

## **SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AS RELATED TO RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

Holidays throughout the school year should be recognized for their educational value in the District's schools. The staff should be aware of and sensitive to the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds of the children in the community. **The purpose of this policy is to promote mutual understanding and respect for the many beliefs and customs stemming from our community's religious, racial ethnic and cultural heritage.**

**The North Merrick Board remains impartial with regard to religion and seeks neither to advance nor inhibit religion. Students, faculty and administration are reminded of the pluralism of religious beliefs and are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.**

### **Curriculum Based Lessons/Units**

Activities related to the observance of holidays are to be conducted in an unbiased and objective manner. Holiday study should be used as a vehicle to encourage students to learn more about the beliefs of various religions and cultures, thus educating students about the need for tolerating and accepting others' religious views and/or cultural practices.

The New York state grade level social studies curriculum should be utilized as a guideline for the extent and depth of lesson and unit development in this area.

### **Religious Music**

Religious music relevant to the curriculum may be included as part of an educational program within the classroom setting. Songs stemming from religious worship or which are liturgical in nature shall not be performed.

Holiday programs may include music representation of the season which does not promulgate the tenets of any particular religion. The purpose of these programs is to foster enjoyment, understanding and feelings in order to promote better interpersonal relationships and express the various social and cultural aspects of the holiday season.

### **Decorations**

Schools shall be permitted to use decorations which are secular and seasonal in nature and do not have any religious connotations. Attention should be given to creating an environment where a child's beliefs are respected and appreciated. **Christmas** Trees and Menorahs, as well as secular symbols of other cultures, may be displayed. A balance should be maintained.

**Adoption: February 1993**

**First Reading (Revised): September 9, 2014**

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