Religion & Education
Administrative Procedures

PURPOSE

Wasatch Peak Academy (the "School") recognizes, protects, and accommodates the rights of religious practice and expression guaranteed by state and federal laws and by the constitutions of Utah and the United States.

The purpose of this procedure is to help School personnel protect and accommodate individual religious belief and rights of conscience in the School.

General Rules Regarding Religion and Education

The School expects School personnel to foster mutual understanding and respect for all individuals and beliefs. Study about religion is an important part of a complete education and is necessary to achieving an understanding of history, societies, and cultures throughout the world. School curricula - including activities, discussions, assignments, displays, and performances - may refer to religious thought and expression, provided such references are designed to achieve specific educational objectives.

School personnel should neither promote nor disparage any religious, agnostic or atheistic belief or religion in general. Teaching about religion should be objective, thus avoiding any implication that religious doctrines have the endorsement of school authority. School personnel should recognize that religious holidays are observed in various ways, or not observed at all, based upon the influence of ethnic tradition, family style, or religious conviction.

The School shall ensure that:

a. a student may express the student's beliefs about religion in homework, artwork, and other written or oral assignments free from discrimination based on the religious perspective of the student's submissions;

b. home and classroom work is:
    i. not penalized or rewarded on the basis of religious perspective; and
    ii. judged by ordinary academic standards of substance, relevance, and other legitimate pedagogical objectives; and

c. notification of the constitutional freedoms described in these procedures are provided to school officials, employees, and students.

Students may refrain from participation in any aspect of school that violates a religious belief or right of conscience of the student or of the student's parent or guardian.

The School shall not, in any aspect of school:

a. require or incentivize a student to affirm or deny the student's or the student's parent or guardian's religious belief or right of conscience;

b. engage a student in a practice that violates or is contrary to the student's or the student's parent or guardian's religious belief or right of conscience; or

c. penalize or discriminate against a student for refraining from participation due to the student's or the student's parent or guardian's religious belief or right of conscience.

A student's parent or guardian may waive the student's participation in any aspect of school (e.g., activities, discussions, and assignments) that the parent or guardian feels would violate the parent or guardian's or student's rights of conscience or religious belief. Such waivers must be communicated in a timely manner to the appropriate School authorities.

Procedures for Implementation

1. The Principal will periodically review these procedures with teachers and staff. This review will stress the School's expectation that School personnel will recognize, protect, and accommodate religious belief and individual rights of conscience in the operation of the School, while fostering mutual understanding and respect for all individuals and beliefs.

2. The School encourages teachers and employees at the School to discuss, equitably and with civility, and, if possible, resolve with students, parents, and guardians, any concerns regarding curricular content, activities, or student participation.

3. Students, parents, and legal guardians will be provided with a copy of these procedures annually through the posting of the procedures on the School's website.

4. A student or parent or legal guardian of a student, may make a complaint to the Principal that a portion of the curriculum, a School activity, or the conduct of a School employee violates state or federal law insofar as it "endorse[s], promote[s], or disparage[s] a particular religious, denominational, sectarian, agnostic, or atheistic belief or viewpoint." See Utah Code § 53G-10-202(4);

5. The Principal may discuss annually with the Board any requests for accommodation, or complaints about religion in the curriculum, made within the last year in order to determine how the School can more effectively recognize, protect, and accommodate religious belief and individual rights of conscience in the operation of the School. In discussing these matters with the Board, the Principal will take care to protect the privacy rights of those who made complaints or requests. The Principal may also submit the written record of

each complaint received and any decisions made regarding such complaints to the Board President.

Waivers of Participation

1. When a student refrains from participating in any aspect of school that violates the student's or the student's parent or guardian's religious belief or right of conscience, the School:

    a. Shall promptly notify the student's parent or guardian;

    b. May offer an alternative that does not violate the student's or the student's parent or guardian's religious belief or right of conscience; and

    c. May not require the student or the student's parent to explain, defend, or justify the student's or the student's parent or guardian's religious belief or right of conscience.

2. In addition, if a student refrains from a portion of a course or to a course in its entirety under Utah Code § 53G-10-205, the parent and School may work together to establish an alternate academic accommodation, which allows the student to demonstrate mastery of Core Standards or alternate standard, consistent with Utah Code § 53G-6-803(7) and Utah Code § 53G-10-205(2)(b).

3. When a student's parent or guardian waives the student's participation in any aspect of school that the parent or guardian feels would violate the student's or the student's parent or guardian's religious belief or right of conscience, the parent or guardian shall communicate that waiver (preferably in writing) as soon as possible to the Principal so that an appropriate alternative for the student can be considered.

4. The School will keep, for a reasonable time, a written record of every waiver of participation based on religious belief or right of conscience.

Complaints Alleging Violation of Law

If a complaint is made by a minor student, the Principal will give written notice to the student's parent or legal guardian by email to the parent or legal guardian's last known email address.

The Principal, student, the student's parent or legal guardian, and the teacher or employee responsible for the program in question will meet to discuss the complaint, and the Principal will arrive at a decision, consistent with state and federal law, whether to alter the curriculum or activity, substitute another activity, or deny that the curriculum or activity is in violation of law. The Principal will give a written decision as soon as practical under the circumstances.

The School will keep, for a reasonable time, a written record of every complaint and any decisions made regarding each complaint.

Appeals Process

A student, parent, or legal guardian who is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision regarding complaints about curricula and activities perceived to be in violation of law, may appeal that decision within ten (10) days to the Board President.

The Board President will review the complaint of the student, parent, or legal guardian and the decision of the Principal and may modify the Principal's decision.

At the sole discretion of the Board President, a committee of his or her choosing may be formed to review the complaint and the decision of the Principal. If the Board President decides to form a committee to consider the appeal, the student and student's parent or guardian will be notified.

The Board will keep, for a reasonable time, a written record of every appeal and any decisions made regarding each appeal.

The decision of the Board President will be final.