



The Academy for Urban Scholars

Board Policy: Religious Expression and Religious Expression Days

I. Purpose

The Academy for Urban Scholars (AUS) is committed to respecting and accommodating the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of all students. This policy is adopted in compliance with **Ohio Revised Code 3320.04**, which requires schools to provide reasonable accommodations related to religious expression, including absences and academic requirements.

II. General Statement of Policy

AUS shall reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of individual students with regard to:

- Absences for religious observances
- Examinations and academic requirements
- Participation in school activities

This policy applies to all AUS students in grades served by the school.

III. Religious Expression Days (Excused Absences)

1. **Student Eligibility**
 - Students are permitted up to **three (3) Religious Expression Days per school year**.
2. **Permissible Uses** Religious Expression Days may be used for:
 - Observing religious holidays
 - Participating in religious ceremonies or services
 - Engaging in organized religious activities affiliated with a church, denomination, or spiritual organization
3. **No Academic Penalty**
 - Students shall **not receive any academic penalty** for approved absences under this policy.
4. **Extracurricular Participation**
 - Students shall be permitted to **participate in extracurricular activities, including athletics**, on days they are absent for a Religious Expression Day.



IV. Parent/Guardian Notification Requirements

1. A parent or guardian must submit a **written request** to the School Director identifying up to three (3) specific dates for Religious Expression Days.
2. Requests must be submitted:
 - Within **fourteen (14) school days of the first day of school**, or
 - Within **fourteen (14) school days of enrollment** for students who enroll after the school year begins

V. Approval Process

1. The School Director shall:
 - Approve no more than three (3) requests per school year
 - Approve requests **without inquiry into the sincerity of the student's religious beliefs**
2. Verification:
 - The School Director may verify the authenticity of the request by contacting the parent or guardian
 - Requests may be denied only if the parent/guardian disputes submission

VI. Academic Accommodations

1. AUS shall provide **alternative accommodations** for:
 - Exams
 - Assignments
 - Other academic requirements missed due to a Religious Expression Day
2. Accommodations shall:
 - Be scheduled at a mutually agreed-upon time
 - Allow students a fair opportunity to complete work without penalty

VII. Non-Discrimination and Equal Access

- Students shall be treated equitably regardless of religious belief or non-belief.
- Participation in religious expression shall not result in:
 - Favorable or unfavorable treatment
 - Academic reward or penalty



VIII. Religious Expression Beyond Absences

Consistent with Ohio law, AUS recognizes that students have the right to:

- Engage in religious expression before, during, and after school to the same extent as secular expression
- Incorporate religious viewpoints in assignments, graded using standard academic criteria
- Participate in student-led religious activities where permitted under law

IX. Communication and Posting

AUS will:

- **Post this policy publicly** on the school's website
- **Annually communicate** the policy to students and families
- Provide clear procedures for requesting Religious Expression Days
- Maintain a **non-exhaustive list of major religious holidays** for reference (without limiting accommodations to that list)

X. Implementation

The Executive Director/School Director or designee shall:

- Ensure consistent implementation of this policy
- Provide guidance to staff regarding accommodations
- Maintain documentation of requests and approvals
- Monitor compliance with state law