

Creed Accommodation Requests (Religious/Faith)



Creed based accommodation requests may be made verbally or in written form. Areas where practice of religion or faith may result in a request for accommodation from students and staff include: observation of holy days and observances; school opening and closing exercises; prayer; dietary requirements; fasting; religious attire; modesty requirements; scheduling for religious leaves and participation in daily activities and curriculum.

All accommodation requests will be taken seriously, regardless of the format of the request. If the request is verbal, documentation of the request should be created (e.g., a letter from parents, minutes of a meeting, written documentation of the discussion, board form: *Request for Religious or Faith Accommodation*, etc.).

To assist schools to better understand a student's accommodation needs that are based on religion or faith, it is important for parents to be specific about the needs and the accommodations requested. Wherever possible, when a student or family requests an accommodation or exemption that is curriculum based, there should be a meeting with the parents (or student if she or he is at least 18 years old) and teacher and/or administrator to gather more information about the nature of the request.

It is not always necessary to fully exempt students from certain subjects. Very often, small adjustments and modifications can be made to the way that the curriculum is delivered so that it respectfully addresses and accommodates the family's needs.

Note: For requests regarding curriculum accommodations or exemptions, the parent or student must be specific with respect to subject area, units, and specific expectations within a subject and grade level. The board form, *Request for Religious or Faith Accommodation* may be used for this purpose.

Preliminary Considerations for Curriculum Accommodation Requests

- Has the request for accommodation been made in writing by the parent, guardian, or student? If the request is verbal, documentation of the request should be created.
- Has the school administrator (and the teacher if possible) met with the parents/guardians/caregivers to discuss and clarify specific times/circumstances to which the request for accommodations apply (e.g., from what curriculum expectations and/or teaching/learning strategies is it necessary to exempt the learner)?

- Has there been a plan documented to indicate how the accommodation will be met?
- To what degree are learning outcomes for students in specific subject areas affected (e.g., what specific Ministry of Education curriculum expectations for the learner may be compromised)? If any outcomes are affected, has the administrator clearly communicated these changes to learning outcomes to the parents/guardians/caregivers (e.g., what will appear/not appear on a learner's report card)? Where applicable, the family should always be informed about and understand what the alternatives are to compulsory high school credits.

When a full curricular exemption is granted as a religious accommodation, the school will 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 of the OSR. Religious reasons would be cited as the rationale for the exemption. This formalizes the process and also allows the student to continue to be exempt in future years or if they were to move to another school. On the report card, an appropriate comment would be used to indicate that the student was exempted for religious reasons.