

MIDDLETON-CROSS PLAINS AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual

323.2

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Policy

The District's commitment to multicultural education and the appreciation of diversity requires sensitivity in planning the District's calendar of school activities. Students may be absent from school for religious reasons. Also, any student with a conflict between an academic requirement and any religious observance must be given an alternative means of meeting the academic requirement. Teachers and administrators will not schedule assessments, reviews or special events (field trips, assembly programs, athletic contests, after-school activities, open houses) on the following holy days that may fall on school days:

Islamic	<i>Eid al-Fitr Muslim day of feasting to celebrate end of Ramadan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The observances of Muslim holy days begin in the morning and students may also be involved in observances around sunset and early morning.• Students need silent and convenient places to perform daily prayers at certain times during the school day.• Some observances require fasting and/or dietary restrictions.
	<i>Eid al-Adha Muslim holy day known as the Feast of Sacrifice</i>	
Jewish	<i>Rosh Hashanah Jewish New Year</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observances begin at sunset the evening before the holy day and continue through sunset the day of. Students, staff and community may be involved in evening observances the evening before, as well as the evening of the holy day.• Some observances require fasting and/or dietary restrictions.• Some students may refrain from doing school projects that occur on evenings when the observance begins after sunset.
	<i>Yom Kippur Jewish Day of Atonement</i>	
	<i>Passover (first two days and last two days)</i>	
Christian Traditions	<i>Christmas Celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ Easter Celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Although conflicts with the school calendar rarely arise in connection with the direct observance of the Christmas holiday (usually falling during Winter Break) or Easter holiday (observance typically occurs on a Sunday) within the Christian faith communities, numerous other observances within the various Christian traditions may result in requests for school-related accommodations.

This policy provides the opportunity for all students to participate in school activities without compromising their religious beliefs. The District will accommodate requests related to holidays other

than those listed above on an as-needed basis. Athletic contests missed due to religious observances do not affect the student's ability to earn a varsity letter or receive post-season awards. Students will not be penalized for missing an event or practice due to a religious observance listed above.

Procedure

Respect for religious and cultural differences is fundamental to American democracy and contributes to harmonious living in a free society. These holiday guidelines are intended to reflect the District's commitment to provide an inclusive environment where religious and cultural diversity are acknowledged and appreciated. It is not the responsibility or intention of the schools to celebrate religious observances.

1. School activities associated with religious observances will be in the context of teaching about traditions, will have educational purposes and will neither inhibit nor promote religion.
2. Teachers may allow appropriate student-initiated sharing of family customs and traditions with the guidance normally present in any classroom-sharing situation. Teachers will provide opportunities for the students to express their own feelings and views in ways that fit the context of the classroom experience.
3. School activities and instruction associated with religious observances will involve a balanced perspective. Musical programs that include selections from religious traditions must withstand the test of the following questions:
 - What is the purpose of the activity/instruction? Is the purpose secular in nature, that is, studying music of a particular composer's style or historical period?
 - What is the primary *effect* of the activity/instruction? Is it the celebration of religion? Does the activity either enhance or inhibit religion? Does it invite confusion of thought or family objections?
 - Does the activity/instruction involve excessive *entanglement* with a religion or religious group, or between the schools and religious organizations? Financial support can, in certain cases, be considered an entanglement.

Since music with a sacred text or of a religious origin (particularly choral music) constitutes such a substantial portion of music literature and has such an important place in the history of music, it should and does have an important place in music education.

4. Classroom activities, concerts, presentations or programs will show sensitivity to the beliefs of all students, will aim for inclusivity, and will treat all students' beliefs with respect and dignity. Activities will be appropriate to the age and developmental level of the students.
5. School classroom celebrations must be in the context of the curriculum, should involve limited instructional time and, cannot be associated with a religious observances.
6. Displays or decorations will include a balanced perspective and will have an educational purpose.
7. Schools may have multicultural presentations or programs following the guidelines set forth above.

LEGAL REF.: Sections 118.01(2)(b)7 Wisconsin Statutes
118.13
118.15(1)(a)
118.155
120.13
Wisconsin Constitution, Article X-Section 3
PI 41, Wisconsin Administrative Code
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
U.S. Department of Education Guidance Document Regarding Constitutionally
Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools

CROSS REF.: 321, School Calendar
333, Parent Rights and Access to the Curriculum and Instructional Materials
371.1, Non-Curriculum Related Student Groups
381, Controversial Issues
411, Equal Educational Opportunities
431, Student Attendance

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