



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, 2017

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 class meeting 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 class meeting 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', written in a cursive style.

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

The Public Schools of Brookline
Religious and Cultural Observances
2017-2018

Category 1

Rosh Hashanah (Day 1)	Thursday, September 21, 2017
Yom Kippur	Saturday, September 30, 2017
Christmas	Monday, December 25, 2017
Good Friday	Friday, March 30, 2018
Easter	Sunday, April 1, 2018

Category 2

Eid al-Adha	Friday, September 1, 2017
Lunar New Year	Friday, February 16, 2018
Passover (Day 1)	Saturday, March 31, 2018
Eid al-Fitr	Friday, June 15, 2018

Category 3*

Rosh Hashanah (Day 2)	Friday, September 22, 2017
Sukkot (2 days)	Thursday, October 5, 2017 Friday, October 6, 2017
Diwali	Thursday, October 19, 2017
Hanukkah	Wednesday, December 13, 2017
Winter Solstice	Thursday, December 21, 2017
Kwanzaa	Tuesday, December 26, 2017
Nowruz	Wednesday, March 21, 2018
Passover (other dates)	Sunday, April 1, 2018 Friday, April 6, 2018 Saturday, April 7, 2018
Good Friday (Eastern Orthodox)	Friday, April 6, 2018
Easter (Eastern Orthodox)	Sunday, April 8, 2018
Shavuot (2 days)	Sunday, May 20, 2018 Monday, May 21, 2018

Thanksgiving Break

Thursday & Friday, November 23-24, 2017

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