



GUIDELINES CONCERNING RELIGION

Lower Merion School District Policy/Administrative Regulation No. 130

MAINTAINING BALANCE

As educational centers, public schools have the basic responsibility to develop in students an understanding of their diverse history and culture and the significance of religion in that history and culture. They also have the responsibility to teach understanding of and respect for group differences in our society including religious differences. In fulfilling these responsibilities the teaching must be objective, avoid any doctrinal impact, and clearly demonstrate religious doctrines do not have the support of state authority. . . .

Further, it is the policy of the District not to prevent, or otherwise deny participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in the District's schools, consistent with guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education and applicable judicial decisions interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Text excerpted from LMSD Policy 130

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES

- As a public school entity, LMSD employees must show no preference for one religion over another or non-religion and refrain from the promotion of any and all religions. There should be no inculcation of sectarianism in the school through religious services, observances, or participation in liturgical rituals, such as prayers or songs connoting an affirmation of faith.
- Any dramatic or musical displays and activities in art or music, regardless of the season, must be determined by their educational function and must avoid the atmosphere of a religious ceremony or observance. This depends on the sensitivity, understanding and good judgment of the teacher.
- Care should be exercised to avoid indoctrination through exhibits of religious artifacts and symbols. The meaning of religious holidays may be explained through the use of religious symbols.
- Whatever the circumstances students should be able freely and comfortably to refrain from participation in any program in the context of the guidelines without either direct or subtle pressures upon them.
- In order to avoid scheduling conflicts between our schools and religious life in the community, calendars which denote religious holidays should be consulted by teachers and administrators in planning the instructional program and school activities. Major examinations should not be scheduled when a significant number of student absences are anticipated due to religious holidays. In areas such as lesson planning (tests, introduction of new units), extra-curricular sports, special programs (music, drama, etc.), and elective classes the dates of religious holidays including the Sabbath should be taken into account. Absence in observance of religious holidays is excused and there should be no academic penalty or non-academic deprivation for non-participation in activities resulting from the students' observation of religious holidays and other observances, including weekly observances.
- Questions or concerns regarding the implementation of these guidelines should be directed to your Supervisor or Principal/Assistant Principal.
- A calendar of religious holidays is included herein and is intended to serve as a reference guide. Note that Baha'i, Jewish, and Muslim holidays begin at sunset on the evening before the date listed. Thus, when scheduling events close to major holidays, school activities should conclude approximately two hours before sunset. At the high school level, activities must conclude in sufficient time to allow students to catch the 4:30 p.m. late bus.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The full text of the policy and administrative regulation should be consulted and can be found on the District's website:

https://www.lmsd.org/data/files/gallery/BoardPolicies100/Policy_P130.pdf

https://www.lmsd.org/data/files/gallery/BoardPolicies100/Policy_AR130.pdf

- Multifaith calendar resources and information regarding religious holidays and celebrations: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/multifaith-calendar/>

<http://www.csee.org/?page=Religiouscalendar>

<http://www.interfaith-calendar.org/>

For More Information Contact:

Megan Shafer/Senior Director

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610-645-1955 or 610-645-1928

OR your Supervisor or Building
Principal/Assistant Principal

REFERENCE CALENDAR of RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS 2018 19					
July		August		September	
10	Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)	1	• Fast in Honor of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus (E.O.Christian)	1	Ecclesiastical Year begins (E.O.Christian)
22	Tish'a B'Av (Jewish)		• Lammass (Christian and Wicca)	2	Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)
27	Guru Purnima/Asalha Pujā Day (Buddhist)	6	• Transfiguration of the Lord (E.O.Christian)	7	His Holiness Sakya Trizin's Birthday (Buddhist)
		13-15	• Obon (Buddhist)	7-14	Paryushana (Jain)
		15	• Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Catholic Christian)	8	• Nativity of Mary (Christian)
			• Dormition of the Theotokos (Orthodox Christian)	9-11	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
			• Naga Panchami (Hindu)	10	Feast of Trumpets (Church of God)
		15-27	• Onam (Hindu)	11	• New Year – Hijra (Islam)
		19-24	• Hajj Day (Islam)		• 1 st Muharram (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
		20	• Yawm al-Arafa (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	12	Muharram (Islamic New Year)
		20-21	• Eid al-Adha (Islam)	12-20	Ashara Mubarakā (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
		21	• Eid al-Adha (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	19	• Yom Kippur (Jewish)
		25	• Ulambana (Buddhist)		• Day of Atonement (Christian, Church of God)
		29	• Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)	12-23	Ganesha Chaturthi (Hindu)
			• Eid-e-Ghadeer (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	20	Yawm Aashura (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
				22	Mabon & Ostata (Wicca/Pagan)
				23-30	Sukkot (Jewish)
				24-30	Feast of the Tabernacles (Church of God)
				27	The Elevation of the Holy Cross (E.O.Christian)
				30-	Sh'mini Atzeret (Jewish)
				Oct 2	
October		November		December	
1	Last Great Day (Church of God)	1	• All Saints' Day (Christian)	2	First Sunday of Advent (Christian)
2	Simchat Torah (Jewish)		• Samhain-Beltane (Wicca)	2-10	Hanukkah (Jewish)
9-17	Navaratri (Hindu)	2	• All Souls' Day (Christian)	8	• Bodhi Day (Buddhism)
18	Dessehra (Hindu)	7	• Diwali (Hindu, Jain, and Sikh)	12	• Immaculate Conception (Christian)
20	• Installation/Scriptures as Guru Granth (Sikh)	8	• Govardhan Pujā (Hindu)	18	Milad Imam-uz-Zamaan (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
	• Birth of B'ab (Baha'i)	10	• Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)	21	Yule (Wicca and Christian)
		15	• Nativity Fast begins (E.O.Christian)	25	• Christmas (Christian)
30	• Chehlum Imam Husain (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	20	• Maulid al-Nabi (Islam & Islam Dawoodi Bohra)		• The Nativity of Christ (E.O.Christian)
		21	• The Presentation of the Theotokos to the Temple (E.O.Christian)	26	Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian)
		23	• Guru Nanak Dev Sahib Birthday (Sikh)	28	Milad Syedna Mohammed Barhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
		24	• Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom (Sikh)		
			• Urus-Syedna Mohammed Barhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)		
		26	• Day of Covenant (Baha'i)		
		28	• Ascension of 'Abdu'l Baha (Baha'i)		
January		February		March	
1	• Gantan-sai (Shinto)	2	• Imbolic-Candlemas (Wicca and Christian)	4	Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)
	• Mary, Mother of God (Catholic)		• The Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple (E.O.Christian)	5	Shrove Tuesday (Christian)
3-10	Holy Convocation (Church of God, Saints of Christ)	8	• Nirvana Day (Buddhist)	6	Ash Wednesday (Christian)
5	• Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (Sikh)	10	• Vasant Panchami (Hindu)	11	Clean Monday (E.O. Christian)
6	• Feast of Epiphany (Christian)	15	• Nirvana Day (Jain)	13	L. Ron Hubbard's Birthday (Church of Scientology)
	• Feast of Theophany (E.O.Christian)	21	• Jonah's Passover (E.O. Christian)	20	• Ostara (Wicca)
	• Nativity of Christ (Armenian Orthodox)	26-	• Intercalary Days (Baha'i)	21	• Mabon (Wicca/Pagan North/South Hemispheres)
7	• Feast of the Nativity (E.O.Christian)	Mar 1			• Purim (Jewish)
13	• Maghi (Sikh)				• Holi (Hindu)
	• Bodhi Day (Buddhist)				• Nowruz (Zoroastrian)
14	• Makar Sankranti and Pongal (Hindu)				• Lord's Evening Meal (Christian, Jehovah's Witness)
20	• World Religion Day (Baha'i)				• Ayyam al Beez (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
21	• Tu B'shvat (Jewish)			22-24	Hola Mohalla (Sikh)
28	• Chinese/Lunar New Year (Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist)			25	• The Annunciation of the Theotokos (E.O.Christian)
					• The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Christian)
					• Urus-Syedna Taher Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
				28	• Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian)
				31-	• Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God, Saints of Christ)
				Apr 6	
April		April cont.		May cont.	
2	• Yawm al-Mab'ath (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	21	• Easter (Christian)	26-27	Laylatul Qadr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
3	• Lailat al Miraj (Islam)		• Palm Sunday (E.O. Christian)	27	Milad Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
5	• Souramana Yugadi (Hindu)		• First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)		
6	• Last Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)		• Lailat al Bara'ah (Islam)	29	• Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
	• Chandramana Yugadi (Hindu)	22	• Easter Monday (Christian)	30	• Ascension of Our Lord (Christian)
8	• Buddha's Birthday/Buddha Day	25	• The 11 th Panchen Lama's Birthday (Buddhist)	31	• Ashkir Jumo'a (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
13-20	• Memorial of Feast of Lord's Passover (Church of God, Saints of Christ)		• Holy Thursday (E.O. Christian)		
	• Palm Sunday	26	• Holy Friday (E.O.Christian)		
14	• Ramnavami (Hindu)		• The Last Friday of Great Lent (E.O. Christian)		
17	• Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)	28	• Easter (E.O. Christian)		
18	• Holy Thursday (Christian)	29	• Ninth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)		
19	• Passover (United Church of God)		• Bright Monday (E.O.Christian)		
	• Holy Friday (Christian)				
	• Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)				
19-21	• Theravadin New Year (Buddhist)				
20-26	• Days of Unleavened Bread (Phila. Church of God)				
20-27	• Passover (Jewish)				
20	• First Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)				
	• Lazarus Saturday (E.O. Christian)				
May		June		June	
		1	• Beltane (Wicca)	1	Laylat as-Qadr (Islam)
		2	• Twelfth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)	4	Eid al Fitr (Islam)
		6-Jun 4	• Ramadan (Islam)	9	Pentecost (Christian)
		9	• Yom Ha'Azmaut (Jewish)	9-10	Shavuot (Jewish)
		18	• Visakha Pujā (Buddhist)	16	• Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib (Sikh)
		23	• Lag B'Omer (Jewish)		• Pentecost (E.O. Christian)
			• Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)	21	Litha (Wicca)
			• Shahada-Amirul Mumineen (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	24	• Fast of the Holy Apostles (E.O. Christian)

Note: This calendar is based on the list of religious holidays permitting absence from school from the State of New Jersey's Board of Education issued on 6/6/18 (Pennsylvania does not provide such a calendar) and is intended to serve as a reference and may not be fully inclusive and representative of all religious holiday celebrations.