

POLICY 24

THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Board believes that our schools have a role in helping children develop emotionally, intellectually, physically, morally and spiritually.

The Board believes in religious tolerance, the acknowledgement of religious diversity, the maintenance of inclusive environments in its school, and the provision of appropriate opportunities for students to give expression to their religious beliefs.

In accordance with the School Act, the Alberta Act, the School Ordinance of the Northwest Territories and the Constitution of Canada, the Board may prescribe that a school include recitation of the Lord's Prayer as part of its opening exercises.

1. Procedure

- 1.1 Whenever parents/guardians request that the recitation of the Lord's Prayer be part of a school's opening exercises, the Principal shall advise the Superintendent, who will advise the Board of Trustees.
- 1.2 The Board of Trustees may, through the Superintendent, direct the Principal to undertake to obtain a consensus of parent/guardian opinion around such request through surveys, meetings or any other appropriate means of gathering information, and establish a timeframe for such undertaking.
- 1.3 The Principal shall present information obtained, including the rationale for the request for recitation of the Lord's Prayer to be part of the school day opening, the determined degree of parent/guardian interest in the request, and proposed method of practice to the Board and seek Board prescription of such recitation.
- 1.4 The Board shall consider the rationale presented, including the tradition and culture of the school community, as well as the determined degree of parent/guardian interest and may prescribe the recitation of the Lord's Prayer to be a part of the school day opening at that school.
- 1.5 When the Lord's Prayer is part of the school day opening exercises, the Principal shall ensure that parents are informed of the practice at the time of registration each year.
- 1.6 The Principal shall annually ensure that written approval is provided for students whose parents/guardians wish them to participate in recitation of the Lord's Prayer as part of the school's opening exercises.
- 1.7 In accordance with the School Act, the Alberta Act, the School Ordinance of the Northwest Territories, the Constitution of Canada and the Alberta Human Rights Act, the Principal shall:

- 1.7.1. make provision for any students whose parents/guardians do not wish them to participate in recitation of the Lord's Prayer as a school opening religious exercise to:
 - 1.7.1.1 leave the classroom while the recitation of the Lord's Prayer is taking place, or
 - 1.7.1.2 remain in the classroom without taking part, or
 - 1.7.1.3 if the location of the recitation of the Lord's Prayer is other than the students' classroom, not attend to that location, and
- 1.7.2 ensure that non-participants are treated discreetly and with respect at all times.

Reference: School Act, Sections 3, 50(1)(a) and (b), and 50(2)(a) and (b)
Alberta Act, 1905: Section 17
School Ordinance of the Northwest Territories, 1901; Section 137 and 138
Constitution Act, 1867: Section 93
Alberta Human Rights Act, Sections 11.1(1) and (2)

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