

<p>Kelsey School Division Box 4700 The Pas, MB R9A 1R4</p> <p>Phone: 623-6421</p>	<p>Code: IND</p>
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SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

1. Religious exercises will be conducted in a particular school only after the requirements of The Public Schools Act Section 84(8), the Regulation 554/88, and Manitoba Education and Training Guidelines have been met, a petition has been directed to the Board, and the Board instructs that school to make the necessary arrangements.
2. The Board will, for the purpose of communicating information, advise parents/guardians (at the end of June) of the provisions of The Public Schools Act Section 84(8), the Regulation 554/88, and Manitoba Education and Training Guidelines. Information contained in this policy will also be shared with parents/guardians to facilitate their understanding of the law, and to explain the process necessary to implement religious exercises.

The Board will not, however, take action which would be seen to initiate or prompt implementation of religious exercises. The process must be grass-roots driven, with parents/guardians taking the initiative to have religious exercises implemented. The schools will play no role in the petition process and will act on a petition only when so advised by Board motion.

3. The petition, which must include the names of a minimum of 60 students registered in a particular school, must be submitted to the Division office by the end of September to ensure that implementation procedures get put into place in the schools affected as soon as possible.
4. Once religious exercises are instituted by petition in a school, only those children whose parents/guardians have signed the petition may participate. Schools will advise parents/guardians, through school newsletters or other means, that religious exercises are in place in the school and that those additional parents wishing to have their children participate can do so by notifying the principal. Participation in religious exercises must be an opt-in process.
5. The content of any religious exercise must be defined by those petitioning for it. Assuming the numerical requirements of Section 84(8), Regulation 554/88, and Manitoba Education and Training Guidelines are met, it is possible that parents of a variety of faith groups could petition for their own religious exercises. Parents/guardians making the petition will be responsible for providing whatever prayer books, literature, etc. are essential to the conducting of the exercises.

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- 6. Teachers and other staff are not compelled to conduct or supervise religious exercises. Participation by staff MUST be voluntary. If teachers and other staff are unwilling to conduct or supervise such exercises, alternate arrangements must be made (eg. requesting members of the parents' group petitioning for the exercises to conduct the activity themselves). The principal will only be responsible for determining the appropriate supervisory arrangements which shall consist of space and time allocation, and the supervision of students to and from the activity.

When there are no volunteers from the teaching or support staff, the principal must be provided with a roster of volunteers from the parents' group to ensure that there will be someone coordinating the activity.

- 7. Where petitioned, religious exercises will be held each teaching day and shall be no longer than ten (10) minutes in duration.

- 8. The exercises will not be held during regular instructional time. Instructional time is to be preserved, and religious exercises must be held either prior to the start of the school day or during noon hour. By holding religious exercises before the beginning of regular classes in the morning, or during the noon hour, the separation of participating and non-participating students can be minimized. Those participating in religious exercise congregate in a common area, proceed with the exercises, and then rejoin their classmates prior to the class which they are scheduled to attend.