



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

TOWN OF EASTON

humanrights@easton.ma.us

Resource for Holiday Observance 2020-2021 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
- † Will be allowed one (1) extra day after return to school to complete work
- ‡ Dietary considerations
- * Holy days usually begin at sundown the day before this date
- ** Local or regional customs may use a variation of this date

Date	Name of Holiday	Description	± Excused Absence	† Extra Day for Work	‡ Dietary Considerations
2020	September 19-20*	Rosh Hashanah ☆ • Jewish New Year • Observed with festive meals and temple attendance	✓	✓	--
	September 21*	Paryushana Parva 🙏 • 8-10 days of intense spirituality • Observed with prayer, meditation, and fasting	--	--	✓
	September 28*	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 17-26	Navarathri ॐ • 10-day celebration of autumn and the goddess Durga • Observed with fasting, evening prayers, vegetarian meals, visiting friends & family	--	✓	✓
	October 25	Dasura ॐ • Celebration the victory of good over evil	--	--	--
	November 14-18	Diwali ॐ • Festival of lights • National holiday in India	✓	✓	--
	December 11-18*	Hanukkah ☆ • Festival of lights • Celebrated for 8 nights; sundown candle-lighting and gift giving	--	--	--
2021	January 7	Orthodox Christmas ‡ • Celebration of the birth of Jesus	✓	✓	--
	February 12	Lunar/Chinese New Year 🌸 • Pan-Asian celebration • Family reunions, festive meals, and gift-giving	✓	✓	--
	February 17	Ash Wednesday † • First day of Lent, a 40-day period of sacrifice • Forehead may be marked with cross of ashes; refrain from meat	--	--	✓
	March 21	Nouruz C• • Two-week celebration of the New Year (rebirth of Earth & first day of spring) • Celebrated by eating fish and visiting family & friends	✓	✓	--
	March 25	Mahavir Jayanti 🙏 • Celebrates the birth of Jain sage Mahavira • Observed with fasting and prayers; refrain from work	✓	✓	✓
	March 28	Magha Puja Day 🌸 • A festival in honor of the Buddhist community and a chance for reaffirmation • Celebrated with gifts, gathering, and sermons	--	✓	--
	March 28	Palm Sunday † • 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	--	--	--



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

TOWN OF EASTON

humanrights@easton.ma.us

March 28-April 3*	Passover ☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration of Exodus from Egypt • Observed by lengthy festive ritual family meals; only consume unleavened grains 	✓	✓	✓
March 29**	Holi ॐ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration of spring and color 	✓	✓	--
April 2	Good Friday †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorates crucifixion of Jesus • Observed solemnly with fasting and refrain from work 	✓	✓	✓
April 4	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 	--	--	--
April 8**	Buddha Day ☸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorates life cycle of Buddha • Temple observance and refrain from meat 	✓	--	✓
April 13- May 11*/**	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 	✓	--	✓
April 30	Orthodox Good/Holy Friday †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorates crucifixion of Jesus • Observed solemnly with fasting and refrain from work 	✓	✓	✓
May 2	Pasech †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorates the resurrection of Jesus • Celebrated by a series of services and events 	--	--	--
May 13*	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 	✓	--	✓

Key to Religions and Corresponding Icons

☸ Baha'i (nine-pointed star)	✋ Jain (ahimsa hand)
☸ Buddhist (wheel of dharma)	☆ Jewish (Star of David)
† Christian (cross)	☸ Sikh (khanda)
ॐ Hindu (om)	✠ Orthodox Christianity (orthodox cross)
C• Islam (crescent)	

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/.