



The Public Schools of Brookline
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V. James Marini, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent

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Dear Families,

I am pleased to be able to share the annual list of religious and cultural observances. For those of you who are returning parents and guardians, this letter and list will be familiar. For those families who are new to the school district, please take a moment to read the information below to understand the purpose and intent behind this annual message.

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 for the 2020-2021 school year is attached.

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 guideline. 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 will be 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 grateful to be serving as interim superintendent in a school district that demonstrates its commitment to diversity in such a tangible way. I appreciate your attention to this important information.

Sincerely,



Jim Marini
Interim Superintendent

The Public Schools of Brookline
Religious and Cultural Observances
2020-2021

Category 1

Rosh Hashanah (Day 1)	Saturday, September 19, 2020
Yom Kippur	Monday, September 28, 2020
Christmas	Friday, December 25, 2020
Lunar New Year	Friday, February 12, 2021
Good Friday	Friday, April 2, 2021
Easter	Sunday, April 4, 2021

Category 2

Eid al-Adha	Friday, July 31, 2020
Passover (Day 1)	Sunday, March 28, 2021
Eid al-Fitr	Thursday, May 13, 2021*

Category 3**

Rosh Hashanah (Day 2)	Sunday, September 20, 2020
Sukkot (2 Days)	Saturday, October 3, 2020
	Sunday, October 4, 2020
Diwali	Saturday, November 14, 2020
Hanukkah	Friday, December 11, 2020
Winter Solstice	Monday, December 21, 2020
Kwanzaa	Saturday, December 26, 2020
Nowruz	Sunday, March 21, 2021
Passover (other dates)	Monday, March 29, 2021
	Saturday, April 3, 2021
	Sunday, April 4, 2021
Good Friday (Eastern Orthodox)	Friday, April 30, 2021
Easter (Eastern Orthodox)	Sunday, May 2, 2021
Shavuot	Monday, May 17, 2021
	Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Thanksgiving Break

Thursday & Friday, November 26-27, 2020

**Tentative. Holidays on the Islamic calendar are confirmed only after a lunar sighting. Therefore, this date is subject to change following actual astronomical observations closer to the holiday.*

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