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SECTION 6

Forms and Procedures

Wherever possible, when a student or family voices an objection to a curriculum based on their religion or creed, there should be a meeting with the parents (or the student if s/he is at least 18 years old) and the teacher and/or administrator to gather more information about the nature of the objection. Very often, small adjustments and modifications can be made to the way the curriculum is delivered so that it respectfully addresses and accommodates the family's concern. (See [Section 5B: Case Scenarios](#) of this document for sample scenarios). In such cases, no exemption is necessary.

Complete exemptions need only be considered when there is no accommodation that is acceptable to the family and they want the student exempted from the curriculum altogether. Where applicable, the family should always be informed of and understand the alternatives to compulsory high school credits.

When a curricular exemption is granted as a religious accommodation, the exemption must be official and proper notification of the exemption must be provided. We suggest that the school forward a letter to the parents confirming that it is going to provide the exemption as per their request, and put a copy of this letter in the document file for that student. Religious reasons would be cited as the purpose for the exemption. This formalizes the process and also allows the child to continue to be exempt in future years at the school or in another school if they were to move. On the report card, an appropriate comment would be provided indicating that the student was exempted from certain course content for religious reasons.

Reasonable Accommodation of Religious Beliefs—Checklist

Reasonable accommodation is oftentimes simple and affordable. With flexibility and good communication, accommodation solutions are usually possible.

An accommodation is “reasonable” when there is an adequate process of accommodation and the effort and measures taken are sufficient. The process used to accommodate a student as well as any resulting accommodation will determine whether reasonable accommodation has been made.

The following checklist is intended to assist administrators in assessing whether a reasonable accommodation has been made.

- The student/parents/guardians were personally consulted and participated in the process of identifying and assessing the accommodation needed (what is the need and how it can best be met).
- The student/parents/guardians provided sufficient proof for the need for accommodation.
- The student/parents/guardians provided actual evidence that lack of accommodation will result in undue hardship.
- The student/parents/guardians provided a reasonable notice of the need for accommodation.
- The student/parents/guardians expressed willingness to accept a reasonable accommodation, even if it is not the one that they most prefer.
- Several approaches to accommodation were explored.

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

- The above approaches to accommodation were in accordance with the principles of dignity and inclusion and did not have a discriminatory effect.
- The above approaches to accommodation were not implemented due to undue hardship based on
 - Health and safety concerns
 - Financial costs
 - Impact on other students (exclusion, segregation, discrimination)

Note: If the administration determined that the requested accommodation would create undue hardship, the student/parents/guardians would be informed of the reasons for the decision and the objective evidence on which it relied.

Request to Substitute Compulsory Credits in Senior Years

Substitution of Credits

Manitoba Education and Training allows principals to substitute one or two compulsory credits where individuals can make a strong case for doing so. Divisions must develop a policy regarding substitution of credits in order for principals to be authorized to substitute credits. Links to the letter sent to schools and the Reporting Form to be used, as well as a template for schools to use to track requests and approvals follow.

Letter to schools: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/gradreq/substituion_credits.pdf (36 kb)

Reporting form: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/gradreq/substitution_form.doc (101 kb)

Template for Requesting and Approving Substitution of Compulsory Credits

School: _____ Date: _____

Student's Name: _____ Student MET #: _____

In accordance with Manitoba Education and Training policies on graduation requirements for Grades 9 to 12, I am requesting the following compulsory credit substitution.

Compulsory Credit: _____

Substitute Credit: _____

I believe this is in my best educational interests for the reasons stated on the back of the page attached to this form.

Student's Signature: _____

Complete if student is under the age of 18 years:

I/We approve of the requested credit substitution.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: _____

For Administration Use

This request is approved

This request is denied

For the following reasons:

Signature of Principal: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Superintendent: _____ Date: _____

Religious Accommodation Discussion Template for Administrators

It is not only recommended but also good practice to respond to a religious accommodation request with an in-person meeting with the parent(s) or guardian(s) and to document the request. This template may act as a guide for discussion and for documenting the request. Please note that a separate template should be completed for each child in the family, and reviewed annually.

School: _____ Date: _____

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Homeroom Teacher(s): _____

Subject Area Teacher(s): _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) in Attendance: _____

Educational Staff in Attendance: _____

Purpose of the Meeting: _____

Questions for Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

In what subject area are you requesting accommodation?

- Music Dance Health and Physical Education
 Language Arts Social Studies Other Subject _____

Do you have other religious accommodation requests (e.g., opening exercises, school and classroom celebrations, field trips, dietary restrictions, school dances)?

Select the appropriate checklist to continue your discussion.

Music: Religious Accommodation Discussion Template for Administrators

When completing this template with parent(s) or guardian(s), refer to

- The relevant description of religious requirements, practices, and observances in Section 2 of this document
- The Manitoba Curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 8—The Arts
- The reporting guidelines referenced in this document

Retain a copy of the completed and signed discussion templates in the document file of the student's records file. Additional information can be stored in a student's folder when the additional information is conducive to the improvement of the instruction of the student.

School: _____ Date: _____

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Music Teacher(s): _____

Questions for Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

What is your understanding of the content of the Music curriculum?

What is the specific area of concern?

Please check one of the following:

Accomodation Request	Instructional Accommodation	Planning Ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is not permitted to blow into an instrument, but may otherwise participate in the Music program.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student may be provided with a percussion instrument (e.g., bassless drum).	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is not permitted to create or perform music but is able to listen to music.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student could be accommodated through withdrawal from all aspects of music creation and performance, and may join the class for all other curricular-based Music programming (e.g., music history, theory, critical analysis).	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is not permitted to create, perform, or listen to music.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student will be provided with an accommodation of full withdrawal from Music.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other—please specify.		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

Signature of Administrator: _____

Dance: Religious Accommodation Discussion Template for Administrators

When completing this template with parent(s) or guardian(s), refer to

- The relevant description of religious requirements, practices, and observances in Section 2 of this document
- The Manitoba Curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 8—The Arts
- The reporting guidelines referenced in this document

Retain a copy of the completed and signed discussion templates in the document file of the student's records file. Additional information can be stored in a student's folder when the additional information is conducive to the improvement of the instruction of the student.

School: _____ Date: _____

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Dance Teacher(s): _____

Questions for Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

What is your understanding of the content of the Dance curriculum?

What is the specific area of concern?

Please check one of the following:

Accomodation Request	Instructional Accommodation	Planning Ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is permitted to explore movement, but is not permitted the following: <input type="checkbox"/> melodic musical accompaniment <input type="checkbox"/> neither melodic nor percussive musical accompaniment	<input type="checkbox"/> The student will be permitted the option of working either without musical accompaniment or with percussive musical accompaniment.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is not permitted to explore movement with a partner, or intentional small group with a member of the opposite sex.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student is permitted to work independently or with a member of the same sex.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is not permitted to perform movement sequences or dances but is able to view, discuss, or research dance.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student could be accommodated through withdrawal from all aspects of dance creation and performance and may join the class for all other curricular-based programming (e.g., history of dance). The student could be set up with an individualized program selected from non-performance related curriculum expectations provided there is appropriate staffing, space, and supervision.	<hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is not permitted to create, perform, view, nor discuss dance.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student will be provided with an accommodation of full withdrawal from Dance.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other—please specify.		

Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

Signature of Administrator: _____

Health and Physical Education: Religious Accommodation Discussion Template for Administrators

When completing this template with parent(s) or guardian(s), refer to

- The relevant description of religious requirements, practices, and observances in Section 2 of this document
- The Manitoba Curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 11—Health and Physical Education
- The reporting guidelines referenced in this document

Retain a copy of the completed and signed discussion templates in the document file of the student's records file. Additional information can be stored in a student's folder when the additional information is conducive to the improvement of the instruction of the student.

School: _____ Date: _____

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Health/Physical Education Teacher(s): _____

Questions for Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

What is your understanding of the content of the Health and Physical Education curriculum?

What is the specific area of concern?

Please check one of the following:

Accomodation Request	Instructional Accommodation	Planning Ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is able to participate in Health/ Physical Education with the exception of any lessons involving sexuality, reproduction, puberty, or pregnancy prevention from the "Growth and Development" expectation.		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is able to participate in Health/ Physical Education with the exception of lessons involving any expectation from "Growth and Development."		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is not permitted to participate in the Healthy Living strand.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student will be provided with an accommodation of full withdrawal from Health.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other—please specify.		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

Signature of Administrator: _____

Social Studies: Religious Accommodation Discussion Template for Administrators

When completing this template with parent(s) or guardian(s), refer to

- The relevant description of religious requirements, practices, and observances in Section 2 of this document
- The Manitoba Curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 10—Social Studies
- The reporting guidelines referenced in this document

Retain a copy of the completed and signed discussion templates in the document file of the student's records file. Additional information can be stored in a student's folder when the additional information is conducive to the improvement of the instruction of the student.

School: _____ Date: _____

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Social Studies Teacher(s): _____

Questions for Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

What is your understanding of the content of the Social Studies curriculum?

What is the specific area of concern?

Please check one of the following:

Accomodation Request	Instructional Accommodation	Planning Ideas
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> The student will be provided with an accommodation of full withdrawal from Social Studies.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other—please specify.		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

Signature of Administrator: _____

School Schedule Considerations

School boards that are committed to recognizing and respecting diversity in general and faith diversity specifically in schools will make every reasonable effort to be aware of the *Significant Faith Days* of its staff, students, and community and take them into consideration when planning special school activities such as examination schedules, school concerts, parent/guardian interviews, graduation ceremonies, professional development opportunities, field trips, and other events.

School boards and schools may wish to refer to [Section 3: Religious Diversity Fact Sheets](#) and [Section 4: Religious Holy Days](#) for more detailed information. For a more complete list of cultural days, holy days, and national days, as well as exact dates, consult one of the following multifaith/multicultural calendars:

- The United States based Anti-Defamation League provides free Calendars of Observances in pdf format “To enhance mutual understanding and respect among the various religious, ethnic and cultural groups” and “as a tool to increase awareness and sensitivity about religious obligations as well as ethnic and cultural festivities that may affect students, colleagues and neighbors.” (See www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education/c/calendar-of-observances.html.)
- A Canadian Multifaith Calendar is published annually by the Multifaith Action Society (MAS) (see <https://multifaithaction.jimdo.com/>). MAS’ primary objective is to promote interfaith/multifaith dialogue, collaboration, and education. The Multifaith Calendar may be ordered from www.multifaithcalendar.org/.
- A number of school boards offer their own multifaith/multicultural calendars. A few examples follow.
 - Diversity in Halton Region—Halton Region: https://www.halton.ca/living_in_halton/diversity_in_halton_region/
 - School Year Calendars—Durham District School Board: www.ddsb.ca/Students/SchoolYearCalendars/Pages/default.aspx
 - Peel District School Board: www.peelschools.org/calendar/schoolyear/Pages/default.aspx
 - Calgary Board of Education: <http://schools.cbe.ab.ca/b267/calendar.htm>

Inclusive School Holiday Considerations: Questions for Reflection and Planning

This resource is a tool for reflection and planning of school and classroom events intended to help make school life as well as the school year as inclusive as possible. Following the questionnaire, a list of useful resources related to this theme are provided.

1. Manitoba's public schools are to be non-sectarian. With this in mind, is the school's curriculum structured so that an opportunity is provided for diverse perspectives and for the study of diverse religions, spirituality, and religious beliefs, without giving preference, privilege, or primacy to; and without indoctrination in, any particular religion or religious belief?
 Yes No Somewhat Not Sure
2. Are the objectives and curricular expectations that correlate to the teaching and learning regarding diversity and holy days such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Diwali; and the holding of a holiday or special concert or community event clearly identified and articulated for all members of the school community?
 Yes No Somewhat Not Sure
3. Are the needs, feelings, and rights of non-Christians respected throughout the school year through a balanced and inclusive recognition of religious holy days and holidays of diverse faiths?
 Yes No Somewhat Not Sure
4. Do students have the opportunity to learn about the most meaningful days of diverse faiths or only about the days that are seen as parallel to Christian holidays? For example, do students learn about Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah, Ramaḍān, and Diwali?
 Yes No Somewhat Not Sure
5. Are developmentally suitable activities planned for children, including exceptional and differently abled students?
 Yes No Somewhat Not Sure
6. Are activities reflective of the lives, cultures, and social contexts of the parents and children of the school community?
 Yes No Somewhat Not Sure
7. Do the school community's activities recognize and demonstrate sensitivity to

- The alienating impact and pressures of the commercialization of holidays on children and families' living in lower socio-economic contexts?

Yes No Somewhat Not Sure

- The sense of exclusion experienced by many non-Christian students and their families during the Christmas season?

Yes No Somewhat Not Sure

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- The Anti-Defamation League has some very useful resources regarding inclusive holiday practices and holiday seasons. See <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/religion-in-public-schools/religious-holidays>.
 - The Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) is a global resource and network of professionals, families, schools, and organizations focusing on inclusive education around the world. The website provides ideas for inclusive celebrations. See <http://inclusiveschools.org/>.

Religious Accommodation Request Flowchart*

A verbal or written request for religious accommodation regarding the Manitoba curriculum is presented to the principal/teacher by the parent/guardian

The teacher, parent/guardian, and principal meet to discuss the request and attempt to reach an agreement on the accommodation(s) to be provided.

Drawing on the accommodating religious diversity guidelines, the participants discuss the following items and document possible accommodations: curriculum outcomes and possible accommodations; alternative assignments; number of minutes missed from class; supervision and parental/guardian role (as applicable), etc.

Note: The religious accommodation agreement may have to be revised

- annually as the student changes grades and schools, and as curriculum changes
- as parental and student needs may change during the year due to new religious affiliations or interpretations

A religious accommodation agreement is made and documented as per divisional board requirements.

Parent/guardian and principal sign off are required on religious accommodations. The signed religious accommodation document is included in the student's file. The parent/guardian is informed that a record of the request and religious accommodation will be kept in their child's file.

Supports: The principal may wish to consult divisional resource persons (e.g., curriculum consultants or coordinators, school support officers, staff development officer, equity/community liaison).

The religious accommodation request is unresolved

A sincerely held religious belief should be accommodated, short of causing undue hardship or violating existing policies. If the meeting does not result in a full resolution, the principal should clarify the nature of the unresolved issues with the parent and indicate that additional information is required.

The principal may seek help from the community liaison coordinators or cultural/religious experts in continuing the process and dialogue with the parent/guardian. The principal will discuss/review/assess the accommodation request with the superintendent.

The superintendent reaches a final decision, taking into consideration the nature, scope, and impact of the requested accommodation on the student's ability to meet the expectations of the Manitoba Education and Training curriculum. Superintendents may consult with internal or external sources to reach a resolution.

The superintendent denies the request for religious accommodation

The superintendent will inform the parent/guardian in writing of the status of their request and, if denied in whole or part, will invite the parent/guardian to contact the superintendent for further explanation or discussion. The parent/guardian will also be informed of their right to pursue internal redress via an appeal of the superintendent's decision to the school division or external redress (e.g., through the Human Rights Commission of Manitoba). The rationale for the denial (in part or in whole) must be documented and placed in the student's file.

Note: In the case of an accommodation that results in full withdrawal from the subject/course and that will affect the assessment and reporting of grades, the parent/guardian must be informed of short-term and long-term implications. The appropriate notation on the report card must read: 'No mark was given due to religious accommodation request made by parent/guardian.' The Department of Education and Training recommends substitutions when there are exemptions requested to specific subject-area curricula.

* Adapted from Peel District School Board, Religious Accommodation Operating Procedure, www.peelschools.org/aboutus/Documents/FINALReligiousAccommodationCOMS8.pdf.