The Rights of Religious Students

Your children or grandchildren face an increasing level of hostility, censorship and punishment for their Christian values that you've worked so hard to instill. But students have more freedom to express their faith in a K-12 public school than you may realize.

The following fact sheet comes directly from **Alliance Defending Freedom**, one of the nation's top religious liberty laws firms.

Your Child CAN:

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- Pray at school.
- Talk about God in class assignments.
- Start a religious club on campus that receives the same rights and resources as other clubs.
- Freely share their faith with others.

As a Parent, You CAN:

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- Opt your child out of curriculum that would require them to violate your family's religious beliefs.
- Choose the best educational environment for your child, such as charter school, private school, or homeschool.

As a parent, you teach your children one worldview at home, but when they go to school, are they learning something else? Today, sexually explicit or homosexual materials are frequently mandated for children as young as kindergarten, many times against their parents' will, and often in the name of "tolerance" or "safe school lessons." As a parent, you have the right to oversee your child's education and what they are taught in public school.

Parents Have the Right to...

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- Choose the school environment that best fits your child's needs, whether public school, charter school, private school, or homeschool.
- Depending upon where you live, opt your child out of curriculum that would force them to violate your family's religious beliefs.
- Depending upon where you live, review the curriculum and teaching materials for any of your child's classes.
- Opt your child out of any extracurricular activity.
- Depending upon where you live, be notified if your child is enrolled in a course that includes sex ed, family planning, homosexual themes, diversity issues, or extreme violence.
- Access your child's record, including grades, disciplinary, and counseling proceedings.
- Remove your child on days of religious observance.
- Depending upon where you live, and your income level, receive tax credits or vouchers to attend religious schools.

For more information about your parental rights and how you can protect your values as a parent concerniing the homosexual and transgender agendas visit **www.TrueTolerance.org**.

Religious Clothing

Students have the right to express their faith through what they wear, such as a pro-life t-shirt or a cross. Schools can place some restrictions on what students can wear, but they can't single out religious clothing. *Students can:* • Wear shirts, pants, necklaces, bracelets, and other articles of clothing that display a religious symbol (i.e., cross) or religious message (including a Bible verse) as long as they meet the school's dress code. *Schools can:* • Ban any clothing with a message that (1) materially and substantially interferes with the operation of the school, (2) is lewd, vulgar, or objectively obscene (i.e., contains

profanity or sexual content), or (3) promotes violence or drug use. *Schools can't:* • Ban clothing or accessories because their messages are religious or contain a religious symbol or picture, or others may find their religious message, symbol, or picture offensive.

Religious Expression

Given the central role that religion plays in many students' lives, it is natural that they would desire to express their religious viewpoints in class discussions and class assignments.

Students have the right to express their faith through what they wear, such as a pro-life t-shirt or a cross.

Students can:

- Express their religious beliefs in classroom discussions, homework, projects, artwork, and all other school assignments as long as it is relevant and meets the requirements of the assignment.

Schools can't:

- Prohibit, punish, or give a lower grade to a student who includes religious viewpoints in a class assignment.

Prayer

Many schools have told students that they cannot pray around the flagpole before school or say a blessing over their food in the cafeteria. But the First Amendment protects all forms of religious expression, including prayer at school.

Students can:

- Pray on their own or in groups during non-instructional time at school as long as it does not significantly disrupt the activity of the school.
- Engage in student-initiated, student-led prayer before or after practices, sporting events, or other school functions as long as such prayers are voluntary and not required by coaches or other school officials.

Schools can't:

- Stop students from praying individually or in groups without evidence that the prayers would significantly disrupt the school environment (for example, making a student late for class).
- Require students to participate in prayer or any other religious activity.

There's more on religious rights concerning student expression, literature distribution, graduations and sporting events at www.adflegal.org.