

# Liberty Union High School District

## Board Policy

Classification: Instruction

Policy No. BP 6141.2

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Effective 3/3/86

Subject: Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs

Revised 9/24/25

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The Governing Board recognizes that students' education would be incomplete without an understanding of the role of religion in society. As appropriate for a particular course, teachers may objectively discuss the influences of various religions, using religious works and symbols to illustrate their relationship with culture, literature or the arts. The Board expects that such instruction will identify principles common to all religions and foster respect for the diversity of religions and customs in the world and be consistent with the adopted instructional materials and state standards, as applicable.

In order to respect each student's individual right to freedom of religious practice, religious indoctrination is forbidden in public schools. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that instruction about religion does not promote or denigrate the beliefs or customs of any particular religion or sect, nor that a preference be shown for one religious viewpoint over another. Teachers and other district staff shall be highly sensitive to their obligation not to interfere with the religious development of any student in whatever tradition the student embraces, and treat all religions and religious conviction, including nonbelief, with fairness and respect.

Staff shall not coerce students in prayer or other religious activities as part of their official duties. However, staff are not prohibited, when acting in their private capacity, from encouraging students' participation in personal prayer or other religious activity. Additionally, staff shall not prohibit or discourage any student from praying or otherwise expressing the student's religious belief so long as this does not disrupt the classroom or other school sponsored activity.

Students may express their beliefs about religion in their homework, artwork, and other class work if the expression is germane to the assignment. Such work shall be judged by ordinary academic standards, relevance, and other legitimate pedagogical objectives.

While teaching about religious holidays is a permissible part of the educational program, celebrating religious holidays is not allowed in the district. District-sponsored programs shall not be, nor have the effect of being, religiously oriented or a religious celebration. School and classroom decorations may express seasonal themes that are not religious in nature. The use of religious symbols that are part of a religious holiday is permitted as a teaching aid or resource provided that such symbols are displayed as an example of cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and temporary in nature.

Classroom methods in instruction about religion shall not include religious role-playing activities or simulated religious devotional acts.

Music, art, literature or drama programs having religious themes are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in an objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage.

District schools shall not prohibit religious activities if the same or similar non-religious activities are permitted.

When required by law, the district shall notify parents/guardians that they may, via written request, opt their students out of instruction on the basis of their religious beliefs as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation. Students whose parents/guardians opt them out of such instruction may be offered an alternative activity of similar educational value. Additionally, a student shall not be subject to disciplinary action, academic penalty, or other sanction on the grounds that the student was opted out of such instruction.

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### Policy Reference Disclaimer:

These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

<u>State</u>	<u>Description</u>
Ed. Code 38130-38139	Civic Center Act
Ed. Code 46014	Absences for religious purposes
Ed. Code	Excuse from instruction due to religious beliefs
Ed. Code 51511	Religious matters properly included in courses of study
Ed. Code 51930-51939	California Healthy Youth Act

  

<u>Federal</u>	<u>Description</u>
20 USC 4071-4074	Equal Access Act
20 USC 6061	School prayer
20 USC 7904	School prayer

  

<u>Management Resources</u>	<u>Description</u>
California Department of Education Publication	Appendix F history social science framework for California public schools
Court Decision	Mahmoud v. Taylor (2025) 606 U.S. __ (2025 WL 1773627)
Court Decision	Florey v. Sioux Falls (1980) 619 F.2d 1311
Court Decision	Fellowship of Christian Athletes v. San Jose Unified School District Board of Education (2023) 82 F.4th 664
Court Decision	Kennedy v. Bremerton (2022) 142 S.Ct. 2407
Court Decision	Cole v. Oroville Union High School District (2000, 9th Cir.) 228 F.3d 1092
Court Decision	Lassonde v. Pleasanton Unified School District (2003, 9th Cir.) 320 F.3d 979
Court Decision	Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971) 403 U.S. 602
U.S. Department of Education Publication	Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer and Religious Expression in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, May 2023
Website	CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services
Website	California Department of Education
Website	CSBA
Website	U.S. Department of Education

  

<u>Cross References</u>	<u>Description</u>
0410	Nondiscrimination In District Programs And Activities
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
1325	Advertising And Promotion
1330	Use Of School Facilities
1330	Use Of School Facilities
5113	Absences And Excuses
5113	Absences And Excuses
5121	Grades/Evaluation Of Student Achievement
5121	Grades/Evaluation Of Student Achievement
5127	Graduation Ceremonies And Activities
5132	Dress And Grooming
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5145.2	Freedom Of Speech/Expression
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6111	School Calendar
6115	Ceremonies And Observances
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6142.8	Comprehensive Health Education
6142.8	Comprehensive Health Education
6142.93	Science Instruction
6142.94	History-Social Science Instruction
6143	Courses Of Study
6143	Courses Of Study
6144	Controversial Issues
6145.5	Student Organizations And Equal Access
6145.5	Student Organizations And Equal Access
6145.8	Assemblies And Special Events
6154	Homework/Makeup Work
6161.11	Supplementary Instructional Materials
6176	Weekend/Saturday Classes