

Instruction

Separation of Church and State

In accordance with the mandate of the Constitution of the United States prohibiting the establishment of religion, it is the policy of the Orange Board of Education that the schools will, at all times, be neutral in matters of religion.

This requirement of neutrality need not preclude nor hinder the schools in fulfilling their responsibility to educate students to be tolerant and respectful of religious diversity. The district also recognizes that one of its educational responsibilities is to advance the students' knowledge and appreciation of the role that religion has played in the social, cultural, and historical development of civilization.

Therefore, the district will approach religion from an objective, curriculum-related perspective, encouraging all students and staff members to be aware of the diversity of beliefs and respectful of each other's religious and/or non-religious views. In that spirit of respect, students and staff members should be excused from participating in activities that are contrary to religious beliefs unless there are clear issues of compelling public interest that would prevent it.

Holiday Celebration and Observances

The building Principal is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy. Pertinent information will be included in the student, parent, and staff handbooks.

Absence for Religious Observation

Student absences for religious observances shall be excused. Furthermore, such absences should not prohibit receipt of attendance related awards nor impact student grades or participation in school events.

Recognition of Religious Holidays

The objective study of religious holidays provides a natural opportunity to promote an appreciation for and respect of diversity. Learning opportunities should extend beyond Judeo-Christian beliefs and reflecting the diversity of global cultures.

1. Recognition of religious holidays will not dominate the educational program and must support curricular objectives.
2. All religions must be afforded equal dignity, but none advanced nor disparaged.
3. Decorations, which are part of custom, that have no direct religious meaning (Christmas tree, Menorah) may be displayed. Tree decoration should not promote religion nor require student participation.
4. Programs should focus on seasonal rather than religious themes, inclusive of concerts, enrichment programs and Parent-Teacher Organization sales.
5. Meaningful and supervised instruction will be made available to any student whose parent/guardian does not wish said student to participate in a particular program.

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Holiday Celebration and Observances (continued)

6. Performances, which recognize holidays, must be of an artistic nature, not religious. Religious music must not dominate any school program. Program selections should not, by their nature, exclude students from participation.
7. The Cafeteria staff will consider religious dietary restrictions when planning menus (non-meat meals, limiting pork to one menu choice).
8. Parents may exclude their children from programs involving the recognition of religious holidays or if the celebration is in conflict with family beliefs. A written request for exclusion should be sent to the Principal.

New Policy:
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