

Board Policy JEDC – Religious Expression Days

This policy allows student to be excused from school during a school year for up to three days for Religious holidays.

The parent/guardian must provide the school principal with a written notice of the specific dates the student will be absent within 14 days of the start of the school year. For students enrolling after the school year begins, the written notice must be received within 14 days of enrollment.

Below are some of the major religious holidays, festivals and religious observations that may be approved. This list is nonexhaustive:

Eid, Good Friday, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Passover.

Please review the policy for further information.

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION DAYS

The Board reasonably accommodates the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of individual students with regard to all examinations or other academic requirements and absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief systems in accordance with State law.

Students in grades kindergarten through 12 will be excused for up to three religious expression days per school year to take holidays for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief systems, or participate in activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church or other religious or spiritual organization. No academic penalty will be imposed on a student who is absent for such reasons in accordance with this policy and all requirements of State law. The number of hours for which a student is absent on an approved religious expression day is not considered in the calculations for determining absence hours for the purpose of parental notification under Ohio Revised Code 3321.191(C)(1).

Students are provided with alternative accommodations with regard to examinations or other academic requirements due to an absence for a religious expression day in accordance with the following procedures:

1. The parent/guardian must provide the school principal with written notice of up to three specific dates for which alternative accommodations are requested within 14 days of the start of the school year, or within 14 days after the date of enrollment if transferring or enrolling into the District after the start of the school year.
2. The principal will approve the request without inquiry into the sincerity of the student's religious or spiritual belief system. The principal may contact the parent/guardian whose signature appears on the request to verify the request; if the parent/guardian disputes signing the request, the request may be denied.
3. If the approved absence creates a conflict, the principal requires the appropriate classroom teachers to schedule a date and time for an alternative examination or other academic requirement that may be before or after the originally scheduled time and date.

Students are permitted to participate in interscholastic or other extracurricular activities on days they are absent for approved religious expression days.

The District develops a nonexhaustive list of major religious holidays or festivals for which a religious expression day will not be unreasonably withheld or denied. The list is nonexhaustive and may not be used to deny a student's request for accommodation for a holiday or festival of the student's faith or religious or spiritual belief system that does not appear on the list. The list will include a statement to this effect. A student will not be denied a request under this policy for a religious expression day because it is not included on the list.

This policy and the list of holidays developed by the District are posted in a prominent location on the District website.

Further information about this policy can be provided by:

Title: Norwayne Local School District Superintendent
Address: 350 S Main St, Creston, OH 44217
Phone number: 330-435-6382

The Board directs the Superintendent/designee to annually convey this policy to parents and guardians, including a description of the general procedure for requesting accommodations in a manner deemed appropriate by the Superintendent/designee. Each time the policy is posted, printed or published it will include a statement that the holiday list is nonexhaustive and may not be used to deny accommodation for a student for a holiday or festival of the student's faith or religious or spiritual belief system that does not appear on the list.

The Board believes that complaints and grievances are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible. If a parent, guardian or student has any grievance with regard to implementation of this policy, the staff member about whom there are concerns should be given the opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problems. If the complaint is not resolved at that level, proper channeling of complaint is to the principal or other immediate supervisor, the Superintendent and then the Board.

[Adoption Date: October 28, 2024]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3320.04
ORC 3321.191

CROSS REFS.: JED - Student Absences and Excuses
JEDA - Truancy
IGD - Cocurricular and Extracurricular Activities