

NEW PROPOSED POLICY

1.14 RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In accordance with the *Florida Student and School Personnel Religious Liberties Act*, the School Board of Clay County, Florida (“Board”) hereby adopts and incorporates herein the Florida Department of Education’s *Model Policy on Religious Expression in Public Schools* as follows:

It is the policy of the Board that Clay County District Schools (“District”) will not discriminate against a student, parent, or school personnel on the basis of a religious viewpoint or religious expression.

A. *Student Expression of Religious Viewpoints*

1. The District will treat a student’s voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject in the same manner that a school district treats a student’s voluntary expression of a secular viewpoint.
2. A student may express his or her religious beliefs in coursework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free from discrimination. A student’s homework and classroom assignments shall be evaluated, regardless of their religious content, based on expected academic standards relating to the course curriculum and requirements.
3. A student may not be penalized or rewarded based on the religious content of his or her work if the coursework, artwork, or other written or oral assignments require a student’s viewpoint to be expressed.

B. *Religious Clothing, Jewelry, and Accessories*

A student may wear clothing, accessories, and jewelry that display a religious message or symbol in the same manner and to the same extent that secular types of clothing, accessories, and jewelry that display messages or symbols are permitted to be worn.

C. *Students Engaging in Religious Activities and Expression at School*

1. A student may pray or engage in religious activities or religious expression before, during, and after the school day in the same manner and to the same extent that a student may engage in secular activities or expression.
2. A student may organize prayer groups, religion clubs, and other religious gatherings before, during, and after the school day in the same manner

and to the same extent that a student is permitted to organize secular activities and groups.

D. Employees Engaging in Religious Activities and Expression at School

1. The District may not prevent school personnel from participating in religious activities on school grounds that are initiated by students at reasonable times before or after the school day if such activities are voluntary and do not conflict with the responsibilities or assignments of such personnel.
2. The District must comply with the federal requirements in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits an employer from discriminating against an employee on the basis of religion.

E. Equal Access to School Facilities

1. The District shall give religious groups access to the same school facilities for assembling as given to secular groups without discrimination based on the religious content of the group's expression.
2. A group that meets for prayer or other religious speech may advertise or announce its meetings in the same manner and to the same extent that a secular group may advertise or announce its meetings.

F. Limited Public Forum Required for Student Speakers b

The District is required to establish a limited public forum for student speakers at any school event where a student is to speak publicly. Where student speakers are permitted, the District:

1. Must provide the forum in a manner that does not discriminate against a student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject;
2. Must provide a method based on neutral criteria for the selection of student speakers at school events, activities, and graduation ceremonies;
3. Must ensure that a student speaker does not engage in obscene, vulgar, offensively lewd, or indecent speech; and
4. Must state in oral or written form that the student's speech does not reflect the endorsement, sponsorship, position, or expression of the Board or District. District officials must deliver this required disclaimer at all

graduation events and at any other school/District-sponsored event where student speakers are permitted.

5. Student expression of a religious viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject may not be excluded from the limited public forum.

Nothing herein stated shall be construed or applied in a manner which is inconsistent with the United States Constitution, the Florida Constitution, or applicable state or federal laws.

(Ref. F.S. § 1002.206; *Equal Access Act*, 20 U.S.C. §§ 4701-4704) [Adopted __/__/__]

