

Policy 6141.2: Recognition Of Religious Beliefs And Customs

Original Adopted Date: 2/14/2024

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.

In order to respect each student's individual right to freedom of religious practice, religious indoctrination is clearly forbidden in the public schools. Instruction about religion shall not promote or denigrate the beliefs or customs of any particular religion or sect, nor should a preference be shown for one religious viewpoint over another. Staff members shall be highly sensitive to their obligation not to interfere with the religious development of any student in whatever tradition the student embraces.

Staff shall not endorse, encourage or solicit religious or anti-religious expression or activities among students during class time. As part of their official duties, staff shall not lead students in prayer or other religious activities. However, staff shall not prohibit or discourage any student from praying or otherwise expressing his/her religious belief as long as this does not disrupt the classroom.

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.

While teaching about religious holidays is a permissible part of the educational program, celebrating religious holidays is not allowed in the public schools. School-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.

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. 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 are temporary in nature.

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.

State

Ed. Code 38130-38139

Ed. Code 46014

Ed. Code 51511

Description

[Civic Center Act](#)

[Absences for religious purposes](#)

[Religious matters properly included in courses of study](#)

Ed. Code 51938

[Right of parent/guardian to excuse from sexual health instruction](#)

Federal

20 USC 4071-4074

Description

Equal Access Act

20 USC 6061

School prayer

20 USC 7904

School prayer

Management Resources

Court Decision

Description

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 in Public
Elementary and Secondary Schools, February 2003

Website

[CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services](#)

Website

[California Department of Education](#)

Website

[CSBA](#)

Website

[U.S. Department of Education](#)

Cross References

Code

0410

Description

[Nondiscrimination In District Programs And Activities](#)

0450

[Comprehensive Safety Plan](#)

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[Comprehensive Safety Plan](#)

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[Advertising And Promotion](#)

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[Use Of School Facilities](#)

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[Use Of School Facilities](#)

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[Absences And Excuses](#)

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[Absences And Excuses](#)

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[Grades/Evaluation Of Student Achievement](#)

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[Grades/Evaluation Of Student Achievement](#)

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[Graduation Ceremonies And Activities](#)

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[Immunizations](#)

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[Immunizations](#)

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[Freedom Of Speech/Expression](#)

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[Freedom Of Speech/Expression](#)

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6142.8	<u>Comprehensive Health Education</u>
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6142.93	<u>Science Instruction</u>
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6143	<u>Courses Of Study</u>
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6144	<u>Controversial Issues</u>
6145.5	<u>Student Organizations And Equal Access</u>
6145.5	<u>Student Organizations And Equal Access</u>
6145.8	<u>Assemblies And Special Events</u>
6154	<u>Homework/Makeup Work</u>
6161.11	<u>Supplementary Instructional Materials</u>
6176	<u>Weekend/Saturday Classes</u>