

**CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES****I. Ceremonies and Observances**

The Deerfield Community School District recognizes that it is important to advance the students' knowledge and appreciation of the role that our religious heritage has played in the social, cultural, and historical development of civilization. The following guidelines provide school personnel with a framework by which religious holidays can be incorporated into the school program within the limitations of the First Amendment.

1. The several holidays throughout the year which have a religious and secular basis may be observed in the school district providing they do not promote any one religion.
2. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays will be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.
3. Music, art, literature, and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of 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 that particular holiday.
4. The use of religious symbols such as a cross, menorah, crescent star of David, crèche, or other symbols that are a part of a religious holiday are permitted as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature.
5. The school district's calendar may be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths.
6. There shall be no prayer or other religious exercise included as part of the district's graduation ceremony or other school ceremony.

**II. Abstinence Provision**

The school district recognizes the need to foster understanding and mutual respect among students, parents, and school personnel, whether it involves race, culture, economic background, or religious beliefs. In that spirit of tolerance, students and staff members should be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs unless there are clear issues of overriding concern that would prevent it.

Parent requests to excuse the student are required and written documentation from the pastor of the church may also be required. Students choosing not to participate in practices contrary to their religious beliefs may not be penalized in any manner. They should be given appropriate alternative educational activities.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Wisconsin State Constitution  
Article I, Section 18.23  
Article X, Section 3  
U.S. Constitution  
Wisconsin Statutes Sections 118.33  
121.02 (1) (p)  
PI 18, Wisconsin Administrative Code

