

## Comparative Table: Public Schools

List of abbreviations		Notes
Ahmadis	Ah	
Alawites	Al	
Baha'is	B	
Catholics	Ca	
Copts	Co	
Jehovah's Witnesses	JW	
Jews	J	
Muslims	M	This category includes both Sunni and Shia Muslims.
Orthodox Christians	OC	
Protestants	P	
Religious education	RE	
Religious minority	RM	
Religious organization	RO	
Shia Muslims	ShM	
Syriac Christians	SC	This category includes both Catholics and Orthodox.
Western Thrace	WT	

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
1. In your country, is religion taught in public schools?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. In your country, what is the existing system of teaching religion in public schools?	Teaching about religions as a specif school subject (1)	Teaching of religion as a specific school subject	Teaching of religion as a specific school subject	Teaching of religion as a specific school subject	Teaching of religion as a specific school subject (2)	Teaching of religion as a specific school subject

(1) Christianity is taught from the 1st grade, then other religions. From the 10th-12th grade, history of religions is taught.

(2) RE is a compulsory subject; however, it is a “pass” or “fail” subject (i.e., it is not calculated as part of a student’s final grade). Some other subjects also include religious notions, such as the Arabic language class, where some Islamic religious texts and Hadiths of the Prophet are taught.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
3. Can the religion of the following RMs be taught in public schools?	All RM religions (Ca, JW, J, M, OC) can be taught in the context of teaching about religion.	Ca: no JW: no J: no M: no (with some exceptions) P: no (3)	JW: no J: yes M: no OC: yes P: yes (4)	Yes, all RM religions (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no (5)	Ah: no Al: yes JW: no SC: yes (5)
3.1. Are they taught within or outside the school timetable?	Within	N/A	Within	Within	Within	Within
3.2. Are they taught for how many hours per week?	It depends on the grade.	N/A	No definite schedule (6)	1 hour per week	2 hours per week (7)	1-2 hours per week

(3) Only the Orthodox religion is taught in all public schools (the Orthodox Church is the majority RO). In primary schools, Law no. 4386/2016 makes it possible to hire teachers of Catholic and Jewish religion on a yearly basis, but it is very seldom applied, with the exception of the Cyclades, where there is a significant Catholic population. Islam is taught in WT - in minority schools for Greek nationals of Muslim religion (characterized by a bilingual Greek-Turkish education system), as well as in public schools. In the latter, it can be taught as an alternative to Orthodox tuition when a sufficient number of Muslim students request exemption from it (Art. 53 of Law no. 4115/2013).

(4) Jews have to right to address any requests coming from students, their families or school authorities concerning the study of Judaism. Christian Orthodox and Protestants have to right to address any requests coming from students, their families or school authorities concerning the study of the religious factor and its implications.

(5) Only the religion of recognized RMs can be taught in public schools.

(6) Classes are given when requested by students, teachers or other stakeholders.

(7) The Ministry of Education allocates two lessons per week for RE, each lesson lasting for about 45 minutes.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
3.3. Who has the right to choose the textbooks: the state/school or RM authorities?	State/school	N/A (8)	RM authorities	RM authorities	State/school	School in cooperation with RM authorities (9)
3.4. Who has the right to define the syllabus content?	State/school	N/A	RM authorities	RM authorities	State in cooperation with experts of different religions (10)	School in cooperation with RM authorities (11)

(8) In WT, under the 1951 bilateral agreement signed with Turkey, Greek textbooks used for the Greek-language part of the curriculum were to be produced by the Greek state (like in all public schools), and the Turkish textbooks were to be imported from Turkey. Textbooks were to be inspected by the respective Ministries, which could censor material considered ideologically charged, and suggest changes. In 2000, new books for the Turkish-language part of the curriculum were imported from Turkey and approved by the Greek Ministry of Education.

(9) The local administration of the school in cooperation with the teachers (affiliated to their respective RM) who provide RE.

(10) The Ministry of Education selects a number of Christian experts and teachers to develop Christian RE curricula, and similarly it selects Muslim experts and teachers from the dominant Sunni denomination to develop Islamic RE curricula, under the supervision of the Curriculum Development Department.

(11) The local school authorities in cooperation with the teachers who impart RE.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
4. Are RE teachers chosen by the state/school or RM authorities?	State/school	N/A	RM authorities	RM authorities	State/school (12)	School in cooperation with RM authorities
4.1. If the answer to question 4 is state/school, are RMs involved in this choice?	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	Yes (13)

(12) In state-owned public schools, the government selects and appoints teachers in all subjects. As for RE, there is no staff or specific teachers who teach only RE, be it Islam or Christianity. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and the governorates' educational departments assign Islamic RE classes to Arabic language teachers. As for Christian RE, the educational administration chooses some Christian teachers who teach other subjects, such as science and social studies, to teach Christian RE in addition to their other basic school subjects. Thus, in public schools the religious authority has no role in selecting RE teachers.

(13) The religious authority chooses who of its clergymen is allowed to teach and who cannot. An agreement is made between the RM and the school concerning those eligible to teach. The school can only choose among those who are eligible to teach.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
5. Are RE teachers paid by the state/school or RM authorities?	State/school	N/A (14)	RM authorities	State/school	State/school	State/school (15)
5.1. Are RE teachers of the following RMs paid by the state/school?	Yes, all RM teachers (Ca, JW, J, M, OC) (16)	N/A	N/A	Yes, all RM teachers (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Ah: N/A B: N/A Co: yes ShM: N/A	Ah: N/A Al: yes JW: N/A SC: yes

(14) In WT, the state pays the salaries of teachers contracted to teach the optional class of Islamic religion in public schools of the region, as well of imams and muftis who teach in minority schools.

(15) The teachers are paid by the state/school. They can have another income paid by the RM authorities if they have other responsibilities in their RO.

(16) There is one teacher responsible for the teaching about religion, which covers both the majority and the minority religions.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
6. Do students have the right to opt out from the teaching of/about religion?	Yes (17)	Yes (18)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
6.1. If students opt out from the teaching of/about religion, are they obliged to attend another course?	No	No (19)	No	Yes	N/A	No

(17) Students have the right to be exempted from classes on Christianity, not from classes of teaching about religions.

(18) Following the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights, Papageorgiou and Others v. Greece, No. 4762/18 & 6140/18, 31 October 2019, students can do so without having to state their affiliation to a RM. Therefore the opt out right formally applies to anyone.

(19) In WT, Muslim students in public schools can be offered tuition in their own faith, when a sufficient number seeks exemption from the Orthodox RE.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
6.2. Do students who are members of the following RMs have the right to opt out from the teaching of religion?	Yes, all RM students (Ca, JW, J, M, OC)	Yes, all RM students (Ca, JW, J, M, P)	Yes, all RM students (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Yes, all RM students (JW, J, M, OC, P)	N/A	Yes, all RM students (Ah, Al, JW, SC)
7. Do public schools offer education on citizenship and living together?	Yes	Yes	Only as a transversal subject	Yes	Yes (20)	Yes (21)

(20) The Ministry of Education has announced its plans to develop a book on values and ethics within the curriculum for the 3rd grade, based on Muslims and Christian religious values, but not as a substitute for the RE subject that is compulsory for all school students.

(21) They teach a curriculum of civil education, which includes education on citizenship and living together. Although some curricula are considered outdated, teaching civil education is mandatory in all schools. Some schools have extra-curricular activities that teach about diversity and living together. These extra-curricular activities depend on the decision of schools' directors.



Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
8. Can teachers wear religious symbols when giving classes?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8.1. Can teachers who are members of the following RMs wear the symbols of their religion?	N/A	Yes, all RM teachers (Ca, JW, J, M, P)	Yes, all RM teachers (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Yes, all RM teachers (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no	Ah: no Al: yes JW: no SC: yes (22)

(22) Since Ahmadis and Jehovah's Witnesses are non-recognized RMs, any display of their religious symbols in state institutions (such as a public school) is illegal. Nevertheless, in practice, their members often wear or show their religious symbols without facing any problem.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
9. Can students wear religious symbols at school?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (23)	Yes
9.1. Can students who are members of the following RMs wear the symbols of their religion at school?	Yes, all RM students (Ca, JW, J, M, OC)	Yes, all RM students (Ca, JW, J, M, P)	Yes, all RM students (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Yes, all RM students (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no (24)	Ah: no Al: yes JW: no SC: yes (25)

(23) Students may wear religious symbols such as a cross or a headscarf. In some schools, there are special restrictions such as the prohibition to wear “over-the-top” accessories (not necessarily religious).

(24) Since Ahmadis, Baha'is and Shia Muslims are non-recognized RMs, their members cannot wear specific religious symbols declaring their identity.

(25) Since Ahmadis and Jehovah's Witnesses are non-recognized RMs, any display of their religious symbols in state institutions (such as a public school) is illegal. Nevertheless, in practice, their members often wear or show their religious symbols without facing any problem.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
10. Do public schools officially display religious symbols?	No (26)	Yes (27)	Yes (28)	Yes (29)	Yes	No (30)

(26) No, but the Danish flag, which includes a religious symbol, is used very often in Denmark, also at schools.

(27) These are Christian symbols and - only as far as WT is concerned - Islamic symbols.

(28) Only the crucifix.

(29) It is possible to display the crucifix, if parents and students do not oppose it.

(30) In most public schools religious symbols are displayed (even though it is illegal).

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
10.1. Can symbols of the following RMs be officially displayed in schools?	N/A	Ca: yes JW: no J: no M: no P: yes	JW: no J: no M: no OC: yes P: yes	JW: no J: no M: no OC: yes P: yes	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no (31)	N/A (32)

(31) Some religious symbols can be displayed in a limited number of lessons of social studies or history (when talking about Christianity in Egypt and the Coptic era).

(32) Although it is forbidden, many schools do display religious symbols. More precisely, all religious symbols are forbidden in all public schools and institutions. The prohibition concerns all religions but in many cases the symbols are displayed according to the following factors: 1) the religious affiliation of the directors and administrative personnel; 2) the geographical location of the school (many areas in Lebanon are inhabited by a dominant religious group); 3) the religious identity of the majority of the students at the school. The symbols concerned can be a cross, a verse from the Koran, a saying by Imam Ali, the five-colored Druze star, etc. Non-recognized RMs are not allowed to display any religious symbols in public schools.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
11. Can teachers refrain from giving classes on occasion of the festivities of their religion?	No (33)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (34)
11.1. Can teachers who are members of the following RMs refrain from giving classes on occasion of the festivities of their religion?	N/A	N/A	JW: no J: yes M: no OC: yes P: yes	Yes, all RM teachers (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no	N/A

(33) Teachers can use individual holidays on such occasions.

(34) In case of festivities officially recognized by the state, all public schools close. In case of religious festivities not recognized by the state as public vacations, teachers can refrain from giving classes if authorized by their school director. In some cases, teachers from different religious affiliations switch in taking off-days according to the dates of each other's festivity days, ensuring that teaching activities are not disrupted.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
12. Can students refrain from attending classes on occasion of the festivities of their religion?	No (35)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
12.1. Can students who are members of the following RMs refrain from attending classes on occasion of the festivities of their religion?	N/A	Ca: yes JW: no J: yes M: yes P: no (36)	JW: no J: yes M: no OC: yes P: yes	Yes, all RM students (JW, J, M, OC, P)	Ah: no B: no Co: yes ShM: no	N/A

(35) Students can use individual holidays on such occasions.

(36) The law allows Muslim students in primary and secondary schools throughout the country to be absent for two days each for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adhar. In early 2022 the Greek state Education Director for the region of WT issued a circular banning minority primary schools from closing early on Fridays to allow their students to attend Friday prayers.

Questions	Denmark	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Egypt	Lebanon
13. Do students have the right to obtain food that is not forbidden by their religion's dietary rules?	No (there is no specific right, just a possibility) (37)	No (there is no specific right, just a possibility)	No (there is no specific right, just a possibility) (38)	No (there is no specific right, just a possibility) (39)	Yes (40)	Yes (41)
13.1. Do students who are members of the following RMs have the right to obtain food that is not forbidden by their religion's dietary rules?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes, all RM students (Ah, B, Co, ShM)	Yes, all RM students (Ah, Al, JW, SC)

(37) Most students can bring their food from home.

(38) School canteens are regulated at regional and/or municipal level. However, national guidelines specify that canteens must provide for the possibility of specific meals for ethical/cultural/religious needs.

(39) This is mainly an issue in schools in the area of Lisbon, which are more multicultural.

(40) There are no restrictions on food in schools. Public schools often give out a school snack (pies or biscuits), and students can bring their own food from home or buy it inside or outside the school.

(41) There is the possibility to have certain types of food for students. Schools are not obliged to do so but they do it out of respect (and to discourage parents from transferring their children to other schools). Also, students, more often than not, bring their own lunches from home. However, canteens do provide a range of food products.