

**WALLINGFORD-
SWARTHMORE
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

SECTION: PROGRAMS

TITLE: RELIGIOUS NEUTRALITY IN SCHOOLS

ADOPTED: January 22, 2001

REVISED:

<p>136. RELIGIOUS NEUTRALITY IN SCHOOLS</p>	
<p>1. Authority</p>	<p>The Wallingford-Swarthmore Board recognizes that religious freedom is protected against government interference or encroachment by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court over the years have defined and reaffirmed this Constitutional guarantee in relation to the nation's public schools and have upheld "religious neutrality" as the standard to which all schools must repair.</p>
<p>2. Definition</p>	<p>The Supreme Court has defined religious neutrality as refraining from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of any and all religions. 2. Expressions of opposition or hostility to religion. 3. Showing preference for one religion over another.
<p>3. Guidelines</p>	<p>Accordingly, the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District is committed to preserving the principle of separation of church and state as a safeguard of religious freedom for all Americans while at the same time recognizing the importance of religion and its role in our society. Consequently, programs which teach about religion and its role in the social and historical development of civilization do not violate the religious neutrality of the public school. However, the staff of the district schools shall not permit or sponsor religious observances, devotions, or celebrations. Accordingly, staff members shall strive to devise programs that are inclusive rather than exclusive and avoid practices which single out and isolate pupils and thereby serve to embarrass those children who would otherwise wish to be excused.</p>