

STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS

- I. The Right to Form and Attend Bible clubs and Prayer Groups on Campus. The Equal Access Act gives students the right to meet on campus for the purpose of participating in Bible Clubs and prayer groups. The Equal Access Act was held to be constitutional by the Supreme Court in *Westside Community Schools v. Mergens*, 495 U.S., 110 L.Ed.2d (1990).
- II. The Right to Identify Your Religious Beliefs through Signs and Symbols. Students have the right to express their beliefs using Christian jewelry or clothing. “Students (do not) shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.” *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District*, 393 U.S. 503, 506 (1969).
- III. The Right to Talk about Your Religious Beliefs on Campus. Freedom of speech is a fundamental right mandated by the Constitution of the United States and cannot be prohibited on school grounds without significant justification by the school authorities.
- IV. The Right to Distribute Religious Literature on Campus. The distribution of literature on a public-school campus may not be restricted merely because it is religious. “When (a student) is in the cafeteria, on the playing field, or on the campus during the authorized hours he may express his opinions.” *Tinker*, at 512-13. This includes the right to advertise about the Bible club by using the public address system, school bulletin boards, school newspapers, flier distribution or posters around the school.
- V. The Right to Pray on Campus. Students may pray alone or with others so long as it does not disrupt school activities. The Supreme Court has only prohibited school endorsed prayers. Individual prayers have not been prohibited.
- VI. The Right to Carry or Study Your Bible on Campus. Students may study their Bible on campus. Any time the student has free time to

read unassigned materials is an appropriate time for Bible study or reading. As in the case with school prayer, the Supreme Court has said that only state directed Bible reading is unconstitutional.

- VII. The Right to Do Research Papers, Speeches, and Creative Projects with Religious Themes. The First Amendment does not forbid all mention of religion in public schools. In fact, religious study is allowed as long as the school does not attempt to convert students to a certain religious belief.
- VIII. The Right to be Exempt from Classes That Conflict with Deeply Held Religious beliefs. Students may be exempt from activities and class content that contradict their religious beliefs.
- IX. The Right to Celebrate or Study Religious Holidays on Campus. Music, art, literature, and drama that have religious themes are permitted as part of the curriculum for school activities if presented in an objective manner as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday.
- X. The Right to Meet with School Officials. The First Amendment to the Constitution forbids congress to make any law that would restrict the right of the people to petition the Government (school officials). Students have the right to meet with officials of the school and should be encouraged to establish a good relationship with school administrators.