

## **SCHOOL DIVISION ORGANIZATION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS**

### **Philosophy and Goals**

#### **Religion**

This regulation supersedes Regulation 1461.

#### **I. PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines for planning and implementing any programs or activities in which religion is a factor.

#### **II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION**

This regulation has been reviewed, and there are no changes at this time.

#### **III. GUIDELINES**

##### **A. Pluralism in American Society**

Fairfax County Public Schools supports intercultural education and recognizes diversity and pluralism in American society. A goal of education should be learning to respect different religious beliefs, convictions, and practices. The school shall develop a climate in which every child can feel comfortable with educational activities containing material about religious cultures and heritages that are not his or her own.

##### **B. Teaching About Religion**

Religion shall not be regarded as a taboo subject but rather shall be dealt with directly and objectively when and where it is intrinsic to the learning experience. Teachers shall not teach religion but shall teach about religion as it relates to other elements of human culture and as it naturally appears in literature, social studies, the sciences, and the arts.

##### **C. Government and Religious Freedom**

As preparation for citizenship, students need to learn the relationship between government and religious freedom in a multifaith society. Administrators and teachers shall frame school activities so that they are consistent with the Constitutional principles that the state (i.e., the school as an agent of the state) must not inhibit free exercise of religion, must not promote religion in general or any specific religion in particular, or must not become entangled with religion or religions.

**D. Days With Religious Significance**

Days with religious significance during the school year may offer educational opportunities for recognition and understanding of different religious and philosophical beliefs. Teachers shall handle these situations with fairness and objectivity so that students learn that differing beliefs are neither strange nor cause for estrangement.

**E. Personal Beliefs of Teachers and Principals**

Teachers and principals need to prepare themselves to handle the teaching about religion so that their own personal beliefs do not lead inadvertently to insensitivity.

**III. ROLE OF HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

In order that school practices and activities reflect sensitivity to the variety of religious beliefs represented in the school community, the principal shall consult with parents, teachers, students, support personnel, and administrators on issues relating to religion and the school. The Human Relations Committee, because its membership is drawn from all these groups, may be used for this purpose.