

OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD	Policy Code: KCDA-R
Policy Committee Review: June 14, 2017 & Sept. 13, 2017 School Board First Read: October 4, 2017 School Board Second Read/Adoption: October 18, 2017 Re-review by Policy Committee: March 14, 2018 Updated: March 27, 2023	Page 1 of 2

## **MEMORIALS, DEDICATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS PROCEDURE**

Flags: Flying a flag at half-staff can only be ordered by the President or Governor.

Assemblies: Large memorial assemblies should not be convened at school and funerals should not be held on school grounds. When spontaneous assemblies of grieving persons occur, they should be managed by allowing reasonable time to assemble in the individual or group's natural school setting (e.g. classroom, common area, etc.), then asking students and staff to continue with their school day and routine. It is important to provide a place for people to process individually or in small groups with professional support.

Moments of Silence: A moment of silence may be used following the death of a student or staff member to honor their memory. School wide moments should be limited to the time immediately following the death. Moments of silence at an event may be used at the discretion of the organizer of the event, but should not be prolonged nor repeated.

Spontaneous Memorials: Spontaneous memorials such as banners, pictures, collections of objects or notes are discouraged. A memory book where students can write personal and lasting remembrances is preferred. This book can then be given to the family. Any temporary memorial that is spontaneously created cannot alter district-owned property. All temporary memorials should be removed within two weeks of a death or within two days of a funeral recognizing that death.

Yearbooks, Graduations and Award Assemblies: Deceased students may be recognized as individuals in yearbooks or at graduation events as any other student or graduate would be upon request of the deceased student's family, and with approval of the Superintendent in consultation with the Crisis Response Team. Dedication pages in the yearbook will not be permitted, as per best practice to deny permanent memorials.

Individual Speech: This policy does recognize individual right to speech and the right of individuals to display symbols memorializing people. However, the policy does allow administrators to regulate time, place and manner of expression to best meet the overall needs of all students, staff, parents and community. The administrator must balance the right to speech with the possible disruption to the educational environment when making decisions on individual memorials.

Permanent Memorials: Permanent memorials are not permitted in public school buildings or on school grounds. This includes but is not limited to plaques, markers, trees, and other items dedicated to a deceased individual. Erecting memorials may have the potential for re-traumatizing both students and staff who knew the victim, as well as families and possibly the surrounding community depending on the scope of the event.

Living Memorials: A living memorial is a non-tangible memorial designed to be sustained over time such as named endowments, scholarships or sponsorship of events. Such donations must be approved by the superintendent. Designated donations such as to a library or co-curricular program in the name of a deceased person, but not having an enduring naming right, will be accepted under policy KCD.

Existing Memorials: The district reserves the right to remove a memorial if it is not or cannot be maintained or is contrary to the overall educational needs of students.

Any memorial item may be moved, relocated, replaced or removed. The superintendent shall make reasonable efforts to notify the original donor or representatives of such considerations.

OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD	Policy Code: KCDA-R
Policy Committee Review: June 14, 2017 & Sept.13, 2017 School Board First Read: October 4, 2017 School Board Second Read/Adoption: October 18, 2017 Re-review by Policy Committee: March 14, 2018 Updated: March 27, 2023	Page 2 of 2

### Alternative to Permanent Memorials

As best practices discourage the establishment of permanent memorials in schools, temporary and timely memorial activities are suitable encouraged alternatives. Memorial activities provide an opportunity for people to express emotions and to be supported by the school community. Activities symbolize that every student and staff member is important, and help to unite and strengthen those impacted by the death(s). The activities provide a forum for a collective grief and bring people together to reduce feelings of isolation and vulnerability and illustrate the universality of grief. Memorial activities can serve a larger purpose as well – to promote positive action toward a cause, such as safety, mental health services, or health and wellness.

Planning a variety of activities offers people options for remembrance. Options for memorial activities include but are not limited to: holding a day of community service or creating a school-based community service program in honor of the deceased; putting together a team to participate in an awareness or fundraising event sponsored by a national health awareness organization; sponsoring awareness events specific to the nature of the loss; purchasing books related to the loss for the school library; and volunteering for a related cause.

### Prohibited Memorial Activities

Selling and or fundraising for memorial items during the school day is prohibited. District accounts including student activity accounts cannot be used to support, finance, or fundraise for memorialization. Proceeds from district events cannot be donated to agencies for memorialization. However, fundraising at district events can be done for organizations in the name of deceased persons, limited to a single event. Utilizing formal all-school events including (e.g. Graduation, Prom or other thematic events or weeks) to memorialize deceased students or staff is prohibited. Commemorative items or events can be sponsored by community-based agencies and promoted outside of the school day.

Cross Reference: KCDA – Memorials, Dedications and Recognitions