

## RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

1. Students may be granted excused absences when the school schedule conflicts with religious holidays. A student may be required to submit written notification.

A student should not suffer adverse or prejudicial consequences from an excused absence; should be allowed a reasonable opportunity to make up work missed due to the absence; will not be subject to penalty scholastically nor to attendance records due to absences incurred due to religious observances. A sincere attempt will be made not to schedule assemblies, tests, and other special school events on religious holidays.

2. It is constitutional to teach about religion in the public schools. Teaching about religion must be clearly distinguished from teaching religion, which amounts to religious indoctrination and practice, which is clearly prohibited in public schools.
3. Religion may be presented as part of a secular educational program, with the goal of teaching students about the role of religion in the historical, cultural, economic, and social development of the United States and other nations and instilling understanding, tolerance, and respect for a pluralistic society. Religion must be discussed in a neutral, objective, balanced, and factual manner. The curricula approached may not be devotional or doctrinal nor have the effect of promoting religion.
4. Any discussion of religion should be very sensitive to the beliefs of the different students in the class. Staff should make every effort so that no student will feel that his or her own beliefs or practices are being questioned, infringed upon, or compromised. A student should never be ostracized.
5. If religion is addressed, great care must be taken to discuss and address minority as well as majority religion.
6. Students may be excused from classes to which they object on religious grounds. Alternative independent study projects should be developed in cases when this occurs.
7. Holidays: Teaching about holidays with both a religious and secular basis may be constitutional if it furthers a genuine secular program of education, is presented objectively, and does not have the effect of advancing or inhibiting religion.

8. Music, art, literature, and drama with religious themes may be included in teaching about holidays, provided they are presented in a religiously neutral, prudent, and objective manner, and relate to sound secular educational goals.
9. Religious music or drama may be included in school events which are part of a secular program of education. The content of school assemblies, concerts, and programs must be primarily secular, objective, and educational, and not focus on any one religion or religious observance. Such events must not promote or denigrate any particular religion, serve as a religious celebration, or become a forum for religious devotion. Student participation should be voluntary.
10. The school staff must be sensitive to "inclusion" not "exclusion" of students holding diverse religious viewpoints.
11. Students may express their religious beliefs in the form of reports, homework, and artwork and such expressions are constitutionally protected. Teachers may not reject or correct such submissions simply because they include a religious symbol or address religious themes.