

2018-2023 Significant Religious Observances

| Name of Holiday | 2018-2019 | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 |
|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>Per Policy 4039:</i> Schools shall avoid scheduling exams, athletic events/contests and other special events, such as assemblies, field trips, and back-to-school nights, on days highlighted in yellow and identified as "Observances That May Impact Attendance." | | | | | |
| All other observances listed may be considered for individual accommodation, but are not included in Policy 4039 | | | | | |
| Fall | | | | | |
| Ramadan | May 16-June 14 | May 6-June 4 | April 24-May 23 | April 13-May 12 | April 2-May 1 |
| Eid al Fitr* | June 14-16 | June 3-5 | May 23-25 | May 12-15 | |
| Eid al-Adha* | Aug. 19-24 | August 9-14 | July 29-Aug 3 | July 18-23 | |
| Rosh Hashanah** | September 10-11 | Sept. 30-Oct. 1 | Sept. 19-20 | Sept. 7-8 | Sept. 26-27 |
| Yom Kippur** | Sept. 19 | Oct. 9 | Sept. 28 | Sept. 16 | Oct. 5 |
| Sukkot** | Sept. 24-30 | Oct. 14-20 | Oct. 3-9 | Sept. 21-27 | Oct. 10-16 |
| Shemini Atzeret** | Oct. 1 | Oct. 21 | Oct. 10 | Sept. 28 | Oct. 17 |
| Simchat Torah** | Oct. 2 | Oct. 22 | Oct. 11 | Sept. 29 | Oct. 18 |
| Birth of Bab* | Nov. 9 | Oct. 29 | Oct. 18 | Nov. 6 | Oct. 26 |
| Diwali/Deepavali | Nov. 7 | Oct. 27 | Nov. 14 | Nov. 4 | Oct. 24 |
| Birth of Baha'u'llah* | Nov. 10 | Oct. 30 | Oct. 19 | Nov. 7 | Oct. 27 |
| Hanukkah** | Dec. 2-10 | Dec. 22-30 | Dec. 10-18 | Nov. 28-Dec. 6 | Dec. 18-26 |
| Christmas | Dec. 25 | Dec. 25 | Dec. 25 | Dec. 25 | Dec. 25 |
| Kwanzaa | Dec. 26 | Dec. 26 | Dec. 26 | Dec. 26 | Dec. 26 |
| Spring | | | | | |
| Lunar New Year [∞] | Feb. 16 | Feb. 5 | Feb. 12 | Jan. 21 | Jan. 22 |
| Ash Wednesday | March 6 | Feb. 26 | Feb. 17 | March 2 | Feb. 22 |
| Purim** | March 21 | March 10 | Feb. 26 | March 17 | March 7 |
| Holi | March 21 | March 10 | March 29 | March 18 | March 8 |
| Naw Ruz** | March 21 | March 20 | March 20 | March 21 | March 21 |
| Passover** | April 20-27 | April 9-16 | March 28-Apr 4 | April 16-23 | April 6-13 |
| Good Friday | April 19 | April 10 | April 2 | April 15 | April 7 |
| Easter | April 21 | April 12 | April 4 | April 17 | April 9 |
| Ridvan Festival | April 21 - May 2 | April 20-May 1 | April 20-May 1 | April 21-May 2 | April 21-May 2 |
| Declaration of the Bab** | May 24 | May 23 | May 23 | May 24 | May 24 |
| Vesak/Visakha Puja (Buddha Day) | May 18 | May 7 | May 26 | May 16 | May 5 |
| Shavuot | June 9-10 | May 29-30 | May 17-18 | June 5-6 | May 26-27 |
| Ascension of Bah'u'llah | May 29 | May 28 | May 28 | May 29 | May 29 |

Many religions and cultures follow various traditional calendar systems that are based on the phases of the moon, with or without occasional adjustments for the solar cycle. Therefore, international standard calendar (Gregorian calendar) dates for these observances will differ from year to year. In addition, calculation of specific dates may vary by geographical location and according to different sects within a given religion.

* Islamic holy day observances are based on the lunar cycle, and may vary by 1-2 days from what is predicted
 ** Jewish and Bahá'í holy day observances begin at sunset on the day preceding the first date listed.
 ∞ Also referred to as Chinese New Year; however, lunar new year is celebrated in many other cultures.

MMSD Religious Holiday Calendar Document

Knowledge about the religious heritages of our community promotes understanding among families, students, and school staff, and it also raises awareness of circumstances in which school staff may be approached by a student or family with a request for religious accommodations. As part of the District's commitment to honor the diverse religious faiths of our students and staff, the information included in the Religious Holiday Calendar Document is intended to serve the following purposes:

- To inform administrators and teachers about the diverse religious practices of their students and staff
- To increase staff awareness of major religious observances within each religious tradition that may cause significant numbers of absences from curricular and instructional activities, with the understanding that individuals within each faith community may or may not follow all the prescribed rituals in the manner presented in the calendar
- To advise administrators and teachers of Board Policy 4039, which requires accommodations for a student's sincerely held religious beliefs

Historically, the MMSD's Religious Holiday Calendar has not been intended to provide an exhaustive list of the diverse array of religious beliefs and practices in existence. The religions included in the calendar represent predominant faith communities of students within the Madison community. Representatives from these faith communities have advised MMSD regarding the religious holiday observances that are most likely to give rise to a need for accommodations. The District is always open to including other religious traditions on the calendar in order to fulfill the calendar's educational purpose.

In the event that conflict does occur between a school schedule and a student's religious observance, there is a specific Board of Education Policy (Policy 4039) that addresses academic accommodations for a student's sincerely held religious beliefs. A copy of the complete Policy is available at <http://boeweb.madison.k12.wi.us/policies/4039>. As stated in Policy 4039, students or parents/guardians in need of religious accommodation for religious beliefs should contact either the classroom teacher, the building Principal, an Assistant Principal, or a Principal-designee. The District is required to provide for the reasonable accommodation of a student's sincerely held religious beliefs with regard to all examinations and other academic requirements. Significantly, however, Policy 4039 is not intended to be an exhaustive statement of situations in which some type of accommodation may be appropriate and/or legally required. Whenever a school is presented with a situation that is not directly addressed by the Policy (e.g., a request made in connection with athletics), please seek assistance from the appropriate Assistant Superintendent and MMSD Legal Services to the extent necessary.

Student confidentiality and privacy are of the utmost importance as well. Therefore, all requests for a religious accommodation (whether falling under Policy 4039 or otherwise) that are presented to any District employee shall be treated as a confidential matter involving pupil records.

One manner of accommodating students' sincerely held religious beliefs is to be considerate of known religious observances when scheduling significant exams/events/activities, to the extent practicable. At the same time, the need for individualized accommodations and the need for school employees to be sensitive to the issues raised by requests for accommodations will continue to arise precisely because it is impractical to avoid all scheduling conflicts with all of the practices of all religions. Please review the table below of the religious observances likely to lead to significant numbers of MMSD student or staff absences, the listed considerations in connection with matters involving reasonable accommodations for students' sincerely held religious beliefs, and the attached document of other important religious observances for the Madison faith communities, titled *Significant Religious Observances*.

| Faith Community | *Major Religious Observances | Considerations |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Bahá'í | <p><i>Birth of Baha'u'llah</i> Commemorates the birth of the Baha'u'llah in 1817.</p> <p><i>Naw Ruz</i> Bahá'í New Year which marks the end of the month of fasting and is a joyous time of celebration.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observances begin at sunset the evening before the holy day. Students, staff and community may be involved in evening observances the evening before, as well as the evening of the holy day. • Students 15 years and older may refrain from eating or drinking during school hours between March 2-20. • Some students may refrain from doing school projects that occur on evenings when the observance begins after sunset. |
| Islamic | <p><i>Eid al-Fitr</i> Muslim day of feasting to celebrate end of Ramadan</p> <p><i>Eid al-Adha</i> Muslim holy day known as the Feast of Sacrifice</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The observances of Muslim holy days begin in the morning and students may also be involved in observances around sunset and early morning. • Students need silent and convenient places to perform daily prayers at certain times during the school day. • Some observances require fasting and/or dietary restrictions. • Some students may refrain from doing school projects that occur on evenings when the observance begins after sunset. |
| Jewish | <p><i>Rosh Hashanah</i> Jewish New Year</p> <p><i>Yom Kippur</i> Jewish Day of Atonement</p> <p><i>Passover</i> Jewish Festival celebrating the Exodus from Egypt (esp. first two days)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observances begin at sunset the evening before the holy day. Students, staff and community may be involved in evening observances the evening before, as well as the evening of the holy day. • Some observances require fasting and/or dietary restrictions. • Some students may refrain from doing school projects that occur on evenings when the observance begins after sunset. |
| Christian | <p><i>Christmas</i> Celebration of the birth of Jesus</p> <p><i>Easter</i> Celebration of the resurrection of Jesus</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although conflicts with the school calendar rarely arise in connection with the direct observance of the Christmas holiday (usually falling during Winter Break) or Easter holiday (observance typically occurs on a Sunday) within the Christian faith communities, numerous other observances within the various Christian traditions may result in requests for school-related accommodations. |

**These are observances that in the past were termed "high holy days" by the District. The list is not intended to be exhaustive of the observances within the various faith traditions that may give rise to a request for accommodations. See the attached Significant Religious Observances for a longer list of important dates. The District is always open to including other religious traditions on the calendar in order to fulfill the calendar's educational purpose.*