

Board Policy

Code No. 604.5

RELIGION BASED EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Board of Directors recognizes the existence of various religious beliefs and acknowledges the American tradition of separation of church and state.

Parents who wish to have their child excluded from a school program because of religious beliefs must inform the building principal. The Board of Directors authorizes the administration to allow the exclusion if it is not disruptive to the educational process and it does not infringe on a compelling state or educational interest. Further, the exclusion must not interfere with other school district operations.

In notifying the building principal, the parents shall abide by the following:

- The notice shall be in writing;
- The objection shall be based on religious beliefs;
- The objection shall state which activities or studies violate their religious beliefs;
- The objection shall state why these activities or studies violate their religious beliefs; and
- The objection shall state a proposed alternative activity or study.

The building principal shall have discretion to make this determination. The factors the building principal shall consider when a student requests to be excluded from a program or activity because of religious beliefs include, but are not limited to, staff available to supervise a student who wishes to be excluded; space to house the student while the student is excluded; available Superintendent-approved alternative course study or activity while the student is excluded; numbers of students who wish to be excluded; whether allowing the exclusion places the school in a position of supporting a particular religion; and whether the program or activity is required for promotion to the next grade level or for graduation.

Students who are allowed to be excluded from a program or activity which violates their religious beliefs shall be required to do an alternate supervised activity or study.

Legal Reference: *U.S. Const. amend. I.*
Lee v. Weisman, 112 S.Ct. 2649 (1992).
Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 U.S. 602 (1971).
Graham v. Central Community School District of Decatur County, 608 F.Supp. 531 (S.D. Iowa 1985).
Iowa Code §§ 256.11(6); 279.8 (2009).

Cross Reference: 603 *Instructional Curriculum*

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