



The Public Schools of Brookline
Brookline Town Hall
333 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
617.730.2401

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

September 5, 2018

Dear Families,

The students in the Public Schools of Brookline represent a diverse community of learners. Celebrating this diversity is one of the key characteristics of our district. PSB's core value of "Respect for Human Differences" calls on us to honor Brookline's diversity and value the varied perspectives and experiences that enrich each of our schools.

The assignment of homework over religious and cultural holidays is an issue often raised by parents and students. Following is a set of procedures, aligned with the School Committee's Homework Policy, that guide the practice of assigning homework over these periods. By following these procedures, we demonstrate our commitment to providing students with the opportunity to fully observe religious and cultural holidays and celebrations.

The list of specific holidays and dates is attached (page 3).

Category 1:

What this means: Absences by staff and students impact the ability to conduct classes on this date or during this time. Designated as "days of low attendance", certain category 1 holidays are often embedded within school vacations.

Instructions: No homework will be assigned in any class for all students on the last day of school before a category 1 holiday. Homework assignments, projects, presentations, or other assignments cannot be due until at least the second school day after the holiday, even in the case of a longer school vacation. The same policy applies for the administration of tests.

Category 2

What this means: School remains in session because these holidays are not considered to be a "day of low attendance". However, they are still celebrated by a significant portion of our school population.

Instructions: No homework will be assigned in any class for all students on the last day of school before the category 2 holiday. Homework assignments, projects, presentations, or other assignments cannot be due until at least the second school day after the holiday, even in the case of a longer school vacation. The same policy applies for the administration of tests.

Category 3

What this means: School remains in session because these holidays impact a smaller number of our students than in the prior two categories.

Instructions: Students who are unable to complete a homework assignment due to this type of holiday should inform their teacher, who will arrange with the student an alternative time for completion of work, without loss of credit. Parents are also encouraged to contact teachers if a category 3 holiday impacts a student's ability to complete an assignment. The attached list includes the most common category 3 dates, but it is not inclusive of all possible dates.

Thanksgiving Break

In addition to the religious and cultural celebrations outlined above, no homework will be assigned over the Thanksgiving break. Projects, presentations, or other assignments will not be due until at least the second day following the Thanksgiving break. The same policy applies for the administration of tests.

In all of the situations described above, teachers are asked to comply with both the “letter” and the “spirit” of this regulation. For example, educators are asked not to “double up” on homework assigned before a holiday.

Athletics

Our athletic programs are another important aspect of a student’s educational experience. Regardless of the category, coaches are advised of and sensitive to the religious and cultural needs of their student-athletes and families. There will be no athletic consequence for missing games and/or practices due to religious observances. Moreover, Brookline High School does not schedule league or non-league contests on any of the category 1 dates. Non-mandatory practices may occur on category 1 dates with prior approval by the Athletic Director.

I am proud to serve in a school system where people commit themselves to honoring the diversity of our students, families, and staff. Providing students with the opportunity to fully observe these religious and cultural holidays is a tangible way to demonstrate our commitment to diversity in Brookline.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Bott', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

The Public Schools of Brookline
Religious and Cultural Observances
2018-2019

Category 1

Rosh Hashanah (Day 1)	Monday, September 10, 2018
Yom Kippur	Wednesday, September 19, 2018
Christmas	Tuesday, December 25, 2018
Good Friday	Friday, April 19, 2019
Easter	Sunday, April 21, 2019

Category 2

Eid al-Adha	Tuesday, August 21, 2018
Lunar New Year	Tuesday, February 5, 2019
Passover (Day 1)	Saturday, April 20, 2019
Eid al-Fitr	Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Category 3*

Rosh Hashanah (Day 2)	Tuesday, September 11, 2018
Sukkot (2 days)	Monday, September 24, 2018
	Tuesday, September 25, 2018
Diwali	Wednesday, November 7, 2018
Hanukkah	Monday, December 3, 2018
Winter Solstice	Friday, December 21, 2018
Kwanzaa	Wednesday, December 26, 2018
Nowruz	Thursday, March 21, 2019
Passover (other dates)	Sunday, April 21, 2019
	Friday, April 26, 2019
	Saturday, April 27, 2019
Good Friday (Eastern Orthodox)	Friday, April 26, 2019
Easter (Eastern Orthodox)	Sunday, April 28, 2019
Shavuot (2 days)	Sunday, June 9, 2019
	Monday, June 10, 2019

Thanksgiving Break

Thursday & Friday, November 22-23, 2018

**This is not inclusive of all possible category 3 dates*