

## INSTRUCTION

### Religious Related Activities or Practices

The following guidelines shall be followed to preserve the rights of all students within the framework of the Washington State and United States 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. Student religious groups may use 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 non-religious nature.
- G. Upon receipt of a parent(s) request, a student shall be excused from attending school in observance of a religious holiday.
- H. Students may wear religious attire or symbols provided they are not materially and substantially disruptive to the educational process.
- I. 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.

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- J. The observance and promotion of the religious significance of Christmas or any holiday must be limited in order to avoid an unconstitutional promotion of, or indoctrination in, religion:
1. Symbols of Christmas as a traditional holiday are permissible, e.g., Christmas trees, reindeer, wreaths, Santa Claus, etc.
  2. Christmas carols with a religious connotation (e.g., contain the Lord's name) are permissible if they have been part of the traditional non-church observance of the Christmas season and are presented with traditional non-religious Christmas carols such as "White Christmas," "Frosty the Snowman," "Jingle Bells," etc.
  3. A religious Christmas carol which has a particular musical virtue may be presented when accompanied by a non-religious carol.
  4. Schools will avoid displaying symbols which depict the religious nature of Christmas, e.g., nativity scenes.
  5. Schools should avoid singing parodies of traditional Christmas carols.

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.

Amended: July 2023