



# TAFELBERG SCHOOL

## Religion Policy

### 1 THIS SCHOOL POLICY ON RELIGION IS UNDERPINNED BY:

- 1.1 The freedom of all individuals in the school to religious choice.
- 1.2 The right of all religions to practice their own religion and to be free of coercion to join any religion other than their own.
- 1.3 A belief in the broad religious-moral-ethical standards and principles espoused by Judeo-Christian-Muslim family of religions.
- 1.4 Tolerance towards and acceptance of all legal religions which have tenets compatible with these standards and principles.

### 2 WHILE RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE SCHOOL'S APPROACH, IT IS POLICY THAT:

- 2.1 No individual in the school is free to indulge in proselytizing.
- 2.2 No individual learner may overtly display physical signs or insignia of his or her religious beliefs while in school uniform (this restriction includes, but is not limited to, overt wearing of the Cross, Star of David, a Fez, dreadlocks, use of marijuana, etc., whether within a religious/cultural context or not, unless a concession has been granted to such learner in terms of the concessions as stipulated in section 6 of this policy.)
- 2.3 Until such time as a formal application has been made for a personal dispensation in terms of the school's concessionary clauses, and a decision has been made in this regard and communicated in writing to the applicant, the learner concerned will be required to continue to observe this and other codes or rules in place in the school, including the uniform code and code of conduct, without dispensation or deviation.

### 3 SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES AND RELIGION

- 3.1 School assemblies which have a religious flavour are acceptable insofar as they do not conflict with clauses 1.1 to 1.4 above
- 3.2 Wherever feasible/practicable, and taking into account the number of learners involved, opportunities for exclusive religious assembly time will be provided on request to accepted religions within the school context, but only in such a way that this does not impact negatively on the normal functioning of the school. (The concept "religious assembly time" may include the forming of a club or society with a specific religious focus.)

### 4 FORMAL ASSESSMENTS AND RELIGION

- 4.1 It will ensure further that no learner is disadvantaged in his/her appraisal/evaluation outcomes, as a direct consequence of his/her having observed a religious holiday or carried out a religious practice expected of them by their religion.

### 5 LEAVE OR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR RELIGIOUS CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Special leave with full pay may be granted to **individual state-employed educators**, in terms of the leave provisions in Circular/Regulations 1235 of 201, or to **School Governing Body (SGB) employees** in terms of the school's own Leave Regulations, for the observance of religious days, if those days are not designated as official school holidays.
- 5.2 Where parents require that their sons/daughters are absent from school for the observance of religious days, this will be allowed on the understanding that any absence will be motivated and requested in writing by the parent, and that the obligation will be on the learner concerned to make up any work missed as a result of such absence (subject to 4.1 above)

## 6 CONCESSIONS

- 6.1 There should be no blanket distinction between religion and culture when considering a request for a concession, but at the same time the school will not be required to make concessions where there is a real possibility of disruption to the achievement and maintenance of a disciplined and purposeful school environment, and the maintenance of the quality of the learning process if an exemption is granted.
- 6.2 It is further recognised that the school must take positive measures to allow all people to participate and enjoy their rights equally, and that a mere desire to preserve uniformity is not sufficient grounds for refusing a concession.
- 6.3 In considering applications for exemptions, the school (SGB) will expect of the parents to apply in writing for such concession.
- 6.4 The written request forwarded to the SGB for consideration, must include the following:
  - 6.4.1 The cultural or religious practice on which the application is based.
  - 6.4.2 The importance of that practice to the learner concerned.
  - 6.4.3 Whether the practice concerned is mandatory or voluntary.
  - 6.4.4 Whether the cultural or religious community concerned regards it as a practice that would normally warrant exemption from school rules.
  - 6.4.5 The extent of the exemption required (how great the required departure from school rules will be and the time period of the concession.)
  - 6.4.6 The effect of the granting of an exemption on the achievement of the “disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the maintenance of the quality of the learning process”.
- 6.5. In coming to a decision, the SGB will consult on the nature of the relevant practice.
- 6.6. The SGB will provide the parents/learner with written notification of its decision and any conditions relating to the exemption.

**Implementation date : 1 November 2017**