

Chippewa Valley Montessori Charter School Holiday Celebration Policy

Purpose

Our school is a diverse community that includes families with many different beliefs and customs connected to holidays, celebrations, and other cultural traditions (referred to here collectively as “holidays”) that occur throughout the year. It is our intent to honor this diversity of beliefs in our community as well as the diversity of beliefs around the globe. Therefore, we approach holidays primarily from an educational perspective, using holidays to teach about topics such as history and culture while not taking time away from education to celebrate holidays.

Scope

- a. This policy describes the organization’s approach to recognizing holidays within the school setting.
- b. This policy applies to all classrooms.
- c. No children or adults will be required to participate in any celebration if they or their parent/guardian requests they be excused.
- d. All staff members will be tolerant of all religious beliefs and non-beliefs.

Guidelines for Religious Holidays

Generally, we recognize but do not celebrate religious holidays such as Christmas, Diwali, Easter, Eid, Halloween, Hanukkah, Kwanza, St. Patrick’s Day, and Valentine’s Day. It is up to grade-level teams to determine how that level (Children’s House, E1, or E2) will recognize each particular holiday, consistent with educational objectives and this policy.

Guidance for Particular Religious Holidays

This guidance is meant to address some common questions that have arisen at our school:

- a. Christmas: (1) Families are encouraged to not give teachers gifts but they may give a gift to the classroom; (2) All decorations and projects need to be defensible within the curriculum and standards; and (3) Trees, lights, and other items may be acceptable, consistent with applicable legal standards and district policies.
- b. Halloween: Costumes should not be worn by students or staff.
- c. St. Patrick’s Day: Students should be discouraged from “pinching” and other practical jokes.
- d. Valentine’s Day: Students should be discouraged from bringing cards from home to distribute.

Guidelines for Non-Religious Holidays

We recognize non-religious holidays such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, New Year, Presidents’ Day, Thanksgiving, and Veterans Day. Teachers should provide information regarding these holidays and provide appropriate educational activities.

Birthdays

We recognize students' birthdays at the classroom level but those recognitions should not include treats or presents.

References

Chippewa Valley Montessori Charter School Diversity Policy and Plan
ECASD Policy 323.1 Special Observance Days
ECASD Policy 323.3 Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs