

### 3.15 Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Religion & Religion in Schools

As a public school, Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy must be non-religious in its programs, admissions policies, governance, employment practices and all other operations, and Scholars Academy's curriculum must be completely secular. Scholars Academy is committed to recognizing and respecting the many religious and non-religious faiths, convictions, and beliefs of its Scholars and staff. Scholars Academy's staff must be sensitive to the freedom of religion and other Constitutional rights of all. The following guidelines on religion and religious practices are provided in order to avoid infringement of individual rights and to set forth Scholars Academy's position concerning specific religious issues:

1. Teachers may include religion's role in appropriate subjects in the curriculum, such as literature, history, the humanities, and the arts. Neither teachers nor guest speakers shall promote religion and shall use fairness and objectivity when presenting subjects that address religion.
2. Staff shall be sensitive to how religious holidays may impact the behavior, appearance, or attendance of Scholars and staff. Examinations, field trips, and other major events will not be scheduled, where possible, on religious holidays designated by the Executive Director, at least once a year.
3. Scholars who miss school because of religious reasons shall not be adversely affected because of their absence. Scholars are still subject to the school's Attendance policy.
4. If a parent should object to an activity, Scholars Academy will grant parent's written request to have a student excused.
5. The temporary use of religious symbols, seasonal celebrations, and music is permitted. An effort towards diversity and mutual respect is expected.
6. A moment of silence not to exceed one minute in duration is permitted for quiet reflection provided that no further instructions are given on how the period of silence is to be used.
7. Appropriate religious books may be given to Scholars as a part of coursework but may not be generally distributed by religious groups to Scholars at Scholars Academy.
8. Scholars may read religious materials during the school day except when it interferes with classroom work or other school activities.
9. No restrictions shall be placed on prayer by individual Scholars or groups of Scholars as long as it does not interfere in any way with the academic program.
10. Religious groups or clubs may be organized and meet on Scholars Academy premises before or after school or during time designated by the Executive Director for non-instructional activities, with the same privileges as other non- curriculum-related school clubs.
11. Staff may read religious materials and pray in their free time and may carry or wear religious symbols when on duty at Scholars Academy as long as it does not interfere with their work. Staff should refrain from displaying any religious symbols or quotes in community spaces such as classroom walls. Staff should be sensitive to and show respect for religious beliefs held by other staff and Scholars. In dealing with religious issues, staff shall do so in a manner that will not show or imply favor or disfavor with any staff's or Scholar's religious beliefs.

12. Graduation exercises, assemblies, and other school-sponsored events will not include centrally led or school system-sanctioned group prayer but may include a moment of silence in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.
13. Counseling of Scholars or informal discussions with Scholars by staff shall neither infringe on the Scholars' religious or non-religious beliefs nor seek to influence Scholars' religious or non-religious beliefs.

Adopted: February 27, 2023