

Notice - Religious Exercises – Green Valley School, 2008-2009

The Board of Trustees of the Hanover School Division has received petitions requesting that religious exercises be held in Green Valley School during the 2008-2009 school year.

The petitioners have specified their desire for the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the reading of a Bible passage or story from the Bible.

As the petitions bear the signatures of parents representing more than 60 students in the school, the Board of Trustees of the Hanover School Division has authorized religious exercises, as specified above, to be held before the official instructional day, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:05 a.m., in a designated common area of the school.

Provincial and divisional guidelines will be followed. These guidelines are available from the school office, the divisional administration offices, or on the web site at www.hsd.ca.

Only children of parents who have signed or joined the petition may participate. Parents may join the petition by forwarding a signed note to the Board of Trustees of the Hanover School Division, indicating the name and the grade of the students they are signing for.

Notice - Religious Instruction-Green Valley School, 2008-2009

The Board of Trustees of the Hanover School Division has received petitions requesting that religious instruction be held in Green Valley School during the 2008-2009 school year.

The petitioners have specified their desire for the Discovery Time program offered by Child Evangelism Fellowship.

As the petitions bear the signatures of parents representing more than 25 students in the school, the Board of Trustees of the Hanover School Division has passed the required by-law permitting religious instruction, as specified above, to be offered by volunteers during designated half-hour per week classes.

Provincial and divisional guidelines will be followed. These guidelines are available from the school office, the divisional administration offices, or on the web site at www.hsd.ca.

Only children of parents who have signed or joined the petition may participate. Parents may join the petition by forwarding a signed note to the Board of Trustees of the Hanover School Division, indicating the name and the grade of the students they are signing for.

Practice of Religion in Hanover School Division

As a Manitoba public school division, The Hanover School Division is obligated to comply with the provisions of *The Public Schools Act* and provincial guidelines governing the implementation of religious exercises and religious instruction. *The Public Schools Act* states that public schools must be non-sectarian. Religious exercises and religious instruction in public schools may only be implemented by school boards in a manner consistent with the Act and departmental guidelines after a parent petition is presented to the school board. Petitions must be submitted annually. The Hanover School Division will continue to provide for appropriate religious exercises and instruction consistent with provincial and divisional guidelines.

Religious Exercises

If the appropriate number of parents of children in a particular school (parental signatures for 60 students) petition for religious exercises of a specific nature for their school, the board will authorize the implementation of religious exercises for that school for that year. Petitions must be presented to the board on an annual basis.

This applies to adherents of all religions presenting a petition with the appropriate number of signatures.

In order for this to be administratively possible, the original petition would need to be presented to the board by the first board meeting in May. (Second Board meeting, May 20, 2008 this year only)

No divisional personnel or board members will be involved in the petitioning process, other than to provide information pertaining to the provincial guidelines governing this process and the presence of enabling by-laws where appropriate petitions are received in a timely manner. No school personnel will be involved in follow-up with students or their families in situations where parents have not joined a petition.

In cases where the board has authorized implementation of religious exercises in a school, based on qualifying annual petitions, schools will provide information to the school community through a newsletter announcement in June and September, indicating that the board has received a petition(s) and passed the required by-law and that parents wishing for their children to participate would need to add their name to the petition(s) by sending in a signed note. New registrants during the year will be informed of the status of religious exercises and their voluntary nature in their school by provision of copies of all of the school newsletters published year-to-date.

The school will provide appropriate space for religious exercises between 9:00 a.m. and 9:05 a.m. before the start of the school day. All schools, except for the SRSS (see below) will have an official length school day starting at 9:08 and ending at 3:40 or later. Exercises will be led by volunteers from the school staff, from the community or from parents requesting the exercises. Attendance will not be taken, nor will school staff enforce attendance or non-attendance, other than to inform parents where appropriate.

Students with permission to participate (parents have signed either the original petition or have added their name to the petition with a signed note) will meet in the designated area during the designated non-instructional time. At no time will religious exercises be broadcast in the school via the PA system or held in a general assembly.

General assemblies are considered to be part of the regular instructional day and will commence at 9:08. Religious exercises on these days will continue to be held before the school day, between 9:00 and 9:05 a.m.

Students not participating would not be required to report for classes until the instructional day begins. Non-participating students at school due to transportation arrangements will be provided with a designated classroom space and will be supervised by a teacher.

At 9:08 all students will be expected to be in their homerooms for the beginning of the school day. Attendance will be taken, as well as lates recorded at this time and O Canada and school announcements will be broadcast from 9:08 to 9:10, at which time regular instruction will commence.

At the SRSS, which has two official start times, the following adjustment will be made:

Cohort 1 8:00 Start Opening religious exercises: 7:52 – 7:57 Classes start at 8:00. Cohort 2 9:08 Start Opening religious exercises 9:00 – 9:05 Classes start at 9:08 O Canada and School Announcements for all from 9:08 – 9:10

Religious Instruction

If the appropriate number of parents of children in a particular school (Parental signatures for 25 students) request religious instruction of a specific nature for their school, the board will pass a by-law permitting this.

This applies to adherents of all religions presenting a petition with the appropriate number of signatures.

In order for this to be administratively possible, the original petition would need to be presented to the board by the first board meeting in May. (Second Board meeting, May 20, 2008 this year only)

No divisional personnel or board members will be involved in the petitioning process, other than to provide information pertaining to the provincial guidelines governing this process and the presence of enabling by-laws where appropriate petitions are received in a timely manner. No school personnel will be involved in follow-up with students or their families in the case that parents have not joined the petition.

In cases where by-laws have been duly passed by the board based on qualifying petitions, schools will provide information to the school community through a newsletter announcement in June and September, indicating that the board has received a petition(s) and passed the required by-law and that parents wishing for their children to participate would need to add their name to the petition(s) by sending in a signed note. New registrants during the year will be informed of the status of religious instruction and the voluntary nature of this instruction in their school by provision of copies of all of the school newsletters published year-to-date.

The school will provide appropriate space for religious instruction and classes will be scheduled for a single half-hour class per week during the regular instructional day for any given class, based on the availability of appropriate volunteer instructors. Schools may limit religious instruction to the last hour of the school day, may designate a specific day of the week for all religious instruction and may set the total length of the instructional block so that it will not extend the entire academic year. Volunteer instructors for the individual schools will provide parents with a schedule in advance of the commencement of religious instruction each year.

Students with permission to participate (parents have signed either the original petition or have added their name to the petition with a signed note) will meet in the designated area during the designated religious instruction time.

Volunteers must use an approved body of materials that meet the requirements of the division and school mission statements and are appropriate to the age of the students. Volunteer teachers must submit a Criminal Records check and a Manitoba Child Abuse Registry check to HSD in advance of the commencement of the instructional block, in order to qualify.

Any use of extra materials for home study is restricted to those students participating in religious instruction during the approved block of religious instruction. This material may only be distributed in the school by designated volunteer instructors as part of the religious instruction class and collected by the same volunteers. Markers of such materials are not authorized to access the students directly through the school.

Students not participating in religious instruction will be in a regular classroom supervised by a teacher and will be working on the regular Manitoba curriculum for their grade. This work will be supplementary in the sense that it will not create homework or missed essential learning for the students opting in to religious instruction, nor will it create extra busy work or homework for those students not opting in.