



Patriotic Observances

The Public Schools Act, Sections 41(1)(b), 85, and 229 allows for patriotic observances to be held in schools (opening and closing exercises). Patriotic observances are also dealt with in The Education Administration Act, Section 16(1)(b) and Manitoba Regulation 472/88R (The Schools Patriotic Observances Regulation).

The Administrative Handbook for Schools provides guidance on the implementation of the requirements for patriotic observances. The following section has been excerpted from the Administrative Handbook for Schools:

General Responsibilities:

Opening and closing of school: At the opening of each regularly scheduled school day, pupils shall sing the first verse and the chorus of "O Canada". The singing in all cases shall be done by the pupils, assisted by any means approved by the principal. Pupils are required to stand erect in an attitude of attentiveness, excepting those pupils who are excused by the school board on medical or other grounds satisfactory to the school board.

If a student or parent/guardian objects to all or part of the opening or closing exercises due to conscientious, religious, cultural, or spiritual beliefs, the student will be exempted and given the option not to participate. The school principal and classroom teacher will ensure that every effort is made to respect the dignity of students who are excused from participation in "O Canada".

A student is not required to participate in "O Canada" in the following circumstances:

1. In the case of a student who is less than 18 years old, if the student's parent or guardian submits a written application to the principal to be exempted from doing so.
2. In the case of a student who is at least 18 years old, if the student submits a written application to the principal to be exempted from doing so.

An optional form for the written application is attached to this procedure.

Procedure for Opting-Out of "O Canada":

- A student who does not participate in "O Canada" may remain seated in class or wait in an agreed upon location through the duration of the exercise.
- A student who does not participate is expected to opt-out respectfully. For example, if the student remains in the class, they will be expected to sit quietly and not be engaged in other activity until the opening exercises have been completed.



Suggested Request Form for O Canada Exemption

Name of student(s) _____

Name of parent(s)/guardian(s) _____

I do hereby request that the student(s) named above be exempted from standing during O Canada.

I / we understand that the procedure for students who are exempted from O Canada is as follows:

- A student who does not participate in “O Canada” may remain seated in class or wait in an agreed upon location through the duration of the exercise.
- A student who does not participate is expected to opt-out respectfully. For example, if the student remains in the class, they will be expected to sit quietly and not be engaged in other activity until the opening exercises have been completed.

Reason for requesting exemption:

- Conscientious
- Religious
- Cultural
- Spiritual beliefs

Explanation of request for exemption:

Signature of parent / guardian for students under 18 years old

Signature of student if 18 years or older