

IKDA: Religious Objections to Activities

(See IF, IKB, and IKD)

Parents have the fundamental right to direct the religious upbringing of their children. This policy affirms that right and ensures that the district handles all opt-out requests respectfully and consistently. Schools and staff shall remain viewpoint-neutral and shall not grant or deny requests based on agreement or disagreement with a family's beliefs.

Parents shall be notified in advance and given the opportunity to opt out before their student participates in classroom discussions, activities, or instruction addressing topics that are known to be or are reasonably ascertainable to be contrary to the religious beliefs of parents. Teachers shall provide parents access to instructional materials, lesson plans, or presentations upon request. The intent of this provision is to ensure transparency, uphold parental rights, and maintain trust between the school and families.

A parent or guardian (or a student eighteen years of age or older) may request that the student be excused from participating in activities for religious reasons. The parent, guardian, or adult student must complete the district opt-out form for religious objections, stating the specific activity, the portion of the curriculum in which the activity exists, and the reasons for the request. The request may be granted, or denied, or partially granted and partially denied.

A parent or guardian seeking to opt-out their child from activities contrary to the child's religious teachings must complete the district's Activity Participation Opt-Out Form regarding religious objections which is available at the District Administrative Center. Parents desiring to opt-out their children from activities due to religious reasons must return the completed and signed form to the principal. The form must be submitted within a reasonable amount of time prior to the scheduled activity in order to allow time for the principal to consider the request. The completed form shall be kept on file in the school office, and the superintendent shall receive a copy.

The principal shall review the request and determine whether the request should be granted or denied. The principal shall notify the parents of the decision within a reasonable amount of time after the request is submitted. If the parents are dissatisfied with the principal's decision, they may appeal in writing to the superintendent or designee.

If the opt-out request is granted, the school may provide an appropriate alternative assignment or academic activity aligned with the same learning goals, without penalty to the student.

Teachers and administrators shall ensure that all approved opt-out requests are honored and properly documented. Records of opt-out requests shall be maintained by the principal and shared with appropriate instructional staff to ensure compliance. The district shall annually inform families of their opt-out rights in the student handbook and on the district website.

Opt-out requests must be submitted annually and are valid only for the school year in which they are submitted.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to allow a parent or guardian to exempt a student from entire academic subjects or from instruction required by law. This policy applies only to participation in specific activities or materials that directly conflict with a student's or family's sincerely held religious beliefs.

Approved: 07.12.04

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