

NEW - Religious Observance Policy

DRAFT

Overview

The Vision of the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough as articulated in its strategic plan states that our belief in appreciating the diversity, differences and dignity of all members of the community and that providing a comprehensive educational experience to support and nurture all students' intellectual, creative, social and emotional development and physical well-being are shared core values. It is our belief that students be provided time to freely participate in their religious activities without conflict and that differences in practices will not be uniform or subject to evaluation and opinion.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151C, Section 2B, states:

Any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or denominational educational or vocational training institution, who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study or work requirement which he may have missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section.

In support of our core values and MGL 151C, s. 2B, the District provides the following guidelines to our faculty and school community:

Faculty & Students

1. Teaching faculty shall make every effort to accommodate all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or other required attendance; provided, five days advanced notice of the scheduled conflict is provided.
2. A student will be given two school days to make up any new classroom work introduced during on the day of a religious observance.
3. Assignments due prior to the absence or within one day of the absence will be due as scheduled.

Parents & Students

1. Any student absent due as a result of a religious observance will be marked “excused absence” for the length of the observation when a bona fide note, signed by a parent/guardian indicating the reason for such absence is presented and approved by the Principal’s Office. Whenever possible, students should notify faculty at least one week (5) school days in advance of an absence for such purposes.
2. Any student will be provided with two school days per excused absence to make-up any work assigned during the excused absence consistent with the attendance policy in the school’s student handbook and code of conduct. Any assignment assigned at least one week in advance of this absence or due during this absence is due one day after his/her return.

Education for All

The District is committed to respecting the diversity and appreciates the importance of providing information that will create a climate of sensitivity and knowledge regarding the religious beliefs and practices of students in our schools. Time will be devoted in our professional development calendar to educate our teachers.