

## **RELIGIOUS-BASED EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

*Policy Code:*

**3510**

The curriculum of the school system will be based on the current statewide instructional standards. The Board of Education and the school administrators will exercise authority to select appropriate materials and teach the curriculum in an effective manner. The board supports the free exercise of religion and prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion. While students are expected to participate in all required courses and school activities, the Board of Education recognizes that at times parents may object to a specific school course or activity. This policy is designed to provide parents with a process for seeking a religious-based exemption for their child from a required school course or activity.

If parents have religious-based objections to certain programs, parents may petition to exempt their child from participation. Any request for exemption should be submitted to the superintendent in accordance with the following guidelines.

1. The request must be in writing.
2. The request must specify the activities or studies that violate their religious beliefs and explain how their religious beliefs are violated by the activity.
3. The request may suggest a proposed alternate activity or study.

The superintendent shall review the request in accordance with any constitutional or statutory standards and shall accommodate the request when required to do so by law. If accommodation is not required by law, the superintendent or designee may choose to accommodate such a request after weighing factors, such as the interest of the child, the impact on other students, and the availability of alternative activities or materials. An appeal of the superintendent's decision may be made to the board through the student grievance procedure.

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE TO BEGIN THE SCHOOL DAY**

The Cherokee County Board of Education authorizes the observance of a moment of silence at the beginning of each day in all grades in the school system. The moment of silence may not exceed one minute in length, must be completely unstructured and free of any influence from any source and no other activities will be allowed during that time.

Legal References: U.S. Const. amend. I; N.C. Const. art. I, § 14; G.S. 115C-36, -47

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Curriculum Development (policy 3100)

Adopted: July 15, 1999

Amended: September 12, 2013