

**Cambridge Public Schools
Administrative Guidelines and Procedures**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND DISPLAY OF THE FLAG

Section 69 of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws requires that the “flag [of the United States] shall be displayed, weather permitting, on the school building or grounds on every school day and on every legal holiday or day proclaimed by the governor or the President of the United States for special observance; provided, that on stormy school days, it shall be displayed inside the building.” In addition, this statutory provision also requires that a flag be displayed in every classroom and in each assembly hall or other room in the school where opening exercises are held.

This state law also requires teachers, at the commencement of the first class of the day at each grade level in a public school, to lead the class in a group recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, however, has recognized that both students and teachers have a constitutional right not to participate in the Pledge. Many school districts address this issue by having schools set aside time during the homeroom period each day and by asking students and employees to stand while the Pledge of Allegiance is recited over the school’s public address system.

School administrators must also remember that individuals who as a matter of conscience refuse to salute the flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance should not be disciplined, excluded, or otherwise treated any differently from individuals who participate in the Pledge.

It is expected, however, that any student or employee who does not wish to take part in the Pledge of Allegiance will respect the right of others who wish to take part in the Pledge to do so without interruption or disruption.

Policy references: IMDB

Legal references: M.G.L. c. 71, § 69

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