

RELIGIOUS-BASED EXCLUSION FROM A SCHOOL PROGRAM

Parents/guardians who wish to have their child excluded from a school program because of religious beliefs must inform the building principal. The board authorizes the administration to allow the exclusion if it is not disruptive to the educational program 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/guardians will abide by the following:

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

The building principal will have discretion to make this determination. The factors the principal will 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;
- * building principal approved alternative course of study or activity while the student is excluded;
- * number 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 will 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 (2013).

Cross Reference: 603 Instructional Curriculum
606.2 School Ceremonies and Observances

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