



INSTRUCTION: Schedules

Student Prayer and Religious Literature: Attendance

I. Policy Statement

- A. No employee of the Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) may authorize or require the reading of religious literature or the saying of prayer as a devotional exercise in a public school of Baltimore County.
- B. Daily school opening exercises may include United States government approved patriotic exercises and/or a moment of silent meditation.
- C. Any student or teacher wishing to be excused from participation in any opening exercises shall be excused.
- D. No attempt shall be made to prevent a student from engaging in voluntary prayer or reading religious literature provided it does not interfere with school activities required of the student.
- E. A student who is absent to observe his/her religious holiday shall not be ruled ineligible for the awarding or recognizing of perfect attendance and shall be coded as a lawful absence.

II. Definition

Religious Holiday – A day or days noted on the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) student testing calendar when state primary test administrations cannot be scheduled.

III. Compliance

- A. A student absence to observe his/her religious holiday shall be coded as a lawful absence when the absence has been approved as outlined in Board Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5120, *Absences and Excuses*.
- B. A student who is absent from class to observe his/her religious holiday shall be permitted the opportunity to make up homework, classwork and any missed assignment when the student's absence has been approved in accordance with Board Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5120.

- C. An approved absence for a religious holiday shall not negatively affect the awarding or recognizing of perfect attendance.

IV. Implementation

The Board directs the Superintendent to implement this policy.

Legal References: 20 U.S.C. 7904, *School Prayer*
COMAR 13A.08.01.03, *Lawful Absence*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5120, *Absences and Excuses*
Board of Education Policy 5320, *Student Organizations and Clubs*
Board of Education Policy 5600, *Students' Responsibilities and Rights*
Board of Education Policy 6301, *School Calendar*
Board of Education Policy 6307, *Patriotic Exercises*

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