

TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides both freedom of religion and prohibition against the establishment of religion by the government. The Constitution of North Dakota guarantees the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship without discrimination or preference. The Apple Creek School District, as a political subdivision of the State of North Dakota, will be neutral with respect to religion and will not engage in any activity that advocates or disparages religion. The Apple Creek School District will treat the values of all religions (within the educational context) in an open, forthright way, without advocating or disparaging any religious belief.

Factual and objective teaching about religion, the impact of religion, and religious-based ideas and ideals may be included in classroom instruction in relation to the district's educational goals and student learning objectives. It is inherent to the teaching of history, literature, social studies, intercultural education, human relations, art and music to include what various religions and religious movements have contributed to these fields.

Classroom displays and decorations pertaining to religion or religious symbol(s) or holiday(s) should relate to instruction that is based solely upon the objective study of that subject. No public school funds, property, or facilities will be used for a decorative display of religious symbols. This will not infringe upon the rights of students to wear religious symbols in a manner that is not materially and substantially disruptive to the educational process.

Religious musical selections may be included on the basis of their particular musical and educational value and/or traditional secular usage and be presented in concert with other musical works that are nonreligious in nature. Musical pieces should be selected and performed as works of art, not as acts of veneration. Program notes or oral narration may be provided. These notes should establish an objective context for the performance by giving such information as historical data, identification of the particular group for which the number has significance, and technical characteristics worthy of note.

Any staff member, citizen, or student who believes that a particular school program may have violated this policy may submit a complaint to the Principal in accordance with the procedures established by Board policy for citizen complaints.

Cross Ref: Policy BIB/KAGA Patron Complaints
Policy GBDBB Displays Including Religious Objects or Documents

Legal Ref: Engel v. Vitale, 1962 U.S. Supreme Court
Abington v. Schempp, 1963 U.S. Supreme Court

POLICY ADOPTED: 23 Apr 07
POLICY AMENDED: 21 Aug 09