Recognition of Religious Beliefs & Customs

Adopted: 12/08/1998 **| Last Revised:** 10/17/2023 **| Last Reviewed**: 10/17/2023

Staff shall make every effort to schedule one-time events, such as examinations, school-sponsored trips, special laboratories, picture-taking days, and class parties, to minimize conflicts with major religious holidays of all faiths.

Programs and Exhibits

When school programs and exhibits are in any way related to instruction about religion or religious holidays, the following guidelines shall be observed:

1. The principal or designee shall ensure that school-sponsored programs are presented in an objective manner, consistent with Board policy

2. The principal or designee shall be kept informed of the program's development

3. Program or exhibit planners shall take into consideration the diverse religious faiths represented in the community, student body and staff

Teaching of Material Which Has Religious Significance

The following options will be available to students whose religious beliefs are in conflict with the subject matter being taught.

1. The student will be excused from attending the class while that topic is under study with no penalty of any kind

2. The students will attend the class but no examination about the topic will be required of the students. No penalty for not taking the examination will be assessed

3. The student may be given an alternative assignment or task

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.

Legal References:

STATE

EDUCATION CODE

38130-38139 Civic Center Act

46014 Absences for religious purposes

51240 Excuse from instruction due to religious beliefs

51511 Religious matters properly included in courses of study

51930-51939 California Healthy Youth Act

FEDERAL

UNITED STATES CODES

20 USC 4071-4074 Equal Access Act

20 USC 6061 School prayer
20 USC 7904 School prayer

MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATION
Appendix F history social science framework for California public schools

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATION
Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer and Religious Expression in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, February 2026

COURT DECISION
Mahmoud v. Taylor (2025) 606 U.S. (2025 WL 1773627)
Florey v. Sioux Falls (1980) 619 F.2d 1311
Fellowship of Christian Athletes v. San Jose Unified School District Board of Education (2023) 82 F.4th 664
Kennedy v. Bremerton (2022) 142 S.Ct. 2407
Cole v. Oroville Union High School District (2000, 9th Cir.) 228 F.3d 1092
Lassonde v. Pleasanton Unified School District (2003, 9th Cir.) 320 F.3d 979
Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971) 403 U.S. 602

WEBSITES
CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services https://legalservices.csba.org/#
California Department of Education http://www.cde.ca.gov/
CSBA http://www.csba.org/
U.S. Department of Education http://www.ed.gov/

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