

**Law of Kyrgyz Republic
On Religious Education and Religious Schools**

CHAPTER I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Clause 1. Subject of Regulation

1. This Law aims to provide for: systemization of religious education in Kyrgyz Republic; regulation of the legal relationships of religious education entities and their interrelations with government institutions and non-religious educational establishments; identification of types and forms of religious school activities and streamlining of the forms of religious school activities in compliance with the requirements of government policies in the sphere of religion.

2. This Law aims to streamline religious education, preserve the religious and spiritual culture of the people of Kyrgyz Republic, and ensure legal guarantees for religious and moral education.

**Clause 2. Kyrgyz Republic Legislation on
Religious Education**

1. Kyrgyz Republic legislation on religious education rests on the principles of sovereignty, stability, and national security of Kyrgyz Republic as enshrined in the Constitution of Kyrgyz Republic, the Law of Kyrgyz Republic On Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations in Kyrgyz Republic, in this Law, and in the international human rights treaties and agreements ratified by Kyrgyz Republic, as well as in other adopted laws and regulations on freedom of religion and religious education.

Clause 3. Basic Terms

The basic terms of this Law are used in the following meaning:

(Program) certification – educational program compliance with government and other educational programs;

Final exam – is interdisciplinary and serves to evaluate the graduate's theoretical and practical knowledge; it includes a check of the graduate's knowledge in the set of the special disciplines studied;

Sunday school – Christian education of children and adults conducted on Sundays;

Ecclesiastical seminary – a Christian school for clergy training;

Clerical college – a secondary clerical school providing religious education;

Religious institutions – highly specialized higher education establishments for professional clergy training;

Koran study course – teaching of basic Islamic concepts;

Licensing – issue of training permits to educational establishments to carry out training activities aimed at ensuring education with a guaranteed quality level conforming to state standard requirements;

Madrasah – a special secondary Muslim school, a religion-oriented school providing general secondary education in conjunction with special training of students in the field of religion;

(Religious) boarding school – a closed school with a dormitory organized by private or legal persons and providing for students' full upkeep;

Religious education program – is aimed to achieve the following objectives: formation of personal culture; training of religion-oriented specialists; adaptation of individuals for life in society; building of a basis for making informed choice and for mastering of basic, general-education, and professional religious education programs;

Religious education – activities of religious schools aimed at specialized study of religion, at learning and dissemination of religious cults, and at preparation of students for divine worship activities based on a religious education program;

Religious universities – multipurpose higher religious education establishments;

Parish school – a basic school organized by a parish.

CHAPTER II. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SYSTEM

Clause 4. The Right for Religious Education

Each citizen of Kyrgyz Republic shall enjoy the right to receive basic, secondary, special, or higher religious education irrespective of his/her sex, ethnicity, language, social or property status, religion, or political or religious beliefs.

Clause 5. Religious Education Standards

1. Religious education standards must be developed by religious education actors and approved by authorized state bodies in charge of education and religion affairs.

2. Religious education standards must be based on the state education standard established in Kyrgyz Republic.

3. The main requirements for standards applied to all religious education programs:

- clear definition of the limits for the minimum level of obligatory knowledge in the religious education program content;
- clear definition of the students' maximum academic load;
- definition of requirements for knowledge levels of religious school graduates;
- definition of the forms of documents certifying the specialization and qualification levels of religious school graduates;
- definition of professional requirements for teachers.

Clause 6. Legal Status of Religious Schools

1. The rights of the legal person of a religious school in terms of its financial and economic activities defined by its charter and focused on the educational process preparation shall emerge as of the moment the religious school is registered by justice agencies.

2. The right of a religious school to conduct religious education activities and use the benefits established by Kyrgyz Republic laws shall emerge as of the moment the school is issued a registration certificate.

The registration certificate shall be issued by the authorized state agency for religion affairs in compliance with Kyrgyz Republic laws.

4. Negative findings of expert evaluation results and the ensuing refusal to license a religious school may be contested by its founder in court.

5. Control over the observance of Kyrgyz Republic laws on religious education shall be provided by respective authorized agencies in charge of education and religion affairs.

Clause 7. Religious Education Programs

Religious education programs are focused on achieving the objectives of: personal culture formation; training of specialists of relevant qualifications; adaptation of individuals for life in society; formation of a basis for informed choice-making; and mastering of basic, general-education, and professional religious education programs.

Authorized state agencies for education and religion affairs have the right to inspect religious schools, instruct them to eliminate detected violations, and make decisions on suspending their activities in cases where they do not comply with the education programs and conditions established during registration in compliance with Kyrgyz Republic laws.

Clause 8. Founder of a Religious School

A religious school may be founded by a registered religious organization on condition that it complies with state education programs and has proper documents required for opening and running educational establishments.

Foreign citizens cannot be the founders of religious schools.

Clause 9. Religious School Charter

1. The charter of a religious school shall be approved by its founder.
2. The charter of a religious school shall indicate:
 - the founder's name and location (legal address);
 - goals and objectives;
 - a list of the education services provided, and the education procedure;
 - admission procedure;
 - expulsion procedure;
 - a description of the academic activity management, including the language (languages) used for teaching and mentoring, and the training regime;
 - the staffing procedure of the religious education establishment, the staff's work conditions and payment procedures, the staff's rights and responsibilities;
 - the financial and economic activity structure and procedures, the permanent sources of funding and logistic support of the religious school activities;
 - the charter update procedure, and
 - the religious school reorganization and liquidation procedure.

Clause 10. Religious Education: Mode of Tuition

The mode of tuition for religious education in Kyrgyz Republic shall be full time; no other modes of tuition shall be envisioned.

The number of students at secondary and higher religious schools shall be determined in compliance with the Kyrgyz Republic Law On Education and the Kyrgyz Republic Law On Licensing.

Home-based religious tuition or organization of religious training courses outside religious-purpose facilities shall not be allowed.

Clause 11. Religious Education Certificates

Religious schools shall issue relevant religious education certificates.

Religious schools must undergo licensing and subsequent evaluation procedures of the authorized state education agency and issue relevant religious education certificates to graduates who have passed the final exams and have mastered the religious and general education programs.

CHAPTER III. LEGAL RELATIONS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Clause 12. Rights and Duties of Religious School Students and Staff

1. The rights and duties of religious school students and staff shall be determined by this Law and by the religious school charter.

2. The students shall enjoy all rights and duties required for full implementation of their education program and, after their graduation from the religious school, the right to receive a certificate confirming the religious education received and stating the qualification awarded.

3. The students are obliged to master the education programs at the level of religious education program requirements, observe in-house regulations, respect national traditions, and be legally and materially liable for damages caused by them in consistence with the procedure established by the Kyrgyz Republic Law.

4. Under-age citizens of Kyrgyz Republic shall not be allowed travelling abroad for the purpose of receiving religious education.

5. Kyrgyz Republic citizens shall be allowed travelling abroad with the purpose of receiving religious education if approved by the authorized state bodies in charge of religion and education affairs as provisioned by the Kyrgyz Republic legislation.

6. Persons teaching religious subjects must have higher or secondary special religious (clerical) education;

7. Religious school staff shall enjoy the rights to:

- protect their dignity and professional honor; and
- demand proper conditions for implementing their professional activities.

8. Religious school staff shall be obliged to:

- observe teachers' ethic standards;
- ensure that their students achieve results that conform with state education program requirements;
- form students' high moral behavior standards; and
- avoid applying physical or moral violence to students.

Clause 13. Social Provision Arrangements at Religious Schools

1. Religious schools shall pay state social insurance deductions under the procedure and in the amounts stipulated by Kyrgyz Republic laws.

2. All religious school staff shall be awarded pensions on a common basis as provisioned by Kyrgyz Republic laws.

CHAPTER IV. RELIGIOUS SCHOOL REGISTRATION, REORGANIZATION, AND LIQUIDATION

Clause 14. Religious School Registration

1. Religious schools shall be registered under the procedure established by: the Civil Code of Kyrgyz Republic, the Kyrgyz Republic Law On State Registration of Legal Entities, the Kyrgyz Republic Law On Freedom of

Religion and Religious Organizations in Kyrgyz Republic, the Kyrgyz Republic Law On Education, and by other laws and regulations.

2. Religious schools shall undergo record registration at the authorized state agency in charge of religion affairs and be licensed by the authorized state agency in charge of education affairs in compliance with Kyrgyz Republic laws.

Clause 15. Religious School Reorganization and Liquidation

1. Religious schools may be reorganized into a different religious or education organization in compliance with Kyrgyz Republic laws.

The religious school reorganization procedure shall be established by the religious school charter and in compliance with Kyrgyz Republic laws.

2. Religious schools shall be liquidated:

- in compliance with the Kyrgyz Republic Law On State Registration of Legal Entities and the Kyrgyz Republic Law On Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations in Kyrgyz Republic;

- in compliance with the religious school charter; and

- as advised by the authorized state agency in charge of religion affairs or the authorized state agency in charge of education affairs in cases where the religious education activities were carried out without a proper license (certificate), or in cases of other legally prohibited activities, or in cases of activities that are not envisioned in its charter – on a judicial authority decision.

CHAPTER V. RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUNDING

Clause 16. Sources of Religious School Funding

Religious schools may use the following sources of funding:

- own funds and incomes raised during the training process;

- incomes from ancillary farms or from production activities;

- contributions or heritage received from physical or legal entities;

- funds of foreign physical or legal entities provided in the form of sponsor aid or contributions; and

- any other funds received in a way that conforms with Kyrgyz Republic laws.

Clause 17. Material and Technical Base of Religious Schools

Religious schools' property and material and technical base shall include buildings, structures, equipment, facilities used for implementing social and humanitarian activities, and other means necessary for implementing the organization's activities.

CHAPTER VI. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Clause 18. International Cooperation

1. International cooperation in the field of religious education shall be based on the principles of independence, equality, and mutual respect; it must not damage the national sovereignty, security, or public interests of Kyrgyz Republic.

Types of international cooperation activities in the field of religious education:

- temporary engagement of foreign teachers;
- sending of students abroad for receiving or enhancing their religious knowledge; and
- organization of scientific and practical events for teachers designed to improve their qualification and provide for experience sharing.

2. Studies, training, retraining, and advanced training of Kyrgyz Republic citizens at foreign religious schools, as well as training of foreign citizens at the religious schools of Kyrgyz Republic shall be based on agreements concluded between religious schools, unless this constitutes a violation of Kyrgyz Republic laws.

CHAPTER VII. FINAL PROVISIONS

Clause 19. Effective Date

1. This Law shall become effective as of the date of its official publication.

2. Kyrgyz Republic Government shall pass the regulatory and legal acts necessary for this Law's implementation.