Summary of the guidelines on religious instruction

in state primary schools, intermediate schools and ngā kura

Religious instruction in New Zealand

Boards of trustees (boards) of state primary schools, when making decisions about whether and how to allow religious instruction, should always keep the wellbeing and rights of diverse students and their family and whānau at the centre of decision-making.

Boards can choose to close their school to allow religious instruction programmes, under certain conditions. This means that while some boards may not close their school to allow religious instruction programmes, others may choose to because it reflects what their community wants.

The kind of religious instruction, and content of religious instruction programmes allowed may vary greatly between schools.

These guidelines are intended to be used by boards to develop policies and practices that address each of these scenarios

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| Recommendations |
| 1 | Use community consultation to inform the decision about whether or not to allow religious instruction |
| 2 | Provide full and accurate information to students, families and whānau to help them make informed decisions |
| 3 | Offer valid alternatives to religious instruction if religious instruction takes place when the school would usually be open for teaching |
| 4 | Require signed consent from a parent or caregiver before allowing a student to participate in religious instruction |
| 5 | Use volunteers who are not teaching staff to lead religious instruction |
| 6 | Provide secular school and student support services |
| 7 | Ensure safety checks on volunteers have been completed |
| 8 | Communicate the complaints procedure to families and whānau and use that complaints procedure to resolve issues |