

## STUDENTS

### RELEASE TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION / OBSERVANCE

#### Religious Observance

A student shall be released from school, as an excused absence, for the purpose of observing a religious holiday. <sup>1</sup> The parent(s)/guardian(s) must give written notice to the READY administration 5 days before the student's anticipated absence. <sup>2</sup>

The parent(s)/guardian(s)'s written notification of the student's anticipated absence shall satisfy the READY program requirement for a written excuse when the student returns to school.

The Regional Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop and distribute to teachers appropriate procedures regarding student absences for are religious holiday which include a list of religious holidays on which students shall be excused from attendance, how teachers are notified of a student's impending absence, and the State law requirement that teachers provide the student an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirement. <sup>3</sup>

#### Religious Instruction <sup>4</sup>

A student shall be released from school for a day or portion of a day for the purpose of religious instruction. A letter, requesting the student's absence and written by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), must be given to the Building Principal at least 5 days before the student is to be absent.

LEG. REF.: 105 ILCS 5/26-1 and 5/26-2b.

CROSS REF.: 7:70

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<sup>1</sup> 105 ILCS 5/26-1(5) requires boards to adopt a policy on student absences for religious holidays. See also 105 ILCS 5/26-2b.

<sup>2</sup> Five days is the most prior notice that can be required (105 ILCS 5/26-1(5)).

<sup>3</sup> 105 ILCS 5/26-2b.

<sup>4</sup> According to the United States Supreme Court, a release time policy does not violate the Establishment Clause; it only accommodates a program of outside religious instruction. Zorach v. Clauson, 72 S. Ct. 679 (1952).

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