

RELIGIOUS RELEASE TIME AND CREDIT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Release Time

Pursuant to Indiana law, when the parent of a student provides written notice, the principal shall allow the student to attend a school for religious instruction that is conducted by a church, association of churches, or an association that is organized for religious instruction and incorporated under Indiana law.

Following receipt of such written notice, the principal shall work in a collaborative manner with the parent or entity offering religious instruction to provide assistance in determining a period or periods for the student to receive religious instruction. An entity offering religious instruction to a student shall work in a collaborative manner with the principal to ensure the period(s) in which the student receives religious instruction are the least disruptive to the student's instructional time.

Written notice for religious release time is only valid for the school year in which it was provided.

The period(s) in which a student receives religious instruction under this section may not exceed 120 minutes per week for elementary school students or the equivalent of one (1) elective course per week for secondary school students.

An entity providing religious instruction under Indiana law and this policy shall maintain attendance records and allow inspection of these records by attendance officers; and may not be supported, in whole or in part, by public funds.

An entity that provides religious instruction to a student under this policy must agree to conduct an expanded criminal history check and expanded child protection index check for each of the entity's employees or contractors likely to have direct, ongoing contact with students of the school corporation in the scope of the individual's employment or contract services, and to hold liability insurance coverage for services or transportation provided outside school property.

A student who participates in religious release time shall receive the same attendance credit that the student would receive for attendance in the public school for the same length of time.

Credit for Religious Education

Pursuant to Indiana law, a public secondary school may award academic credit to a student who attends religious instruction if the governing body of the school corporation adopts a policy that allows the awarding of credit. In accordance with Indiana law, the Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District Board of School Trustees adopts the following policy:

1. Classes in religious instruction are evaluated on the basis of purely secular criteria in substantially the same manner as similar classes taken by a student at a nonpublic secondary school who transfers to a public secondary school are evaluated to determine

whether the student receives transfer credit for the classes. Secular criteria may include the following in addition to other established secular criteria:

- A. The number of hours of classroom instructional time.
 - B. A review of the course syllabus that reflects the course requirements and materials.
 - C. Methods of assessment used in the course.
 - D. Whether the course is taught by a licensed teacher.
2. The decision of whether to award academic credit shall be neutral as to, and not involve any test for, religious content or denominational affiliation.
 3. A student who attends religious instruction under this policy shall first seek to use a time period during a student instructional day (as defined in IC 20-30-2-2) that is not devoted to student instructional time to attend religious instruction. If a student is not able to attend religious instruction at a time other than during student instructional time, the student may only be released to attend religious instruction in accordance with the Religious Release Time provision of this policy. See Form C175-E for more information.

A student may be awarded a total of not more than two (2) elective academic credits under this policy.

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Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District

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