



**Administrative Regulation
3067 - Religion in Education**

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Preamble

Section 3(1) of the School Act says:

“All education programs offered and instructional materials used in schools must reflect the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta, promote understanding and respect for others and honour and respect the common values and beliefs of Albertans.”

The Board of Trustees of the Calgary Board of Education requires the Chief Superintendent to operate in compliance with all legislation and the Board of Trustees Governance Policies and Executive Limitations.

The Board of Trustees’ Ends Policy E-5: Character sets out the following expectation for students:

“Each student will possess the character to do what is right, act morally with wisdom, and balance individual concerns with the rights and needs of others.”

The Board of Trustees’ Executive Limitations Policy EL-6: Instructional Programming says:

“The Chief Superintendent shall not fail to ensure that the district’s instructional program achieves the Board’s Ends policies for individual student learning.

Accordingly, the Chief Superintendent shall not fail to:

10. Assure that no program emphasizes a particular religion, notwithstanding the School Act definition of alternative programs.”

The Calgary Board of Education accepts children of all faiths and creeds, and it must show understanding and respect for differences arising from differences in faith, while encouraging inquiry and discussion in the continuing search for truth, which is the hallmark of a growing, rational being.

The Calgary Board of Education endorses teaching students about religion not the teaching of religion.

- Teaching about religion** **1** The educational objectives of teaching about religion are to assist each student to develop:
- (a) an understanding of and respect for the beliefs of others;
 - (b) a knowledge and understanding of the influence of religion in such areas as politics, economics, history, the arts, literature, music;
 - (c) a knowledge and understanding of ethical standards, their derivation and application; and
 - (d) a sound basis for making moral decisions, with an intelligent awareness of the effect of such decisions on oneself and on others, and with full knowledge of the expectations of society.
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- Religion in an instructional context** **2(1)** At the Calgary Board of Education, religion is a subject for study either embedded in existing units of study or in the Alberta Education Program of Studies.
- (2) Religious activities which constitute public acts of worship and/or the propagation of dogma are not permissible within an instructional context.
 - (3) Teachers are encouraged to involve students in an age appropriate objective discussion of religious, moral and spiritual topics whenever such topics become relevant in the curriculum.
 - (4) Where religion is an aspect of existing units in social studies and other subjects, it must be given adequate treatment.
 - (5) An open and age appropriate discussion on moral and ethical questions by teachers and students is encouraged in both formal and informal learning situations.
 - (6) Additional information is found in: "The Role of Religion in the CBE, Questions and Answers".
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- Religious holidays** **3(1)** Nothing in this regulation is meant to suggest any reduction in, or cancellation of Christmas and Easter celebrations at a school.
- (2) The principal must make reasonable efforts to acknowledge major

religious holidays observed by the school community. Major religious holidays are noted in multi-faith calendars and principals may wish to consult with their school community about holiday observance.

Student personal religious expression in school

- 4(1)** Principals may authorize student-initiated informal voluntary group opportunities for student personal religious expression provided that:
- (a) there is a voluntary teacher supervisor for religious clubs/prayer groups;
 - (b) prayer rooms are under the supervision of a teacher; and
 - (c) group student religious expression or group prayers are not conducted in a public, disruptive or confrontational manner.
- (2) Individual students may
- (a) pray publicly, or
 - (b) say grace or prayers before meals, or
 - (c) say prayers before tests or exams,
- as long as these activities are done quietly in a non-disruptive and non-confrontational manner.

Enforcement of religious/conscientious obligations

- 5(1)** Enforcement of religious/conscientious obligations is the responsibility of parents, not teachers.
- (2) For this reason, principals and teachers must not enforce a student's compliance with religious observances or requirements.
- (3) However, a parent may request that their student be excused for participation in certain activities that are contrary to their religious beliefs or conscientious practices.

Religious objects

- 6(1)** Students may wear faith-based jewellery, objects, and articles of clothing at school and during school sponsored activities, as long they are worn discretely, do not have a proselytising message, and meet the requirements of Administrative Regulation 6010 - Standards of Dress and Grooming.
- (2) Faith-based articles are not considered weapons unless they are used to

inflict or threaten to inflict bodily harm on a person or to intimidate a person, in which case the student's behaviour must be addressed under Administrative Regulation 6001 - School Discipline.

Guest speakers

- 7** Teachers may invite guest speakers to assist with study about religion as long as
- (a) the teacher first determines that the guest speaker understands that they are presenting an instructional, objective and scholarly focus to the historical period and religion being studied, and that they are not making a faith-based presentation; and that
 - (b) the requirements of Administrative Regulation 1014 - School Participation in Programs - Outside Speakers are met to the satisfaction of the school principal.

References

- Legal References:**
 - School Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. S-3, preamble and section 3
- Governance Policy References:**
 - E-5: Character
 - EL-1: General Executive Constraint
 - EL-6: Instructional Program
- Administrative Regulation References:**
 - 1014 - School Participation in Programs - Outside Services
 - 3079 - Aboriginal Education
 - 6001 - School Discipline
 - 6010 - Standards of Dress and Grooming
- Other References:**
 - The Calgary Board of Education: "The Role of Religion in the CBE, Questions and Answers"
 - For Multi-Faith Calendar information consult the School Information Package
- Contact Person:**
 - Director, Educational Support Services