



Education office, City of Oulu
Kasarmintie 3, 90100 OULU

Form for the comprehensive school

Pupil participation in the religious events of the school

The new Freedom of Religion Act entered into force on 1st August 2003. It introduces changes when it comes to organizing teaching and practices of participating in religious events. The National Board of Education has issued national guidelines on the matter.

The new arrangements mainly apply to those who start school. They will be given information on the matter. This handout applies to religious events in the school and we ask the guardian's point of view as for the pupil participation in the religious events in the school. The handout will be given to the guardians of all the pupils.

What are religious events in the school?

In addition to teaching of religion, there may be religious events in school life, such as services, religious morning assemblies or religious concerts. Such events are considered as practising religion. Under the Finnish Constitution, no one is under the obligation, against his/her conscience, to participate in the practice of a religion. Therefore, a pupil can be released from participation in religious events in the school, upon the request of the guardian. For the time of the religious events, the school will organize other activities for the pupils.

A prayer, a hymn or learning about a life in a religious community connected with teaching of a religion is not considered as practice of a religion, according to the national guidelines. The same goes for elements referring to a religion connected with traditional festivities in the school. For example, a single hymn does not make a school festivity into a religious event.

The religious events organised in our school this school year (to be filled in by the school)

Religious events in accordance with one's own religion

According to the national guidelines, as a main rule, a pupil cannot be released from religious events in accordance with one's own religion, but the pupil participates in them as a part of normal school work. However, if for justified reasons of conscience, the pupil wants to be released from participation in the religious events of one's own religion, the guardian and the pupil have to discuss this with the principal. The principal may grant an exemption after the discussion.

Other religious events

The pupil can participate in other religious events than of his/her own religion in the school. The guardian of the pupil states, whether the pupil participates in religious events other than of his/her own religion or not. Please fill in the enclosed form and return it to the class teacher. Information you have given us applies the present school year.

Pupils studying ethics

If the pupil studies ethics, his/her guardian informs the school, whether the pupil participates in the religious events in the school or not. Please fill in the enclosed form and return it to the class teacher. Information you have given us applies the present school year.

Signature of principal