

## RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Code **JHCB** Issued **DRAFT/16**

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Purpose: To establish the basic structure for released time for students for religious instruction.

The board will release students in grades **K** through **12** from school, at the written request of their parent/legal guardian, for the purpose of religious instruction for a portion of the day. The school will consider this a lawful absence.

The board will not allow the student to miss required instructional time for the purpose of religious instruction. Any absences for this purpose must be during non-instructional periods of the school day.

When approving the release of students for religious instruction, the board assumes no responsibility for the program or liability for the students involved. Its attitude will be one of cooperation with the various sponsoring groups of the school district.

The sponsoring group or the student's parent/legal guardian is completely responsible for transportation to and from the place of instruction. The district assumes no responsibility or liability for such transportation.

Religious instruction must take place away from school property and at a regularly designated location.

District officials will ensure that no public funds will be expended to support a released time program and that district staff and faculty will not promote or discourage participation by district students in a released time program. **District faculty and staff may not promote program attendance through encouragement, coercion or other means. Specifically, employees of the district may not be instructors for a released-time program.**

Adopted ^

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Legal references:

- A. S. C. Code, 1976, as amended:
  - 1. Section 59-1-460 - South Carolina Released Time for Religious Education Act.
  - 2. Section 59-39-112 - South Carolina Released Time Credit Act.
- B. ~~Court Decision:~~ **Federal Cases:**
  - 1. *Moss v. Spartanburg County School District Seven*, 683 F.3d 599 (4th Cir. 2012).