



Religious Accommodations Administrative Procedure 1.A.120

1.0 School Administration
1.A. Foundations

Board Governance Policy Cross Reference: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10

Legal Reference: *Public School Act*, Section 262

Date Adopted: February 2019

Date Amended:

Religious accommodation in Manitoba's school divisions and schools will be granted within a context of respect for human rights, welcoming of diversity, and safe schools policies.

School administration should attempt to reasonably accommodate staff and students and to be aware of the religious observances of their staff, students, and community when planning special school activities, examination schedules, school concerts, parent interview dates, field trips, and other events.

Students

The Public School Act, Section 262, establishes that "A child may also be absent from school on any day regarded as a holy day by the church or religious denomination with which the child is affiliated." (See **1.B.40 Attendance**)

Students are required to present written notice from their parents/guardians, specifying the religious holy days for which they will be absent from school. This notice should be made enough in advance (preferably at the beginning of the school year) to ensure that scheduling for major evaluations (e.g. tests, assignments, examinations) takes the holy days into consideration.

Student handbooks, parent newsletters, and school announcements should include information about religious holy day procedures.

In the case of an absence for religious holy day reasons, major tests or exams should be rescheduled for the student.

Schools should be aware of the **food requirements/fasting and dietary restrictions** of the members of the various religious groups that are present in their school communities.

This awareness may relate to menus provided by food and catering firms, breakfast, lunch and snack programs in elementary schools, and food and refreshments for special occasions and events.

Special consideration is necessary with regard to overnight outdoor education activities, as well as to field trips.

Students who are fasting may need exemptions from physical education/sports (due to concerns related to dehydration) or from swimming (due to concerns about ingesting water).

School administrators and teachers have an important role to play in the diverse religious beliefs and practices of students and staff in their schools.

Nevertheless, it is not the role or responsibility of school administrators and teachers to monitor a child's compliance with religious obligations or to regulate such practices as performing daily prayers, wearing a head covering, etc.

Staff

Evergreen School Division staff may request a leave of absence for major religious holy days observed by the staff member and designated as a day of required obligation by the staff member's religion.

Any requests must be made directly to the Superintendent in writing no later than September 30th for the current school year.

Each request will be considered on an individual basis and if granted, may be with or without pay.