

THE GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL



RELIGION POLICY

ADOPTED BY THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY ON: 30 September 2016

PRINCIPAL: SALLY SHIELD

CHAIRPERSON: BUSI MAHO

CONTENTS

[INTRODUCTION and PURPOSE](#)

[CONTEXT](#)

[POLICY](#)

1. [ASSEMBLIES](#)
2. [LEAVE OF ABSENCE](#)
3. [FORMAL ASSESSMENT](#)
4. [DIETARY ACCOMMODATIONS](#)
5. [UNIFORM](#)

[CONCESSIONS](#)

[PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF THIS POLICY](#)

[LEGISLATION](#)

[Addendum.](#)

1. [SGB PROTOCOL FOR GRANTING CONCESSIONS](#)

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Grove Primary School aims to develop citizens of South Africa that will understand and tolerate people with different value and belief systems, whilst endeavouring to promote positive values that will assist children to grow into valuable citizens of our country. To this end The Grove strives to provide education in a multicultural context, promoting the values of tolerance and respect for all forms of faith and culture.

CONTEXT

In acknowledging the freedom of all individuals in the school to cultural and belief choice, it is accepted that instruction and observation are the domain of the family and home.

We provide opportunities for teaching and learning about our religious diversity and our common humanity, supporting unity without uniformity and diversity without divisiveness.

POLICY

This policy is aligned with the values upheld by the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the South African Schools Act (1996), National Policy on Religion in Education (1996) and the Statement of Values of the school.

While tolerance is fundamental to the school's approach, the following is policy:

1. ASSEMBLIES

Weekly assemblies include messages of a universal nature to promote a sense of what we share, of how much we have in common. Celebrations/customs of the beliefs of the community can be highlighted and can be accompanied by a presentation in order to promote understanding of and respect for each other and to celebrate our diversity.

2. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Where parents require that their children are absent from school for the observance of religious or cultural events, this will be allowed on the understanding that any absence will be explained to the student administrator in writing by the parent. For security reasons, the child's name will be placed on a register and only a designated person may fetch the child concerned.

The obligation will be on the pupils concerned to make up any work missed as a result of such absence.

3. FORMAL ASSESSMENT +

Wherever feasible/practicable, the school will ensure that its timetables concerning formal assessments of pupil work, as well as major, whole-school cultural and sporting activities, take cognisance of the holy days of the various religious groups in the school.

It will ensure as far as reasonably possible that no learner is disadvantaged in his/her assessment outcomes, as a direct consequence of him/her having observed a religious holiday or carried out a cultural practice.

Given the wide diversity of beliefs of in the school community, it will not be the norm for the school to apply for any **further** adaptations to the formal school day, or the published school calendar, in order to accommodate the specific needs of any one group.

4. DIETARY ACCOMMODATIONS

The school is considerate of the dietary needs of all members of its communities. The school tuckshop provides both meat and vegetarian snacks. In the nature of the facilities that we have, requirements for strict religious practices in cooking and preparation of food cannot be met, whether in the tuckshop or for any functions. When fasting, pupils are expected to continue to fulfil all their commitments and attend co-curricular activities. Staff will be sensitive to the needs of affected children during particularly important periods.

5. UNIFORM

The school uniform serves to unite all pupils and thus compliance with the school's Uniform Policy is required as laid out in the Uniform and Hair Policy. With regard to those whose religious or cultural beliefs require them to make particular modifications to the uniform, recognising constitutional rights in this regard, the school will not turn down such requests. Nonetheless, as a courtesy and also in order to support the learner and their family, it is still required that this is formally communicated to the SGB in writing.

PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The School shall review the existing Policy one year into the term of each new Governing Body. If the Policy is changed, it will be done in such a way that the rights and views of pupils already learning at the school will be considered and protected. If significant changes are to be made to the policy these changes will be negotiated and phased in over an agreed and reasonable time frame.

ADDENDUM

1. SGB PROTOCOL FOR GRANTING CONCESSIONS

It will do so on the following basis, as recommended by the Constitutional Court.

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 It is further recognised that the school must take positive measures and possibly incur additional hardships and expense in order 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.
- 3.3 In considering applications for concessions, the school will expect of the parent to apply in writing for such concession and will address the aspects outlined below, which will be taken into account by the school.
- 3.4 Parents must attend a meeting with the governing body (or a governing body committee/representative) in order to discuss the concession and the possible conditions linked to the concession, so as to limit the concession's impact on the code of conduct as far as possible.
- 3.5 The conditions to be applied to the consideration of the application for concessions are as follows:
 - 3.5.1 The cultural or religious practice on which the application is based.
 - 3.5.2 The importance of that practice to the learner concerned.
 - 3.5.3 Whether the practice concerned is mandatory or voluntary.
 - 3.5.4 Whether the cultural or religious community concerned regards it as a practice that would normally warrant exemption from school rules.
 - 3.5.5 The extent of the concession required (how great the required departure from school rules will be.)
 - 3.5.6 The effect of the granting of a concession on the achievement of the "disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the maintenance of the quality of the learning process".
 - 3.5.7 In coming to a decision, the Governing Body will consult experts on the religion or culture concerned on the nature of the relevant practice.
 - 3.5.8 It will provide the parents/learner with written notification its decision and any conditions relating to the concession.