

Religious/Ethnic Observances and/or Holy Days 2007-08

* Those holidays marked by an asterisk may require absence from school or fasting or other specific observance. The presence or absence of an asterisk does not definitively indicate whether a student will be absent from school. All absences will be reviewed on an individual case-by-case basis. If questions arise, it is suggested that the students bring a note from their religious leader. Also note that some holidays may vary slightly based on local custom.

CHRISTIAN HOLIDAYS

Assumption	Aug. 15 - Roman Catholic Holy Day of Obligation; commemorates assumption of Mary into heaven
All Saints Day	Nov. 1 - A Catholic and Protestant commemoration of all the saints
Feast of the Immaculate Conception	Dec. 8 - Roman Catholic Holy Day of Obligation; commemorates the Virgin Mary's freedom from original sin at her conception
Christmas	Dec. 25 - Celebrates birth of Christ. A federal holiday celebrated in all states and territories
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God	Jan. 1 - Roman Catholic Holy Day; celebrates the motherhood of Mary
Epiphany	Jan. 6 - Christian commemoration of the manifestations of the divine nature of Jesus Christ. The homage of the magi to the infant Jesus is honored by some. For others the Baptism of Jesus is the remembered event. A season of the Christian year from the close of Christmas to the beginning of Lent
Lent	Feb. 6 – March 22 - A period of fasting and penitence observed by Christian churches; lasts 40 days, excluding Sundays, from Ash Wednesday to the Saturday before Easter
*Ash Wednesday	Feb. 6 - First day of Lent. Catholic priests place ashes in the middle of parishioners' foreheads during mass on this day
Orthodox Lent	March 10 – April 26 – Eastern Orthodox and Greek Orthodox Lent; period of fasting and penitence before Easter
Palm/Passion Sunday	March 16 – Christian celebration of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The day begins Holy Week. It is observed by worship celebrations and parades using palm branches
Maunday Thursday	March 20 – Christian observance of the first Lord's Supper during Holy Week
*Good Friday	March 21 - Observed by Christians the Friday before Easter. Commemorates Christ's crucifixion, death, and entombment
Easter	March 23 – Christian celebration of Christ's resurrection. Observed the first Sunday following the first full moon that occurs on or after the vernal equinox

Ascension

May 1 – Celebrated the Thursday approximately 40 days after Easter, to commemorate Christ's ascension into heaven. Roman Catholic Holy Day of Obligation

Pentecost

May 11 - Christian observance, considered the birthday of the Church, celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter; commemorates descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and disciples of Jesus

JEWISH HOLIDAYS:

All holidays begin at sunset on the evening of the day before the date specified here if not already specified in comments.

Tisha B'av	July 24 – A Jewish day of fasting in remembrance of the destruction of the Temple in 586 b.c.e. and 70 c.e.
*Rosh Hashanah	Sept. 13 - 14 - Begins at sunset, Sept. 12. Jewish New Year and holy days. Days of Renewed Responsibility. The first of the High Holy Days marked by solemn religious observance
*Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)	Sept. 22 - Begins at sunset, Sept. 21. Jewish holy day devoted to prayer, fasting, and repentance
*Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)	Sept. 27 - 28 - Begins at sunset, Sept. 26. Jewish festival of thanksgiving, harvest, and the remembrance of the Jews who wandered in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt
*Shemini Atzeret	Oct. 4 - Begins at sunset, Oct. 3. The closing day of the Jewish festival of Sukkot. A day of prayer
*Simchat Torah	Oct. 5 - Begins at sunset, Oct. 4. Reading of the law (Torah) is concluded and begun anew in the synagogue
Hanukkah (Festival of Lights)	Dec. 5 – 12 – Begins at sunset, Dec. 4. Jewish holiday commemorating rededication of the Temple by the Maccabees. Primarily a children's festival – a time for fun, songs, games, and gift-giving. It starts on the 25 th day of the Jewish calendar month of Kislev and lasts for eight days and nights
Tu B'shvat	Jan. 22 – Jewish celebration of the coming of spring by preparation of foods native to Israel. It is also known as "New Year for Trees" – a method for determining the age of trees for tithing purposes
Purim	March 21 – Jewish celebration of the deliverance of the Jewish minority in Persia from genocide. Charity to the poor, sharing food with friends, and vigorous merrymaking mark the observance
*Passover (Pesach), First Days	April 20 – 21 - Begins at sunset, April 19. Jewish festival marking the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt
*Passover (Pesach), Concluding Days	April 26 – 27 - Begins at sunset, April 25. Jewish festival
Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom Hashoah)	May 2 - Begins at sunset, May 1. Honors the memory of six million Jewish martyrs and heroes who perished in the Nazi Holocaust
*Shavuot (Festival of Weeks)	June 9 - 10 - Begins at sunset, June 8. Jewish festival that commemorates the giving of the law (Torah) to Moses on Mount Sinai

MUSLIM HOLIDAYS:

NOTE: Actual Islamic dates may vary one or two days based on actual sighting of the new crescent moon in each respective month. Holidays begin at sunset the previous day.

- Lailat al Miraj** **Aug. 10** - Islamic observance of Mohammed's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascension to heaven
- Lailat al Bara'ah** **Aug. 28** - Islamic Night of Forgiveness. A night of prayer to Allah for forgiveness of the dead. Preparation for Ramadan through intense prayer
- *First day of Ramadan** **Sept. 13** - Beginning of Islamic holy month in which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset each day. The holiest period of Islam, it honors the revelation of the Koran
- Laylat el Qadr** **Oct. 8** – Islamic Night of Destiny. First revelation of Qur'an to Prophet Mohammed. Observed during the last ten days of Ramadan. Prayers to Allah for a good destiny
- *Id al-Fitr** **Oct. 13** - Muslim day of feasting to celebrate the end of Ramadan
- * Id al-Adha** **Dec. 20** – Muslim holy day known as Feast of Sacrifice, marking the end of the Pilgrimage.
- Al-Hijra** **Jan. 20** – The start of the Islamic New Year, which is based on the lunar calendar and is also marked as the first day of the Islamic month of Muharram. Hijra also means migration, when prophet Mohamed 'pbuh" migrated from Makkah to Medina and set up the first Islamic state
- Ashura** **Jan. 29** – An Islamic optional one day fast recognizing the Creation, Noah's departure from the ark, and the saving of Moses from Pharaoh. Prophet Muhammad's Grandson, Hussein, was martyred on this date in 683/684 AD
- Mawlid an Nabi** **March 31** – Islamic commemoration of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, in about 570 c.e.

BAHÁ'Í HOLIDAYS

Holidays begin at sunset the previous day.

- *Birth of the Báb** **Oct. 20** – Bahá'í observance of the anniversary of the birth, in 1819 of “the Báb,” the prophet-herald of the Bahá'í faith. One of the nine holy days of the year where work and school are suspended for Bahá'ís
- *Birth of Baha'u'llah** **Nov. 12** - Bahá'í celebration of the birth of their founder and teacher. Refrain from work
- Day of Covenant** **Nov. 26** - Baha'i celebration of the covenant given in the last will and testament of Baha'u'llah
- Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha** **Nov. 28** - Baha'i celebration of the rising of the spirit of Abdu'l-Baha to the heavenly dwelling
- Bahá'í New Year's Day (*Naw Rúz)** **March 21** – Begins at sunset the previous day (March 20). One of the nine holy days of the year where work and school are suspended for Bahá'ís
- Ridvan begins** **April 21** - Baha'i commemoration of the twelve day period in 1863 when Baha'u'llah declared that he was God's messenger for this age. Work is to be suspended on days 1, 9, and 12 of the festival
- Declaration of the Báb** **May 23** - Baha'i recognition of the declaration in 1844 by Ali Muhammed that he is the anticipated "Coming One" of all religions. Work is suspended
- Ascension of Baha'u'llah** **May 29** — Baha'i recollection of the death of Baha'u'llah, the founder. Observed by prayers and readings. Work is suspended
- Martyrdom of the Báb** **July 9** - Ali Mohammed was executed in 1850 by Persian political and religious powers. Observed by abstaining from commerce and work

HINDU FESTIVALS

- Raksha Bandhan** **Aug. 28** – Hindu festival honoring the loving ties between brothers and sisters in a family
- Krishna Janamashtami** **Sept. 3** – Birthday of Krishna, Avator of Vishnu
- Ganesa Chaturthi** **Sept. 15** – A Hindu festival honoring the god of prosperity, prudence and success. Images of Ganesa are worshipped to honor God Ganesh, Son of Shiva, and is considered the remover of obstacles from business and personal life
- Navaratri** **Oct. 12-20** - Nine days of fasting before Dasera; Hindu Festival of the divine mother honoring Durga, wife of Shiva, and seeking her blessings. Also observed as a celebration recalling the days of Lord Krishna
- Durga Puja** **Oct. 18** -Celebration of feminine values and strengths
- Dasera** **Oct. 21** – 10th day of Navaratri Hindu celebration of victory and valor. King Ravan is destroyed by God Vishnu Avatar Lord Rama. Victory of good over evil. Ram-Rajaya established
- Karva Chauth** **Oct. 29** - Day of fasting and prayer to God Shiva for the long life of one's husband/Celebration of family values
- Diwali (Deepavali)** **Nov. 9** - Celebration of God Visnu Avatar Ram's return to Avodhva after defeating King Ravan. Hindu Festival of Lights symbolizing the human urge to move toward the light. Gift exchanges, fireworks and festive meals. New Year follows. Jain celebration of Lord Mahavira's day of final liberation
- Goverdhan Puja** **Nov. 10** -God Krishna lifts Mt.Goverdhan to save peasants from natural disasters
- Children's Day** **Nov. 14** - Former prime minister Nehru's birthday in India - celebrates values and teachings through story-telling
- Guru Nanak Birthday** **Nov. 24** - Sikh honoring of the birth of the first Sikh teacher who lived from 1469-1539 c.e. Sacred readings, prayers, meals together; anointment of the Holy Book of the Sikh's
- Lodi/Shankrant** **Jan. 14** - Celebration of bountiful harvest
- Maha Shivaratri** **March 6** - Married women pray to God Shiv/Parvati - God of marital bliss and harmony. A Hindu festival in honor of Lord Shiva and his marriage to Goddess Parvati. Ceremonies involving prayer and hymns take place mostly at night. Special foods are not used
- Gauri Purnima** **March 21** - Commemorates the appearance of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, sixteenth century saint, considered an incarnation of Lord Krishna
- Holi** **March 22** - God Vishnu saves Holika and Prahlad from the fires created by Harnaya Kashyap. Hindu spring festival dedicated to the god of pleasure. It is observed in a colorful and boisterous manner. People shower each other with colored water and smear red and green powder on each other
- Bhai Dauj** **March 24** - Celebrations of love among siblings

Ramanavami

April 14 – Birthday of God Rama, Avatar of Lord Vishnu. Hindu celebration of the birth of Lord Rama, hero of the religious epic poem, The Ramayana. The day involves telling of stories and going to the temple

Baisakhi (Vaisakhi)

April 14 - Celebration of Spring. Hindu start of the New Year. Greetings that wish good life in coming days are exchanged. In Sikhi the day commemorates the founding of the Khasla, a distinctive Sikh brotherhood

BUDDHIST OBSERVANCES

- Bodhi Day(Rohatsu)** **Dec. 8** – Buddhist celebration of the time when Prince Gautama took his place under the Bodhi tree, vowing to remain there until he attained supreme enlightenment
- Nirvana Day** **Feb. 15** – A regional observance of the death of Buddha
- Magha Puja Day** **March 21** - Buddhist celebration of the presentation of teachings by Lord Buddha to assembly of holy men
- Celebration of Buddha's Birthday** **April 8** - Buddhists celebrate the birthday of Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, lived 563-480 B.C.

SIKH HOLIDAYS

- Maghi** **Jan. 13** - Sikh commemoration of a battle in which forty Sikhs died for Guru Gobindh Singh Ji
- Baisakhi** **April 13** - Hindu start of the New Year. Greetings that wish good life in coming days are exchanged. In Sikhi the day commemorates the founding of the Khalsa, a distinctive Sikh brotherhood