

**CODE: IMBB**

## **ACCOMMODATION OF SINCERE BELIEFS IN REQUIRED INSTRUCTION**

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The curriculum of the Kittery School Department is designed to meet the learning expectations for all students in all content areas according to statutory and regulatory requirements as specified by state statutes/requirements and policies of the School Committee.

The School Committee acknowledges that from time to time individual students may be exposed to some ideas and materials with which they or their parent(s) disagree. Students and their parent(s) cannot be required to adopt ideas with which they disagree, but such disagreement alone is not a sufficient basis to exempt a student from the prescribed curriculum. Exemptions from the required curriculum should be minimized because they can detract from the overall instruction provided to the class as a whole and the educational objectives sought to be achieved by the curriculum.

The School Committee recognizes, however, that there could be topics in the curriculum which may be objectionable to individual students and/or parent(s) based on their particular sincerely held religious, moral or philosophical beliefs. Exemption from instruction which infringes on such beliefs may be requested by the parent(s).

Requests for accommodations of belief in instruction must be made in writing to the building Principal and are subject to the approval of the Principal. The Principal shall notify the Superintendent as soon as practicable of any request for exemption from instruction and of his/her decision. If the Principal denies an exemption request, the parent(s) may appeal to the Superintendent, whose decision shall be final.

In considering requests for accommodation, factors that the Principal shall consider may include:

- A. Whether the course of instruction is required by state law or School Committee policy;
- B. Whether the accommodation will adversely affect the instruction provided to other students;
- C. The educational importance of the material or instruction for which accommodation is requested;
- D. Evidence regarding the sincerity of the belief on which the request is based;
- E. Whether the school has a legal obligation to accommodate the request;
- F. Other factors that bear upon the particular request.

Accommodation in required instruction does not excuse the student from meeting the requirements for the course and/or graduation, and from performing required alternative work.

When a student is exempted from any portion of the regular curriculum, the staff will make reasonable efforts, within the scope of existing resources, to accommodate alternative instruction for the student. Alternative instruction may be provided by the school or through approved alternative means. Any alternative instruction shall be approved in advance by the Principal in consultation with the classroom teacher, and shall meet the standards and objectives of the part of the curriculum that is being replaced.

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Legal Reference:           20-A MRSA § 6209  
                                  LD 1536, Chap. 51 Resolves  
                                  Ch. 127 § 3.07 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)  
                                  Ch. 131 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)

Cross Reference:         ADF – School District Commitment to Learning Results  
                                  IJJ – Instructional and Library Material Selection  
                                  IMB – Teaching About Controversial/Sensitive Issues  
                                  IMBAA – Alternatives To Biological Dissection

Adopted:                   December 17, 2013