

POLICY FAMILY	RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND COSTUMES	291
	<p>It is accepted that no religious beliefs or non-belief should be promoted by the school district or its employees, and none should be disparaged. Instead, the school district should encourage all students and staff members to appreciate and be tolerant of each other's religious views. The school district should utilize its opportunity to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents, whether it involves race, culture, economic background or religious beliefs. In that spirit of tolerance, students and staff members should be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs unless there are clear issues of overriding concern that would prevent it.</p> <p>The Shrewsbury School District recognizes that one of its educational goals is to advance the students' knowledge and appreciation of the role that our religious heritage has played in the social, cultural and historical development of civilization.</p>	
<p>Observations of Religious Holidays</p> <p>Amended 11/20/91</p>	<p>The practice of the Shrewsbury School District shall be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination. 2. Teachers must be alert to the distinction between teaching about religious holidays, which is permissible, and celebrating religious holidays, which is not. Recognition of and information about holidays may focus on how and when they are celebrated, their origins, histories and generally agreed-upon meanings. If the approach is objective and sensitive, neither promoting nor inhibiting religion, this study can foster understanding and mutual respect for differences in belief. 3. Music, art, literature and drama having religious themes or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective manner. 4. The use of religious symbols such as a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, creche, symbols of Native American religions or other symbols that are a part of a religious holiday, such as the Christmas tree, Santa Claus, the Hannukuh dreidle, etc., is permitted as a teaching aid or resource provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature. Among these holidays are included Christmas, Easter, Passover, Hannukah, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving and Halloween. 5. The school district's calendar should be prepared so as to minimize conflicts with religious holidays of all faiths. 6. Any student in an educational institution, who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirement, on a particular day shall be excused from such requirements and shall be provided with a reasonable opportunity to make-up such requirement which he/she may have missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such make-up examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who avails him/herself of the provisions of this section. <p style="text-align: right;">Continued on next page</p>	

<p>Religion in the Curriculum</p>	<p>Religious institutions and orientations are central to human experience, past and present. An education excluding such a significant aspect would be incomplete. It is essential that the teaching about - and not of - religion be conducted in a factual objective and respectful manner.</p> <p>Therefore, the practice of the Shrewsbury School District shall be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The district will include religious literature, music, drama and the arts in the curriculum and in school activities provided it is intrinsic to the learning experience in the various fields of study and is presented objectively. 2. The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature, and history should be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies should never foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs. 3. Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme shall be accommodated. For example, students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech and debate.
<p>Dedications and Commencement</p> <p>Adopted 10/15/86</p> <p>Amended 11/20/91</p>	<p>Traditions are a cherished part of the community life and the Shrewsbury School District expresses an interest in maintaining those traditions which have had a significance to the community. Such ceremonies should recognize the religious pluralism of the community.</p> <p>Therefore, the practice of the Shrewsbury School District shall be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A dedication ceremony should recognize the religious pluralism of the community and be appropriate to those who use the facility. An open invitation should be extended to all citizens to participate in the ceremony. 2. Because the bacallaureate service is traditionally religious in nature, it should be sponsored by agencies separate from the Shrewsbury School District.