

## **661 RELEASE TIME**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to recognize and provide guidelines in accordance with state law for parents who wish to have their children be released from the public school to receive religious instruction.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The Compulsory Attendance Law (Minn. Stat. § 120A.22) provides that the parent or guardian of a child may ask for their child to be excused from public school in order to receive religious instruction.

### **III. LEGAL AUTHORITY AND LIMITATIONS**

- A. The Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. §120A.22, subd. 12, provides authority for public schools to excuse and release students from school for religious instruction upon request of a parent/guardian with the following limitations and restrictions:
1. The release time may not exceed in the aggregate 3 hours in any week.
  2. The request for release time must be on the School District approved form (Request For Religious Instruction Release Time) signed by the student's parent or guardian, and the form shall include a provision whereby the School District is held harmless for claims related to the release of students from school. The form shall be valid for the school year, unless it is revoked, in writing, by the parent/guardian.
  3. Religious instruction is defined under Minn. Stat. §120A.22, subd. 12 as "a school for religious instruction conducted and maintained by some church, or association of churches, or any Sunday school association incorporated under laws of this state, or any auxiliary thereof."

4. Religious instruction may not take place in a School District building or property, and it must not, in whole or in part, be conducted and maintained at public expense.
5. The School District may not provide transportation for students released from school for religious instruction.

#### **IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

- A. A Request For Religious Instruction Release Time form must be submitted to the building principal which will excuse the student from attendance at school on the days and for the time period specified in the form for the school year. Any absence by the student beyond the specified days and times will be considered an unexcused absence. (Appendix A)
- B. Students must comply with all school procedures to be released from school, including sign-out and sign-in procedures.
- C. Instruction and school activities will not cease during a student's release time, and students may be required to make-up any missed work, as with other absences.

#### **V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ENTITIES PROVIDING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION**

- A. Entities accepting Release Time students for religious instruction must record the students in attendance, including arrival and departure time, and submit an attendance report each day to the attendance clerk at the school of record for each child in attendance.

This Policy, including Release Time procedures and the impact on the School District educational programs, shall be reviewed by the School Board at least annually.

#### ***Legal References:***

Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 (Compulsory Instruction)

***Cross References:***

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Alexandria Public Schools – No. 206

Alexandria, Minnesota