

RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

The Superintendent of Schools will provide for releasing students from schools for the purpose of religious instruction in accordance with the laws of New York State and the regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

Work will continue in the classes from which these pupils are released, and pupils attending religious instruction during released time are expected to make up the work missed. However, no tests are to be scheduled during released time hours.

The following are the times for released time instruction established for the Lawrence Public Schools:

Elementary Schools – Wednesdays
Secondary Schools – Thursdays

Pupils will be released for religious instruction for a maximum of one hour prior to the close of the school day in accordance with a time schedule developed by the district.

Adopted by B.O.E.: April 20, 2004

RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION REGULATION

Every school day is a day of regular instruction. If school is open, the instructional program will continue without interruption.

Staff members should know which days are excusable for religious observance. The Commissioner of Education has recognized the following as days of religious observance which may be excused in the attendance register upon receipt of a parent's signed statement:

1. Feast of the Elevation of the Cross
2. First and last two days of Sukkoth
3. Feast of the Immaculate Conception
4. Feast of the Epiphany
5. Eastern Christmas
6. Feast of the Circumcision and New Year
7. Ash Wednesday
8. Feast of the Ascension
9. Shabuoth (Two days)
10. Feast of All Saints

Specific Guidelines

Some of these holidays have more than one date as celebrated by Greek and Syrian Orthodox Churches and all other Eastern Orthodox Churches. School is usually closed on the other holidays recognized by the Commissioner, including Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Monday and the first and last two days of Passover.

Building Principals and teachers should not allow special attention to be drawn to coming holidays. In the classroom, attention should not be drawn to the approach of a holiday unless it is the subject of study related to the course content. Actions which may make a child feel that they must come to school or that they must stay at home should be avoided. These include teacher comments as to the appropriateness of any mode of student observance of the holiday, polling the students to find out who and how many will be absent (or present), and automatically presenting advanced assignments to cover the day(s) when absence is expected. (Giving advance assignments may be interpreted as encouraging students to stay out of school or as putting pressure on students who will remain home to complete homework assignments on days when religious obligation might preclude such activity.)

Parents and pupils should know in advance that make-up of work is required after any absence. Everyone involved should understand the policy. Everyone should be familiar with the procedures to be followed by a pupil in making up work after any absence. These procedures should be set forth in writing and distributed by the Building Principal to each teacher and each pupil, each year. Make-up work missed should be scheduled to avoid undue pressure of homework on the day or two following a student's return to school.

Operating School on the Day of Religious Observance

1. Continue with regular instruction
2. Each teacher present will follow a normal schedule of teaching classes, so that when classes are combined for instructional purposes, the teachers of each of the classes so combined will work as a team or a panel.
3. Hire substitutes as needed.
4. Examinations and other similar major evaluative activities will not be scheduled on these days.

Adopted by B.O.E.: April 20, 2004