

INSTRUCTION

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

Commemoration of special days and events shall be arranged to the end that the effective observation of these occasions is a definite and valuable part of the school program.

Religious Subjects

It is the policy of the Board of Education that no religious belief or non-belief shall be promoted by District 93 or its employees, and none should be disparaged. Instead, all school district personnel shall encourage all students and staff members to appreciate and be tolerant of each other's religious views. School district personnel shall encourage understanding and mutual respect among students and parents whether it involves race, culture, economic background or religious beliefs.

District 93 recognizes that one of its educational goals is to advance each students' knowledge and appreciation of the role that our religious heritage has played in the social, cultural and historical development of civilization. School activities and instruction relating to religion or religions, if conducted in an objective, historical and non-devotional manner, may be permitted. However, in the spirit of tolerance, students and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs.

Religious Holidays

Those holidays that have a religious and/or secular basis may be observed in District 93 schools. In addition, the historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination. Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday. The use of religious symbols such as a cross, Menorah, crescent, Star of David, creche, symbols of Native American religions or other symbols that are a part of a religious holiday such as Christmas, Easter, Passover, Hanukkah, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving and Halloween, is permitted as a teaching aid or resource provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature. The school district calendar shall be prepared so as to minimize conflict with religious holidays of all faiths.

Any student who is absent from school on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day for the reason that the student is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirements on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day, because of the observance of a religious holiday or because the tenets of the student's religion forbid secular activity on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day, shall be excused from any examination or any study or work assignments on such days or at such times.

The Board may, at its discretion, excuse the absence of a student on any day by reason of the observance of a religious holiday provided the parent or guardian of such student shall have given three (3) days advance notice of the child's intended absence to the principal of the school attended.

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Staff members shall make available to any student who is absent because of the observance of a religious holiday an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirement which is missed. No special fees shall be charged to the student for making available to the student such equivalent opportunity.

No student excused from attending school in accordance with this policy shall be required to submit a written excuse for such absence after returning to school.

Display of the Flag

The flag of the United States of America shall be raised above each schoolhouse and at other appropriate places during all school sessions and on all legal school holidays, weather permitting. The flag shall be raised before the opening of school and taken down at its close every day.

Flag at Half-Staff

The following procedures shall be observed:

Flying at half-mast, halfway up the staff, a national flag is a signal of mourning. The flag should be hoisted to the top of the staff for an instant before being lowered to half-mast. It should be hoisted to the peak again before being lowered for the night. By tradition, the national flag flies at half-mast only when the entire country mourns. It is not lowered to half-mast for occasions of local mourning. If local flags are flown at half-mast, the national flag may be flown at full mast with them. Citizens may salute and pledge allegiance to the flag when it flies at half-mast.

In the United States, the U.S. flag flies at half-mast (1) for 30 days after the death of the President or a former President; (2) for ten days after the death of the Vice-President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and (3) from the day of death until burial of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a former Vice-President, a member of the Cabinet, or a secretary of the army, navy, or air force. In addition, the flag flies at half-mast in the District of Columbia from the day of death until burial of a United States Senator or Representative, a territorial delegate, or the resident commissioner from Puerto Rico. Flags in a state or territory fly at half-mast from the day the governor dies until burial.

LEGAL REF.: Illinois School Code, Sec. 10-22.15, 26-1, 26-2a, and 26-2b (105 ILCS 5/10-22.15, 5/26-1, 5/26-2a, and 5/26-2b); and World Book Encyclopedia.

Adopted: May 12, 1983
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