

RELIGIOUS-BASED EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Policy Code:

3510

The curriculum of the school system will be based on the current statewide instructional standards. The board and the school administrators will exercise their authority to select appropriate materials and teach the curriculum in an effective manner. The board supports the free exercise of religion and prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion. While students are expected to participate in all required courses and school activities, the board recognizes that at times a student or a student's parent or guardian may object to a specific classroom discussion, activity, or assigned reading. This policy is designed to provide students, parents, and guardians with a process for seeking a religious-based exemption for a student from a specific classroom discussion, activity, or assigned reading. To the extent practicable, students, parents, and guardians will be notified in advance of upcoming classroom discussions, activities, and assigned readings.

A student, parent, or guardian may petition to exempt the student from participation in a specific classroom discussion, activity, or assigned reading that the student, parent, or guardian believes would impose a substantial burden on the student's religious beliefs or invade the student's privacy by calling attention to the student's religion. Any request for exemption should be submitted to the superintendent or designee in accordance with the following guidelines.

1. The request must be in writing.
2. The request must specify the discussion, activity, or reading and explain how it would impose a substantial burden on the student's religious beliefs or invade the student's privacy by calling attention to the student's religion.
3. The request may suggest a proposed alternate activity or study.

The superintendent or designee shall review the request in accordance with any constitutional or statutory standards and shall accommodate the request as required by law. If accommodation is not required by law, the superintendent or designee may choose to accommodate such a request after weighing factors, such as the interest of the child, the impact on other students, and the availability of alternative activities or materials. An appeal of the decision may be made through the student grievance procedure.

If a student is excused from a classroom discussion, activity, or assigned reading, the student will be provided an alternative activity or assignment aligned with the standard course of study.

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; N.C. Const. art. I, § 14; G.S. 115C-36, -47(33b)

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Curriculum Development (policy 3100)

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