



The Public Schools of Brookline
Brookline Town Hall
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Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
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Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent

September 3, 2019

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 'BL', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ben Lummis
Interim Superintendent

The Public Schools of Brookline
Religious and Cultural Observances
2019-2020

Category 1

Rosh Hashanah (Day 1)	Monday, September 30, 2019
Yom Kippur	Wednesday, October 9, 2019
Christmas	Wednesday, December 25, 2019
Good Friday	Friday, April 10, 2020
Easter	Sunday, April 12, 2020

Category 2

Eid al-Adha	Sunday, August 11, 2019
Lunar New Year	Saturday, January 25, 2020
Passover (Day 1)	Thursday, April 9, 2020
Eid al-Fitr	Sunday, May 24, 2020*

Category 3**

Rosh Hashanah (Day 2)	Tuesday, October 1, 2019
Sukkot (2 days)	Monday, October 14, 2019
	Tuesday, October 15, 2019
Diwali	Sunday, October 27, 2019
Winter Solstice	Sunday, December 22, 2019
Hanukkah	Monday, December 23, 2019
Kwanzaa	Thursday, December 26, 2019
Nowruz	Friday, March 20, 2020
Passover (other dates)	Friday, April 10, 2020
	Wednesday, April 15, 2020
	Thursday, April 16, 2020
Good Friday (Eastern Orthodox)	Friday, April 17, 2020
Easter (Eastern Orthodox)	Sunday, April 19, 2020
Shavuot (2 days)	Friday, May 29, 2020
	Saturday, May 30, 2020

Thanksgiving Break

Thursday & Friday, November 28-29, 2019

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

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