

A Few Notes on Observance

All Jewish religious observances begin on the evening before the date indicated on conventional calendars and conclude the subsequent evening.

There is variation of religious practice among Jews; therefore some students and staff may be absent for religious purposes more often than others.

The exact dates of Jewish holidays and observances differ each year because the Jewish calendar is lunar-based.

Guidelines for Recognizing Religious Holidays in Public Schools:

JCRC recommends having a written policy on how teachers and administrators should handle religion and holidays in the public school classroom. With the goal of promoting understanding and respect among students of different traditions, JCRC recommends the following as guidelines:

1. **It is important to teach about religion, but not teach religion itself.** The distinction is critical. The approach to teaching about the role that religion has played in history, civics, arts, and culture should be done academically in a secular manner, and not devotionally.
2. **Sensitivity is crucial.** The age, diversity and sensitivities of students must always be a consideration.
3. **Context is everything.** Determining the appropriateness of a lesson involves careful consideration of the class subject and the age of the students. It's not only what is said but how it is said.
4. **Religious holidays provide opportunities to teach about religion.** It is appropriate to discuss different cultures and communities in civics, geography, history, art, music, and foreign languages. Teaching is permissible, celebrating the holiday is not. Proselytizing or denigrating religion is strictly prohibited.
5. **Information on religious holidays.** Focus on how and when they are celebrated, their origins, histories, and generally agreed-upon meanings. If done objectively and sensitively, neither promoting nor inhibiting religion, the study of holidays can foster understanding and respect.
6. **Religious symbols.** May be used as a teaching aid if displayed temporarily as part of an academic program. Religious art, drama, music, literature may be permissible if it serves a sound educational curriculum, if it is not used for the promotion of a religious belief, and does not dominate a play, concert, or presentation.

Adapted from "Religious Holidays in the Public Schools: Q&A"



7 - YEAR CALENDAR OF MAJOR JEWISH HOLIDAYS AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES 2015 - 2023

A Planning & Scheduling Guide for:

- ◆ School Administrators
- ◆ Teachers and Coaches
- ◆ Government Agencies
- ◆ Private Employers

JEWISH COMMUNITY
RELATIONS COUNCIL

Pursuing a Just Society and Secure Jewish Future

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SHABBAT (shah baht')

The Jewish Sabbath is observed shortly before sunset on Friday and ends an hour after sunset on Saturday. Observant Jews refrain from work to devote time to rest, prayer, study, and renewal.

ROSH HASHANAH (rosh' hah shah nah')

The Jewish New Year marks the beginning of 10 days of prayer & repentance, which culminates on Yom Kippur.

YOM KIPPUR (yome kee poor')

The "Day of Atonement" is the most solemn of Holy Days in the Jewish calendar. Jews fast, pray, reaffirm their faith, and ask for God's forgiveness.

SUKKOT (soo kote')

This week-long Jewish festival of thanksgiving derives its name from the tabernacles (booths) used as temporary dwellings in ancient Israel during times of harvest.

SHEMINI ATZARET (sheh mih' ni a tzair' et)

This eighth and final day of Sukkot officially marks the end of the High Holy Day Season.

SIMCHAT TORAH (sim' chat to' rah)

This holiday marks the completion of the yearly cycle of reading the first five books of the Bible (*Torah*) and the beginning of the next cycle.

PURIM (poor' reem)

This festival commemorates the rescue of the Jews of ancient Persia from a plot to exterminate them based on the biblical Book of Esther.

PESACH (pay' sach)

Known in English as *Passover*, this week-long Festival of Freedom celebrates the Jews' Exodus from Egypt.

SHAVUOT (shah voo ote')

This pilgrimage holiday celebrates Moses receiving the *Torah* (God's laws) on Mount Sinai.

HANUKAH (ha' noo kah)

This holiday commemorates the rededication of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, when a small bit of oil burned miraculously for 8 days, after the Maccabees fought for and secured the Jews' religious freedom.

7-YEAR CALENDAR OF MAJOR JEWISH HOLIDAYS & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

This 7-year calendar of Jewish holidays has been prepared by the **Jewish Community Relations Council** as an aid for planning and scheduling events (tests, examinations, assemblies, conferences, athletic events, tournaments, open houses, registrations) in an attempt to minimize conflicts that involve the absence of Jewish students and personnel.

All dates in red are HIGH HOLY DAYS: Expect virtually all Jewish students/employees to be absent.

All dates in blue are Holy Days: Expect some Jewish students/employees to be absent.

Some Jews will not participate in events during Shabbat. Hanukkah and Purim do not require an absence from school or work.

NO PERSON SHOULD BE PENALIZED FOR HIS/HER RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES OR BELIEFS.

WEEKLY	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
SHABBAT The Jewish Sabbath	Every Friday eve thru Saturday eve	Every Friday eve thru Saturday eve	Every Friday eve thru Saturday eve	Every Friday eve thru Saturday eve	Every Friday eve thru Saturday eve	Every Friday eve thru Saturday eve	Every Friday eve thru Saturday eve	Every Friday eve thru Saturday eve
FALL	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
ROSH HASHANAH Jewish New Year	Sept. 13 - 15 Sun eve - Tues eve	Oct. 2 - 4 Sun eve - Tues eve	Sept. 20 - 22 Wed eve - Fri eve	Sept. 9 - 11 Sun eve - Tues eve	Sept. 29 - Oct. 1 Sun eve - Tues eve	Sept. 18 - 20 Fri eve - Sun eve	Sept. 6 - 8 Mon eve - Wed eve	Sept. 25 - 27 Sun eve - Tues eve
YOM KIPPUR Day of Atonement	Sept. 22 - 23 Tues eve - Wed eve	Oct. 11 - 12 Tues eve - Wed eve	Sept. 29 - 30 Fri eve - Sat eve	Sept. 18 - 19 Tues eve - Wed eve	Oct. 8 - 9 Tues eve - Wed eve	Sept. 27 - 28 Sun eve - Mon eve	Sept. 15 - 16 Wed eve - Thurs eve	Oct. 4 - 5 Tues eve - Wed eve
SUKKOT Festival of Booths	Sept. 27 - 29 Sun eve - Tues eve	Oct. 16 - 18 Sun eve - Tues eve	Oct. 4 - 6 Wed eve - Fri eve	Sept. 23 - 25 Sun eve - Tues eve	Oct. 13 - 15 Sun eve - Tues eve	Oct. 2 - 4 Fri eve - Sun eve	Sept. 20 - 22 Mon eve - Wed eve	Oct. 9 - 11 Sun eve - Tues eve
SHEMINI ATZARET SIMCHAT TORAH	Oct. 4 - 6 Sun eve - Tues eve	Oct. 23 - 25 Sun eve - Tues eve	Oct. 11 - 13 Wed eve - Fri eve	Sept. 30 - Oct. 2 Sun eve - Tues eve	Oct. 20 - 22 Sun eve - Tues eve	Oct. 9 - 11 Fri eve - Sun eve	Sept. 27 - 29 Mon eve - Wed eve	Oct. 16 - 18 Sun eve - Tues eve
HANUKKAH Festival of Lights	Dec. 6 - 14 Sun eve - Mon eve	Dec. 24 - Jan. 1 Sat eve - Sun eve	Dec. 12 - 20 Tue eve - Wed eve	Dec. 2 - 10 Sun eve - Mon eve	Dec. 22 - 30 Sun eve - Mon eve	Dec. 10 - 18 Thurs eve - Fri eve	Nov. 28 - Dec. 6 Sun eve - Mon eve	Dec. 18 - 26 Sun eve - Mon eve
SPRING	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PURIM Festival of Esther	March 23 - 24 Wed eve - Thurs eve	March 11 - 12 Sat eve - Sun eve	Feb. 28 - March 1 Wed eve - Thurs eve	March 20 - 21 Wed eve - Thurs eve	March 9 - 10 Mon eve - Tues eve	Feb. 25 - 26 Thurs eve - Fri eve	March 16 - 17 Wed eve - Thurs eve	March 6 - 7 Mon eve - Tues eve
PESACH Passover's Beginning	April 22 - 24 Fri eve - Sun eve	April 10 - 12 Mon eve - Wed eve	March 30 - April 1 Fri eve - Sun eve	April 19 - 21 Fri eve - Sun eve	April 8 - 10 Wed eve - Fri eve	March 27 - 29 Sat eve - Mon eve	April 15 - 17 Fri eve - Sun eve	April 5 - 7 Wed eve - Fri eve
PESACH Passover's Conclusion	April 28 - 30 Thurs eve - Sat eve	April 16 - 18 Sun eve - Tues eve	April 5 - 7 Thurs eve - Sat eve	April 25 - 27 Thurs eve - Sat eve	April 14 - 16 Tues eve - Thu eve	April 2 - 4 Fri eve - Sun eve	April 21 - 23 Thurs eve - Sat eve	April 11 - 13 Tues eve - Thurs eve
SHAVUOT Festival of Weeks	June 11 - 13 Sat eve - Mon eve	May 30 - June 1 Tues eve - Thurs eve	May 19 - 21 Sat eve - Mon eve	June 8 - 10 Sat eve - Mon eve	May 28 - 30 Thurs eve - Sat eve	May 16 - 18 Sun eve - Tues eve	June 4 - 6 Sat eve - Mon eve	May 25 - 27 Thurs eve - Sat eve