

The Manchester Board of Education adheres to the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes 10-16(c), Prescribed Courses of Study, which specifies that curricular areas will be "planned, ongoing, and systematic" in their sequencing and presentation to students. The attainment of subject area knowledge is a building process for the learner, and gaps in this process can lead to a less well-educated individual. For any learning to occur, class attendance by students is essential; therefore, attendance policies are rigorous and are strictly enforced. To meet the goals of public education, the Manchester Board of Education provides a K-8 instructional program that is required for all students; electives are introduced at the High School level, where students must meet graduation requirements.

The Board recognizes that circumstances may arise in which exemption from class attendance is requested by a student or a student's parent(s) or guardian(s). Also, the Manchester Board of Education recognizes the fundamental importance of parents in the education of their children, and its policy is to grant reasonable parental requests for exemption under the circumstances enumerated below:

Mandatory Curricular Exemptions:

Upon the written request of a parent or guardian received by the school district prior to planned instruction in the areas set forth below, the Manchester Board of Education (the "Board") shall permit curricular exemptions for instruction in the following areas:

1. Dissection;
2. Family life education;
3. HIV/AIDS;
4. Sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program; or
5. Firearms safety programs.

Definitions:

"Dissection Instruction" is defined as instruction in which a student must participate in, or observe, the dissection of any animal.

"Family Life Education Instruction" is defined as instruction pertaining to family planning, human sexuality, parenting, nutrition and the emotional, physical, psychological, hygienic, economic and social aspects of family life.

"HIV/AIDS Instruction" is defined as ongoing and systematic instruction on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) offered by the district pursuant to state law.

"Sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program" is defined as the state-wide program identified or developed by the Department of Children and Families, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (or a similar entity) that includes age-appropriate educational materials designed for children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, regarding child sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention that may include, but not be limited to, (A) the skills to recognize (i) child sexual abuse and assault, (ii) boundary violations and unwanted forms of touching and contact, and (iii) ways offenders groom or desensitize victims, and (B) strategies to (i) promote disclosure, (ii) reduce self-blame, and (iii) mobilize bystanders.

Other Curricular Exemptions

1. Religious Reasons - Reasonable accommodations will be made in order to honor a request for exemption for religious reasons.

Written Request for Mandatory Exemption:

Parents who wish to exercise such exemptions must notify the school district in writing in advance of the instruction to be provided.

Permissive Curricular Exemptions:

Except for the mandatory and other curricular exemptions noted above, or otherwise required by law, the Board does not require teachers to exempt students from any other aspect of the curriculum.

Alternative Assignments:

1. Any student excused from participating in, or observing, the dissection of any animal as part of classroom instruction shall be required to complete an alternate assignment to be determined by the teacher.
2. Any student excused from participating in the sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program or a firearm safety program shall be provided, during the period of time in which the student would otherwise be participating in such program, an opportunity for other study or academic work as determined by the teacher.
3. Any student excused from any other aspect of the curriculum may be required by the teacher to complete an alternative assignment as determined by the teacher.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-16c.
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-16e.
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-18c.
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-18d.
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-19(b).
Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-101q.

Adopted: July 10, 1995

Revised: May 22, 2023