

Released Time for Religious Instruction During the School Day

The Ohio Virtual Academy desires to cooperate with parents & guardians who wish to provide for religious instruction for their children but also recognizes its responsibility to enforce the attendance requirements of the State.

Students shall be provided "released time" during the school day to attend a course in religious instruction conducted by a sponsoring entity, provided that the following requirements are met:

- A. student's parent or guardian gives consent in writing;
- B. sponsoring entity maintains attendance records and makes them available to OHVA;
- C. sponsoring entity provides and assumes liability for the student; and
- D. student assumes responsibility for any missed school work.
- E. students parent/guardian understand that this time does not count towards the students regular attendance requirements at OHVA.

Transportation of students to and from released time instruction is the responsibility of the sponsoring entity, the parent, guardian, and/or student. The OHVA Board and employees are immune from liability for any injuries arising from transportation to and from released time instruction. Further, no OHVA funds will be used for, and no school staff shall be involved in, the provision of religious instruction.

As required by law, OHVA shall collaborate, when necessary, with a sponsoring entity to identify a time for religious instruction to be offered during the school day.

While OHVA's online model of education provides some added flexibility, the "released time" should not conflict with a scheduled core curriculum subject course. OHVA considers all graded courses to be core curriculum.

High school students may earn up to two (2) units of high school credit for coursework completed during released time instruction.

OHVA will evaluate the course based on secular criteria including, but not limited to:

- A. the number of hours of instructional time;
- B. a review of the course syllabus that reflects course requirements and materials used;
- C. the assessment methods used in the course; and
- D. the instructor's qualifications, which shall be similar to the qualification of other teachers in OHVA.

The decision as to whether to provide credit for a specific released time religious instruction course will be neutral as to religious content.

Nothing herein shall constitute an endorsement of religion and/or infringe upon an individual's First Amendment rights.

Legal Reference: **Ohio Revised Code 3313.6022**