



Guidelines for a Released Time Program of Religious Education

Public school boards in the State of Wisconsin may permit students to be absent from school to obtain religious instruction. Each local school board sets its own guidelines for released time for public school students, subject to the requirements of Wisconsin Statutes 118.155. A parish or group of parishes may take advantage of this opportunity and provide a released time program of religious education. The program must be established and administered in accord with state law, district/school guidelines, and the policies of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. (Policy 6113, *School and Parish Policy Manual*)

The parish(es) should observe the following guidelines when implementing a released time program of religious formation.

1. Released time, when feasible, should be organized, promoted and function on an ecumenical basis.
2. So that maximum scheduling and efficient programming of available school time can be maintained, a regular program must be guaranteed and maintained by the parish(es).
2. The parish(es) sponsoring a released time program will provide classes in such a place that students need not travel long distances. The facilities used must meet educational, safety and health standards.
3. If transportation is necessary for the operation of the program, the parents or the sponsoring parish(es) must assume all responsibility and costs.
4. Written permission of a parent or guardian must be provided to the public school for a student to be absent, and written permission must be obtained by the parish for the student to participate in the religious program.
5. The parish(es) shall not solicit for attendance on public school premises, and the staff of the school shall neither encourage nor discourage participation in the released time program.
6. Adult instructors and chaperones shall be provided both for the safety of the children and for a responsible and worthwhile use of the released time period.
7. The scheduling of all released time will be maintained and controlled by the local school administration, in consultation with the faculty, parents and students.
8. In the scheduling of time released from the public school, consideration should be given to provide adequate travel time so that a minimum of 60 minutes of effective class time will be made available. Participating students may be absent from the public school for not more than 180 minutes per week.
9. The supervisor of the religious instruction will report monthly, to the public school principal, the names of the students who attended the instruction. Students who absent themselves from religious instruction may lose the privilege of participating in the released time program.
10. The educational administrator(s) of the parish(es) will apprise their constituency of the above guidelines and will see to it that an approved curriculum is used for the released time classes.