



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

TOWN OF EASTON
 humanrights@easton.ma.us

Resource for Holiday Observance

2023-2024 School Year

This guide was prepared by the Town of Easton’s Human Rights Committee as a resource for teachers, coaches, and all school personnel to promote cultural proficiency. The purpose of the guide is to explain what “observing” the following holidays means in terms of a student’s ability to be present in school, complete work, or participate in any after-school activities, as well as dietary and other considerations.

Please note that this guide describes only major holidays that fall during the school year, excluding winter and summer breaks.

We acknowledge that students may be absent for other religious or cultural observances beyond what is on this list, and we ask that school personnel treat such absences with understanding and accommodation.

± Excused absence

* Holy days usually begin at sundown the day before this date

† Will be allowed one (1) extra day after return to school to complete work

** Local or regional customs may use a variation of this date

‡ Dietary considerations

Date	Name of Holiday	Description	± Excused Absence	† Extra Day for Work	‡ Dietary Considerations
2023	September 15-19*	Rosh Hashanah ☆ • Jewish New Year • Observed with festive meals and temple attendance	✓	✓	--
	September 11-18*	Paryushana Parva • “Festival of Forgiveness” - most important Jain holiday • 8-10 days of intense spirituality • Observed with prayer, meditation, and fasting	--	--	✓
	October 15-24	Navarathri ॐ • 10-day celebration of autumn and the goddess Durga • Observed with fasting, evening prayers, vegetarian meals,, visiting friends & family	--	✓	✓
	September 24-25*	Yom Kippur ☆ • Day of atonement • Holiest day of Jewish calendar • Observed with 24-hour fast; refrain from work; temple attendance; festive meal to end fast at sundown	✓	✓	✓
	October 24	Dussehra ॐ • Celebration the victory of good over evil	--	--	--
	November 12	Diwali ॐ • Festival of lights	✓	✓	--
	October 12	Bandi chhor Divas • Day of liberation for Sikhs			
	December 7 - December 15*	Hanukkah ☆ • Festival of lights • Celebrated for 8 nights; sundown candle-lighting and gift giving	--	--	--
2024	January 7	Orthodox Christmas ‡ • Celebration of the birth of Jesus	✓	✓	--
	February 10	Lunar/Chinese New Year 🌸 • Pan-Asian celebration • Family reunions, festive meals, and gift-giving	✓	✓	--



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February 14	Ash Wednesday †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First day of Lent, a 40-day period of sacrifice • Forehead may be marked with cross of ashes; refrain from meat 	--	--	✓
February 14 - March 28	Lent †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 40-day time of intense devotion • Observed by fasting, worship, and acts of charity 	--	--	✓
March 25**	Holi 🌺	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration of spring and color 	✓	✓	--
March 19	Nouruz C•	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-week celebration of the New Year (rebirth of Earth & first day of spring) • Celebrated by eating and visiting family & friends 	✓	✓	--
February 24	Magha Puja Day 🌺	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A festival in honor of the Buddhist community and a chance for reaffirmation • Celebrated with gifts, gathering, and sermons 	--	✓	--
March 11 - April 9*/**	Ramadan C•	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 days of daylight fasting with special attention to understanding one's inner self • Ritual evening meal to break fast 	✓	--	✓

March 24	Palm Sunday †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration for honoring Jesus's entry into Jerusalem • Signifies the beginning of Holy Week • Observed by a special service, including the distribution of palm leaves 	--	--	--
April 21	Mahavir Jayanti 🌺	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrates the birth of Jain sage Mahavira • Observed with fasting and prayers; refrain from work 	✓	✓	✓
March 29	Good Friday †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorates crucifixion of Jesus • Observed solemnly with fasting and refrain from work 	✓	✓	✓
April 22-30	Pasech †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorates the resurrection of Jesus • Celebrated by a series of services and events 	--	--	--
April 22-30*	Passover ✨	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration of exodus from Egypt • Observed by lengthy festive ritual family meals; only consume unleavened grains 	✓	✓	✓
May 5	Orthodox Easter Sunday				
March 31	Easter Sunday †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most important holy day for Christians • Commemorates the resurrection of Jesus • Observed by a special church service, gatherings, and other activities 	--	--	--
May 3	Orthodox Good/Holy Friday †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorates crucifixion of Jesus • Observed solemnly with fasting and refrain from work 	✓	✓	✓
May 15**	Buddha Day 🌺	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorates life cycle of Buddha • Most important holiday in Buddhism • Temple observance and refrain from meat 	✓	--	✓
April 10*	Eid-al-Fitr C•	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A three-day Muslim holiday signifying the end of the holy month of Ramadan • Celebrated by congregational prayers and visiting family and friends 	✓	--	✓



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Key to Religions and Corresponding Icons



Baha'i (nine-pointed star)



Buddhism (wheel of dharma)



Christianity (cross)



Hinduism (om)



Islam (crescent)



Jain (ahimsa hand)



Judaism (Star of David)



Sikh (khanda)



Orthodox Christianity (orthodcross)

The Human Rights Committee welcomes any additional comments and information regarding this informational guide. Please email humanrights@easton.ma.us with your suggestions.

For more information, visit http://www.easton.ma.us/boards_and_committees/humanrightscommittee/.