or benediction which is neutral as to any particular religious belief may be honored as part of commencement exercises in the spirit of accommodating cultural and community traditions.
- K. There shall be no school sponsorship of baccalaureate services. Interested parents and students may plan and organize baccalaureate exercises provided that the service is not promoted through the school and staff, and student participation is voluntary.

Students, parents and staff who are aggrieved by practices or activities conducted in the school or district may register their concern with the building principal or district superintendent.

Cross References:	Board Policy	2153	Non-curriculum-related Groups
		3122	Excused and Unexcused Absences
		3220	Freedom of Expression
		3223	Freedom of Assembly
		3224	Student Dress
		4220	Complaints Regarding Staff or Program
		4237	Contests, Advertising and Promotions
		4235	Public Performances
		4260	Use of School Facilities

Legal References:	U.S. Constitution	First Amendment, Fourteenth Amendment
	Wash. Constitution	Art. I, § 11
	Wash. Constitution	Art. IX, § 4 and Art XXVI
	RCW 28A.600.025	Student rights of religious expression -- Duty of superintendent of public instruction to inform school districts
	WAC 392-400-227	School district rules defining students' religious rights

Adoption Date: December 19, 1988
References Updated: December, 2007