

GRANITE FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

INSTRUCTION

POLICY 6150: RELIGIOUS-RELATED ACTIVITIES OR PRACTICES

The board recognizes that views and opinions regarding the relationship of the school and religion are diverse. While community opinions are important in shaping policy, the board must give primary credence to the United States and Washington State constitutions and the decisions made by the respective courts when establishing guidelines for making decisions regarding religious-related activities and practices. The board further accepts the declaration of the State Board of Education that "all students ... possess the constitutional right to the free exercise of religion and to have their schools free from sectarian control or influence." To this end, the board hereby establishes the following guidelines to preserve the rights of all students within the framework of the respective constitutions.

- A. Instruction about religious matters and/or using religious materials shall be conducted in an objective, neutral, non-devotional manner and shall serve a secular educational purpose.
- B. A student may decline to participate in a school activity that is contrary to his/her religious convictions.
- C. If noncurriculum-related student groups are permitted to meet on school premises immediately before or after school hours, students shall be permitted to meet to discuss political, philosophical or other issues provided such group meetings are student-initiated, student-managed and in compliance with policy 2153 authorizing such meetings.
- D. A student may distribute religious literature under the same conditions that other literature may be distributed on the campus provided that such distribution does not intrude on the operation of the school.
- E. Material and/or announcements promoting religion may not be distributed by non-students or on behalf of groups or individuals who are not students.
- F. Religious services, programs or assemblies shall not be conducted in school facilities during school hours or in connection with any school sponsored or school related activity. Religious groups may rent school facilities under the policy providing for facilities rental. Activities of such groups shall be clearly separated from school-sponsored activities so that the school district does not support or appear to support the establishment of religion.
- G. Musical, artistic and dramatic presentations that have a religious theme may be included in course work and programs on the basis of their particular artistic and educational value or traditional secular usage. They shall be presented in a neutral, non-devotional manner, be related to the objective of the instructional program, and be accompanied by comparable artistic works of a nonreligious nature.
- H. A student, upon the request of a parent, may be excused to participate in religious instruction for a portion of a school day provided the activity is not conducted on school property. (Credit shall not be granted for such instruction.)
- I. Upon receipt of a parent(s) request, a student shall be excused from attending school in observance of a religious holiday.
- J. Students may wear religious attire or symbols provided they are not materially and substantially disruptive to the educational process.
- K. Commencement exercises shall be free from sectarian influence, including invocations and benedictions.

L. There shall be no school sponsorship of baccalaureate services. Interested parents and students may plan and organize baccalaureate exercises provided that the service is not promoted through the school and staff and student participation is voluntary.

Students, parents and staff who are aggrieved by practices or activities conducted in the school or district may register their concern with the building principal or district superintendent.

Legal References: U.S. Constitution First Amendment, Fourteenth Amendment
Wash. Const. Art. IX, § 4, Wash. Const. Art. I, § 11; WAC 392-400-227; RCW 28A.600.025

Cross References:

- Policy 6120: Religious Assemblies
- Policy 6130: Religious Holiday Observances
- Policy 6140: Religion and Curriculum
- Policy 7020: Use of Buildings and Equipment
- Policy 5044: Dress Code

ADOPTED: APRIL 27, 2000

CODE CHANGE ONLY NOVEMBER 15, 2007