

Book	Policy Manual
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Title	Copy of RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY
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5223 - RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

The Board of Education desires to cooperate with those parents who wish to provide for religious instruction for their children but also recognizes its responsibility to enforce the attendance requirements of the State.

Students shall be provided "released time" during the school day to attend a course in religious instruction conducted by a private sponsoring entity that is provided off of District property. Students will be excused and not considered absent from school during released time, provided that the following requirements are met: ~~entity off District property, provided that the following requirements are met, such students will not be considered absent when the:~~

- A. student's parent or guardian gives consent in writing;
- B. sponsoring entity maintains attendance records and makes them available to the District;
- C. sponsoring entity provides and assumes liability for the student; and
- D. student assumes responsibility for any missed school work.

Transportation of students to and from released time instruction is the ~~complete~~ sole responsibility of the sponsoring entity, the parent, guardian, and/or student. The Board, its members, and employees are immune from liability for any injuries arising from transportation to and from released time instruction. Further, no Board funds will be expended for, and no District personnel shall be involved in the provision of religious instruction.

The District shall collaborate with a sponsoring entity to identify a time for religious instruction to be offered during the school day.

At times identified by the District during the school day, released time for religious instruction will be permitted as follows:

- A. For elementary and middle schools students, one (1) period(s) per week.
- B. For high school students, the equivalent time to attend one (1) unit(s) of high school credit per week.

Students shall not be excused from a core curriculum subject course to attend Released Time released time instruction.

Private entities proposing to provide religious instruction during released time as set forth herein shall be required to provide the District with criminal records checks for any and all of their instructors and volunteers providing a released time course in religious instruction. Criminal records checks will be at no cost to the Board and any private entity proposing to provide religious instruction during the released time must provide updated documentation of such checks if/when their staffing changes. The District will not release students to the private entity for religious instruction release time if any criminal background check indicates conviction of an offense which would preclude an individual from employment in an Ohio public school district and/or should the Board determine that the private entity did not complete a satisfactory criminal background check on any subsequent/new instructor or volunteer. Criminal background check documentation must be provided to the Board upon request.

Any private entity providing religious instruction during the school day must agree that it will not provide participating students with any materials, snacks, clothing, candies, trinkets, or other items for their return to school. The District will not release students for religious instruction release time to any private provider that fails to adhere to this prohibition.

Staff members shall not promote or discourage participation in release time programs for any religious instructional program. Nothing herein shall constitute an endorsement of religion or infringe upon an individual's First Amendment rights.

Revised 8/4/16

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Legal

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Attorney General's Opinion 88-001

Last Modified by Regina Jutz on September 25, 2025