

INSTRUCTION

6115(a)

CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

Pledge of Allegiance

The Board of Education directs the Litchfield Public Schools administration to provide an opportunity during morning opening exercises for all students to say the Pledge of Allegiance each school day. Participation in the recitation of the Pledge is voluntary.

If a student or an adult has made the decision not to recite the Pledge, he/she may choose to remain silent. Each and everyone must be courteous and respectful of the beliefs of others.

United States Flag

The Flag of the United States of America shall be displayed on the grounds of each school and at other appropriate places during all school session, weather permitting, and on the inside of the schoolhouse. The Flag shall be raised before the opening of school and taken down at its close every day unless illuminated.

The United States Flag shall be displayed in each classroom each day school is in session.

Holidays and Special Events

Holidays and special events may be recognized in our schools within the mores of our culture so long as such recognition respects the rights and feelings of minorities and is consistent with law.

Songs and customs which have come to us from the various ethnic and racial segments of our population may be used so as to broaden the awareness of our students to the contributions which each such segment has made to the composite American culture.

No public funds may be used in any way to benefit sectarianism in our schools. No books, papers or utterances of a sectarian character shall be used except for instructional purposes.

Separation of Church and State

In accordance with the mandate of the Constitution of the United States prohibiting the establishment of a religion, it is the policy of the Board of Education that the schools will, at all times and in all ways, be neutral in matters of religion. The District will encourage all students and staff members to appreciate and be tolerant of each other's religious or non-religious views. The District will use all opportunities to foster understanding and mutual respect among students and parents, whether it involves race, culture, economic background or religious beliefs. Students and staff members shall be excused from participating in practices that are contrary to their religious beliefs unless there are clear issues of overriding concern that would prevent it. There will be no benedictions, invocations or other form of group prayer at any school functions or exercises.

Recognition of Religious Holiday

The District recognizes that one of its educational goals is to advance the student's knowledge and appreciation of the role that religions have played in the social, cultural and historical development of civilization.

Therefore, the practices of the District will be:

- a.) The several holidays throughout the year which have a religious and secular basis may be observed in the schools.
- b.) The historical and contemporary values and the origin of religious holidays may be explained in an unbiased and objective manner without sectarian indoctrination.
- c.) 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 and as a part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday.
- d.) The use of religious symbols 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.

It is also the policy of the Board that religious literature, music, drama, and the arts will be included in the curriculum and in school activities provided that it is intrinsic to the learning experience in the various fields of study and is presented objectively.

The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature and history will only be 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.

Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme will be accommodated. For example, students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech and debate as long as they are not disruptive to the learning environment or contrary to Board policy.

Legal Reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-1 6a Silent meditation.
 Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-29a Certain days to be proclaimed by governor.
 Distribution and number of proclamations.
 Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-230 Flags for schoolrooms and schools.
 PA 02-119, An Act Concerning Bullying Behavior in Schools and
 Concerning the Pledge of Allegiance.
 No Child Left Behind Act.

INSTRUCTION

6115(c)

Litchfield Board of Education
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Policy Revised: 4/22/2015, 1/3/2018