



IMDC - RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND DISPLAYS/TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

The diversity of religions and cultures constitutes one of the great strengths in our school/community society. It is the concern of the Poudre R-1 schools that students, teachers, parents, and others in the community achieve a mutual understanding and respect for the various religious and cultural groups. In the interest of achieving this goal, the following guidelines are suggested.

1. The Poudre R-1 schools shall be religiously neutral. The schools shall avoid the promotion of any specific religion and shall guard against deliberate or inadvertent preference for any religion.
 - a. No religious or worship services shall be conducted by the schools.
 - b. Religious exhibits or displays shall be shown only as an integral part of some curricular area such as art, music, history, or literature for informational purposes and with no intent to indoctrinate.
 - c. Religious music may be presented for its musical content but not as part of a devotional exercise or service.
 - d. Significant religious holy days shall be taken into consideration in scheduling school activities.

When conflicts arise between an individual student's religious observances and the school's schedule of classes or activities, the religious obligations take precedence. The absence of students from classes or activities because of religious observances shall be excused and assistance shall be provided in arranging for make up of any missed school work without penalty or embarrassment.

- e. The teacher should avoid any connotative reference to the religion or religious background of an individual in handling discipline, attendance, or other school routines. Religious stereotyping must be avoided.
2. The schools should seek ways to achieve sensitivity to varying religious observances.

Instruction should include the understanding of religions and cultures and their similarities, diversities, histories, and contributions. Such teaching should be factual, and any doctrinal impact should be avoided.

- a. In this effort, teachers are the key. Their manner and sincerity in seeking greater religious and cultural understanding are crucial to success.
 - b. Instruction should acknowledge the multicultural society. Focus should be on the similarities and differences of religions and cultures without treating differences as novelties.
 - c. In providing information, teachers should draw upon community resources. Students should not be expected to represent a group unless they are comfortable doing so.
3. The Poudre R-1 schools and each individual should work to bring about better religious and cultural understanding.
- a. The curriculum and instruction division should provide assistance with religious and cultural education. Particular help should be made available in the fields of music, art, social studies, language arts, and bilingual education. The district's media center should be a resource.
 - b. Principals shall be encouraged to lead inservice activities at their sites. The emphasis of the inservice training should be focused upon the crucial role of the classroom teacher both as a behavioral example and as the instructional leader.
 - c. Above all, a meaningful effort toward achieving a sensitive understanding of people regardless of religion, culture, or race demands a dedication of each individual to that end.

Current practice codified 1994

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CROSS REFS:

IFC, Multiculturalism

JH, Student Absences and Excuses