HOLIDAYS & OBSERVANCES

2019 - 2020 CALENDAR

Komitha Sivanathan, Donald Cousens P.S., Grade 8
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

York Region is one of the most diverse areas in Canada, a diversity that is reflected in our schools and workplaces. Our rich composition makes this region one of the most vibrant in Canada.

Each year at the York Region District School Board, we welcome students, staff and families of different backgrounds into our many learning and working communities. We respect and celebrate the various faiths, cultures and backgrounds that are represented in our schools, communities and workplaces.

The diversity of our schools and workplaces is reflected in the 2019-20 Holidays and Observances Calendar, which recognizes the significant dates that are observed by members of the many faith communities who live and work in York Region. The student artwork that has been chosen for inclusion in the calendar celebrates our different backgrounds and cultures while promoting our common values of equity and inclusiveness.

I hope this calendar will serve as a useful resource for you and your family. I look forward to the many celebrations that our schools and communities will participate in this year.

All the best for 2019-2020

Louise Sirisko
Director of Education

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Vivian Chan-Simao
    Richmond Hill High School
Sandra Bruni
    Inclusive School and Community Services
Donna Ford
    Inclusive School and Community Services
Mounir Mounir
    Information Technology Services
Suganja Sinnathamby
    Maple High School
Dawna Snell
    Inclusive School and Community Services
Sheeba Yousef
    Oscar Peterson Public School

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Staff and Students of the York Region District School Board
Calendar Coordination: Inclusive School and Community Services
Layout & Design: Stuart Gerskup & Lindsay Brown
Learning, Design & Development, YRDSB

For information please call the office of Inclusive School and Community Services,
(905) 884 2046 ext. 252, (416) 969 7170 ext. 2409
or e-mail: iscs@yrdsb.ca

This calendar is a selected representation of special days and holy days of the major faith communities in York Region and it is intended to be used primarily as a learning resource. Note that the calendar does not contain all the dates of a particular faith. This calendar is not applicable in determining faith day/religious holidays for employees. Please refer to the appropriate collective agreement or contact Human Resources at hrs.faith.days@yrdsb.ca.

For accommodation requirements or additional information on faith, please refer to the document Program Planning for Faith Purposes.

F.Y.I.

- Christian system is used for dating years.
- B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) is used in preference to B.C. (Before Christ)
- C.E. (Common Era) is used in preference to A.D. (Anno Domini)
- (pbuh) - Peace be upon Him
### Holy Days by Faith

#### Baha’i Faith
- **October 29**: The Birth of the Bab
- **October 30**: The Birth of Baha’u’llah
- **November 26**: The Day of the Covenant
- **November 28**: Ascension of Abdu’l-Baha
- **Feb. 26 – 29**: Intercalary Days
- **March 1 – 19**: The Baha’i Fast
- **March 20**: Naw Ruz (New Year)
- **April 20 – 28**: Ridvan
- **May 23**: Declaration of the Bab
- **May 28**: Ascension of Baha’u’llah
- **July 9**: Martyrdom of the Bab

#### Hinduism
- **August 15**: Raksha Bandhan
- **August 23**: Sri Krishna Jananthy
- **September 2**: Ganesha Jananthy
- **Sep 29 - Oct 6**: Navaratri (Fall)
- **October 27**: Diwali
- **January 14**: Mawlid-ul-Nabi
- **January 29**: Vasant Panchami
- **February 21**: Mahashivratri (Shivaratri)
- **March 9**: Holi
- **March 25 – Apr 2**: Navaratri (Spring)
- **April 2**: Ramnavami
- **April 14**: Chaitra/Chithirai New Year

#### Islam
- **August 11**: Day of Arafat (Hajj)
- **August 12**: Eid-ul-Adha *
- **September 1**: First Day of Muharram
- **September 10**: Ashura
- **November 9**: Mawlid-un-Nabi
- **December 13**: Birthday of Aga Khan (Isma’ili)
- **March 21**: Naw Ruz (Isma’ili)
- **March 22**: Miraj-un-Nabi
- **April 19**: Nisru-Shaban
- **April 24**: First day of Ramadhan
- **May 20**: Lalit-ul-Qadr
- **May 24**: Eid-ul-Fitr *

#### Jainism
- **September 13**: Ananta Chaturdsi
- **October 27**: Mahavir Nirvana Mahostav (Diwali)
- **November 1**: Gyan Panchami
- **December 8**: Maun Agiyaras
- **April 6**: Mahavir Janmakalyanak

#### Christianity
- **September 12**: Coptic New Year
- **October 6**: World communion Sunday
- **November 1**: All Saints’ Day
- **December 1**: First Sunday of Advent (Western)
- **December 25**: Christmas (Western)
- **January 6**: Epiphany (Western)
- **January 7**: Christmas (Eastern)
- **January 20**: Epiphany (Eastern)
- **February 26**: Ash Wednesday (Western)
- **March 2**: First Day of Lent (Eastern)
- **April 5**: Palm Sunday (Western)
- **April 12**: Palm Sunday (Eastern)
- **April 9**: Maundy Thursday (Western)
- **April 10**: Good Friday (Western)
- **April 12**: Easter Sunday (Western)
- **April 17**: Good Friday (Eastern)
- **April 19**: Easter Sunday (Eastern)
- **May 21**: Ascension Day (Western)
- **May 31**: Pentecost (Western)

#### Judaism
- **September 30-1**: Rosh Hashanah
- **October 9**: Yom Kippur
- **October 14-20**: Sukkot
- **October 21**: Shemini Atzeret
- **October 22**: Simchat Torah
- **December 23-30**: Chanukah
- **March 10**: Purim
- **April 9**: Pesach / Passover (April 9-16)
- **May 29-30**: Shavuot

#### Sikhism
- **September 1**: First Parkash
- **November 12**: Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji
- **November 24**: Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji
- **January 5**: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji
- **January 13**: Maghi
- **March 14**: Sikh New Year’s Day
- **April 14**: Vaisakhi
- **June 16**: Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji

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#### Hinduism
- **May 23**: Declaration of the Bab
- **May 28**: Ascension of Baha’u’llah
- **July 9**: Martyrdom of the Bab

#### Buddhism
- **October 13**: Kathina Ceremony
- **October 13**: Pavarana Day
- **January 1**: Temple Day / Bodhi Day
- **January 25**: Lunar New Year *
- **March 20**: Spring Ohigon
- **April 14**: Theravada New Year
- **May 6**: Wesak / Buddha Day
- **July 5**: Asalha Puja Day

#### Islam
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#### Zoroastrianism
- **August 17**: Naw Ruz (Shenshai)
- **December 26**: Death of Prophet Zarathustra
- **March 16**: Ghambar Hamapasthmaedem
- **March 21**: Naw Ruz (New Year’s Day)
- **March 26**: Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra
- **June 29 - July 3**: Ghambar Maidoshem

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This excerpt is referenced in the Scheduling of Events on Faith Days document – “we are committed to affirm and value equally the faith diversity in our schools and workplaces. Therefore, INTERNALLY scheduled events such as field trips, school concerts, conferences, meetings, workshops, other professional events, co-curricular activities, and exams/tests SHALL NOT be scheduled on these dates referred to as ‘Diamond Days’ in the YRDSB”. Exceptions to the above may be considered where dates for special events are set EXTERNALLY to our Board and after consultation with superintendents who will present requests to Senior Team to determine participation. Please refer to the YRDSB Religious Accommodations Guidelines for more information.

Tentative dates subject to the sighting of the new moon each month. Some Jain and Buddhist dates are tentative at the time of publishing.

These dates follow the Nanakshahi calendar. Please check our website for updated information: www.yrdsb.ca

Please note that observances of these faith days begin on the eve of this event. The same guidelines apply to the ‘Diamond Days’.
HINDUISM
August 15
Raksha Bandhan ("to tie protection on") is a celebration where girls and married women tie an amulet on the right wrists of their brothers to ward off evil influences.

August 23
Sri Krishna Jayanti (also known as Janmashtami) celebrates the birthday of Lord Krishna. According to the Hindu epics, Lord Krishna was the eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. His purpose was to destroy the demon Kansa who was responsible for the increase of evil in the world.

ISLAM
August 11
Day of Arafat (Hajj), or Pilgrimage to Mecca, is undertaken once in a lifetime for those who can afford it. Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam after the Belief in One God, daily prayers, fasting and charity. On the Islamic calendar, it falls on the 9th day in the last month of Zul-Hijjah.

August 12
Eid-ul-Adha is the Festival of Sacrifice. It honours Prophet Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael to God. In commemoration, Muslims sacrifice a sheep or goat and donate the meat or its equivalent value in cash to charity. This is the “minimum” requirement for those who can afford it.

WICCA
August 1
Lammas meaning "loaf-mass", time of first harvest and bread making. It is when the plants of spring wither and drop their fruits or seeds for our use, as well as to ensure future crops. The God symbolically loses some strength, as the Sun rises farther in the South each day and the nights grow longer.

ZOROASTRIANISM
August 17
Naw Ruz (Shenshai) New Year’s Day in accordance with the Shenshai calendar.
**Please note:**
- Islamic dates are tentative and subject to the sighting of the moon each month.
- All Jewish Holy Days commence on the preceding evening at sunset.

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Shion Ramsay, Stonebridge P.S., Grade 8

Madhav Mehta, Woodbridge P.S., Grade 6
CHRISTIANITY
September 12  Coptic New Year. This is the day for Copts (Christians of Egyptian origin) to celebrate the New Year and the Feast of Martyrs. For members of the Ethiopian Orthodox community, the New Year is a chance to celebrate the new month as well as the Feast of St. John the Baptist.

HINDUISM
September 2  Ganesha Jayanti celebrates the birthday of Ganesha, God of success and one of the major Hindu deities. He is invoked at the beginning of all new undertakings.
Sept 29 - Oct 6  Navaratri is a nine-day celebration of the Divine Goddess for good health, happiness and knowledge.

ISLAM
September 1  Muharram (New Year’s Day) begins the new Islamic year. This is the year 1440.
September 10  Ashura falls on the 10th day of Muharram. The 10th day commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

JAINISM
September 13  Ananta Chaturdasi is regarded as the holiest period of the year. Fasting, worship, meditation and confession characterize this period.

JUDAISM
Sept 30-Oct 1  Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, marks the start of a ten day period of spiritual self examination and repentance which ends with Yom Kippur. Families celebrate with a festive dinner at which apples dipped in honey are eaten. (New Year’s Day, 5779).

SIKHISM
September 1  First Parkash observes the installation of the Guru Granth Sahib, the first edition of the Sikh Scriptures, in the Golden Temple by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, in 1604 C.E.

WICCA
September 23  Mabon Autumn Equinox and the second harvest. Wiccans take a moment to pay their respect to the impending dark. They celebrate the aging Goddess as she passes from Mother to Crone, and her consort the God as he prepares for death and rebirth.
The Holidays and Observances Calendar is presently being drafted for the 2020-2021 school year. Included again this year will be student artwork from Elementary and Secondary Schools for the calendar cover and for each month. Keep an eye out for a memorandum providing details for the submission of student artwork.

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<td>Coptic/Ethiopian Orthodox New Year</td>
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Do you need a translator/interpreter? The translator/interpreter list is posted on the Portal at bww.yrdsb.ca. Select Board Documents and click on "T". Scroll through to Translators / Interpreters.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 29</td>
<td><strong>The Birth of the Bab.</strong></td>
<td>The Bab was born Siyyid’ Ali Muhammad in Shiraz in southwestern Iran in 1819 C.E. His title, in Arabic, means “The Gate”. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 30</td>
<td><strong>The Birth of Baha’u’llah</strong></td>
<td>Baha’u’llah was born Mizra Husayn Ali into one of the leading noble families of Persia in 1817 C.E. His name is a title in Arabic meaning “the Glory of God”. He is the founder of the Baha’i faith. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.</td>
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<td>October 13</td>
<td><strong>Kathina Ceremony</strong></td>
<td>marks Buddha’s “descent from heaven.” The day is dedicated to remembering the dead and respecting elders.</td>
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<td>October 13</td>
<td><strong>Pavara Day</strong></td>
<td>signals the completion of the Rains of Retreat.</td>
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<td>October 6</td>
<td><strong>World Communion Sunday</strong></td>
<td>is observed worldwide. Communion is the most fundamental of all Christian rituals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 27</td>
<td><strong>Diwali</strong></td>
<td>(Deepaval) both names mean a row or garland of lights. Also known as the Festival of Lights, Diwali is probably the most widely celebrated Hindu festival. This festival may be celebrated over a five-day period. The diwas (clay pots filled with oil and a wick) herald the start of the new year and symbolize the triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness.</td>
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<td>October 27</td>
<td><strong>Mahavir Nirvana Mahostav (Diwali)</strong></td>
<td>The Jain year begins with Moksha (attainment of final enlightenment and release) by Lord Mahavira. It is popularly known as Deepavali, festival of lamps. Lamps symbolize the light of knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td><strong>Yom Kippur</strong></td>
<td>the day of Atonement, is the most solemn of the Jewish Holy Days. At synagogue, the evening service is called Kol Nidre. People ask for forgiveness of their sins and forgive others. Jews refrain from all eating and drinking on this day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 14-20</td>
<td><strong>Sukkot</strong></td>
<td>is a harvest festival or thanksgiving. Small huts are constructed in which meals are eaten, weather permitting, to commemorate the time when the Israelites dwelled in booths in the desert for 40 years.</td>
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<td>October 21</td>
<td><strong>Shemini Atzeret</strong></td>
<td>is a festival marking the end of the holiday of Sukkot on which a special prayer for rain is recited.</td>
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<td>October 22</td>
<td><strong>Simchat Torah</strong></td>
<td>is marked by singing and dancing which celebrates the end of public reading of the Torah in the synagogue and the beginning of its reading anew.</td>
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<td>October 31</td>
<td><strong>Samhain</strong></td>
<td>The third harvest, meaning &quot;summer’s end&quot;, when the ancestors are honoured. It is a magical interval when the mundane laws of time and space are temporarily suspended, and the thin veil between the worlds is lifted, symbolized by the Crone and her aged Consort.</td>
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◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
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<td>Thanksgiving</td>
<td>Sukkot begins</td>
<td>Simchat Torah</td>
<td>Shemini Atzeret</td>
<td>PA day Elementary/Secondary Keswick HS, Maple HS, Markville SS, Sutton DHS</td>
<td>The Birth of the Bab</td>
<td>The Birth of the Baha’u’llah</td>
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Please note:
BAHA’I FAITH

November 26  The Day of the Covenant. The eldest son and appointed successor of Baha’u’llah Abdu’l-Baha is referred to as the “Centre of the Covenant”. The covenant was established by Baha’u’llah to safeguard the unity of the Baha’i community. It was Abdu’l-Baha’s wish that the Covenant be celebrated rather than his own birth date.

November 28  Ascension of Abdu’l-Baha. After years of serving both his father and the growing Baha’i community, Abdu’l-Baha passed away in Haifa, Israel in 1921 C.E.

CHRISTIANITY

November 1  All Saints’ Day is observed as a special day in many Christian churches.

ISLAM

November 9  Mawlid-un-Nabi celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

JAINISM

November 1  Gyan Panchami, the day of knowledge, observed with Pooja (ritualistic offering) to pay homage to Saraswati Devi, the deity of knowledge and learning.

SIKHISM

November 12  Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The founder of the Sikh faith was born in 1469 C.E.

November 24  Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadar Ji. The Guru was executed in 1675 C.E. by a Mughal emperor. Sikhs believe that he gave his life to save the Hindu faith and religious liberty.

◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
Please refer to the Board’s Scheduling of Events on Faith Days document list before scheduling Conferences, Workshops, Co-curricular Activities, Staff meetings, Exams/Tests, Field trips etc.

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Notes

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Elliya Benaich, Ventura Park P.S., Grade 4

Sarah Pan, Charles Howitt P.S., Grade 6
CHRISTIANITY
December 1  First Sunday of Advent begins the period of preparation for Christmas. In homes and churches, Christians set out special candle holders or Advent wreaths (Western).

December 25  ◆ Christmas (Western calendar) celebrates the birth of Jesus about 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the son of God, and accept him as their Saviour and Lord. In many families, Christmas Eve is celebrated with big dinners, visiting and carol-singing, often followed by midnight church services.

ISLAM
December 13  Birthday of Aga Khan (Ismaili)  December 13 marks the birthday of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan, the 49th hereditary Imam-of-the-Time descended from the progeny of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It is referred to as Salgirah Khushiali and is a celebratory occasion for Ismaili Muslims to express love, loyalty and devotion to their Imam.

JAINISM
December 8  Maun Agiyaras  is a day of fasting, silence and meditation.

JUDAISM
Dec. 23 - 30  Chanukah (Festival of Lights) celebrates religious freedom by commemorating the victory of the Jews over Antiochus who tried to outlaw the practice of Judaism. Starting on the evening of December 12, candles are lit in increasing numbers for eight nights in a “Chanukiah” which is a special candelabrum containing nine candles.

KWANZAA
Dec. 26 - Jan. 1  Kwanzaa named after the Swahili word for “first fruits” is a seven day cultural celebration initiated by African Americans starting on December 26th. Each day a candle is lit and placed in a seven-cup candelabrum called a kinara that sits on a straw mat adorned with fruit and vegetables. The participants discuss the principles or Nguzo Saba of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. On the final night of the celebration, friends and relatives gather for a feast known as Karamu.

WICCA
December 22  Yule  In most traditions, Yule is the Sabbat that begins the Wiccan Year. This is the Winter Solstice—the shortest day and longest night we will experience in the Northern Hemisphere.

ZOROASTRIANISM
December 26  Death of Prophet Zarathushtra who was the founder of the Zoroastrian faith. His dates are uncertain but Westerners believe he lived in the first or the second millennium B.C.E.
Please note: The deadline to submit student artwork for the Holiday & Observances Calendar is Friday, December 20, 2019. Please submit all artwork to Inclusive School and Community Services at Dr. Bette Stephenson Centre for Learning.

Artwork may include original student photography, traditional artwork and digital artwork. Artwork entries must be in **BLACK and WHITE** and only on **8 1/2x11** paper. Each piece of artwork **MUST** include on the **BACK**: Student’s Name/Age/Grade/School/ Celebration/Holiday. Additionally, parents must provide permission to have student’s artwork publicly displayed.
BUDDHISM

January 1

Temple / Bodhi Day has become a day for Canadian Buddhists to attend a special service in the local temple.

January 25

* Lunar New Year the day after the new moon, marks the beginning of the new lunar year. It is the year of the Pig. Irrespective of their religion or country, all Chinese, Vietnamese and many Koreans celebrate the cultural aspect of this day. This is the beginning of year 4717 in the Chinese calendar. It is a time for renewal and personal relationships, and pledges of prosperity.

CHRISTIANITY

January 6

Epiphany (Western Calendar) is the 12th day of Christmas and the end of the Christmas season. It comes from a Greek word referring to the baptism of Jesus and the arrival in Bethlehem of the Three Wise Men who came to worship Jesus. The Armenian Orthodox Church celebrates the nativity of Jesus on this day.

January 7

* Christmas (Eastern Calendar). Some Orthodox churches celebrate the birth of Jesus on this day. The Julian (Eastern) calendar is currently 13 days behind the Gregorian (Western) calendar. In York Region, this is often referred to as “Ukrainian Christmas”.

January 20

Epiphany (Eastern Calendar). The Eastern Church associates the date with the baptism of Jesus by John and the miracle of Cana in which Jesus turned water into wine. This day is also known as Theophany in Orthodox churches.

HINDUISM

January 14

Makar Sankranti / Pongal, is also known as Lohri, Thai Pongal and Til Sankranti. It marks the winter solstice and is primarily a rice harvest festival.

January 29

Vasant Panchami is particularly celebrated in Northern India. This festival marks the advent of spring. Also known as Shri Panchami, it is a celebration commonly associated with Shri or Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth). It is also commonly linked with the Goddess of Learning, Saraswati

SIKHISM

January 5

Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The tenth guru (1666-1708 C.E.) was the final master who created the Sikh Brotherhood, the Khalsa.

January 13

Maghi commemorates the forgiveness shown by Guru Gobind Singh to forty deserters who returned to fight the Mughal army and sacrificed their lives under the leadership of a brave Khalsa woman named Maee Bhaago.

* Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
### WINTER BREAK

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- **Epiphany (Western Calendar)**
- **Christmas (Eastern Calendar)**
- **Makar Sankranti / Pongal**
- **P.A. Day Elementary and Bill Crothers S.S. only**
- **Vasant Panchami**
- **P.A. Day Elementary & Secondary including Keswick HS, Maple HS, Markville SS, Sutton DHS**

### Notes

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**Ian Chiu, Sir John A. MacDonald P.S., Grade 3**

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**Isabella Robinson, Park Ave. P.S., Grade 6**

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**Please note:**

The Program Accommodations for Faith Purposes document has been posted on the BWWW. To learn more about these guidelines and corresponding resources, please visit the Equity & Inclusive Education page on the BWWW.
BAHA'I FAITH
Feb. 26 – 29
Intercalary Days are four days (five in a leap year) that do not belong to any month. They are days of celebration, gift-giving, hospitality and charitable works.

CHRISTIANITY
February 26
Ash Wednesday (Western Calendar) is the beginning of Lent, the forty day period (excluding Sundays) of prayer, repentance and self-denial that precedes Easter. It is a reminder of the days Jesus spent alone in the wilderness.

HINDUISM
February 21
Mahashivaratri (Shivaratri) ("Great Shiva Night") is a special night of prayer. Devotees sing the praises of Shiva, one of the major Hindu deities.

WICCA
February 1
Imbolc also called Brigid's Day, is a Gaelic traditional festival marking the beginning of spring. It is held on 1 February, or about halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox.

◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
Please refer to the Board’s Scheduling of Events on Faith Days document list before scheduling Conferences, Workshops, Co-curricular Activities, Staff meetings, Exams/Tests, Field trips etc.

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<th>Justin Chen, Unionville Meadows P.S., Grade 2</th>
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Notes

Please refer to the Board’s Scheduling of Events on Faith Days document list before scheduling Conferences, Workshops, Co-curricular Activities, Staff meetings, Exams/Tests, Field trips etc.
BAHA’I FAITH
March 1 - 19
The Baha’i Fast is observed every year from March 2 until March 20. During this time those who are physically able, abstain from food and drink from sunrise until sunset each day.
March 20
Naw Ruz (Baha’i New Year). Baha’is celebrate New Year on the first day of spring. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day. This date is also celebrated as a cultural event or faith day by many faith groups throughout the world.

BUDDHISM
March 20
Spring Ohigan is a special time to listen to the teaching of the Buddha and to meditate on the perfection of enlightenment. This day is of particular importance for Jodo Shinshu Buddhists.

CHRISTIANITY
March 2
First day of Lent (Eastern Calendar), which is the great fast, is the last six weeks of a ten week period before Easter. This day is also known as Clean Monday. Some Eastern Churches may start Lent a week before on March 4.

HINDUISM
March 9
Holi is a colourful spring festival observed widely in Hindu communities around the world. The myths, customs and rituals associated with Holi vary considerably from place to place.
Mar 25 - Apr 2
Navaratri (Spring) is a nine-day celebration of the Divine Goddess for good health, happiness and knowledge.

ISLAM
March 21
Naw Ruz (Ismaili) Naw Ruz (“New Day”) is considered New Year for many cultures. It falls on the date of the vernal (spring) equinox and symbolizes the renewal of the world after winter. For Ismaili Muslims, it signifies a time of Spiritual renewal and physical rejuvenation, as well as a spirit of gratitude for blessings and an outlook of hope and optimism.
March 22
Miraj-un-Nabi commemorates Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh) famous night journey (al-Isra) from Mecca to Jerusalem and his subsequent ascension (al-Miraj) to paradise.

JUDAISM
March 10
Purim celebrates the victory over an oppressive ruler by Queen Esther and her Uncle Mordecai.

SIKHISM
March 14
Sikh New Year’s Day is the first day of the new Nanakshahi solar calendar. This is year 550 of the new era.

Wicca
March 19
Ostara - a festival that celebrates the season’s change from dark winter to brightening spring.

ZOROASTRIANISM
March 16
Ghambar HamaspPathmaedem celebrates the creation of human beings.
March 21
Naw Ruz (New Year’s Day) in Fasli calendars. This is the first day of the Zoroastrian and Persian year. It is a time of religious observance preceded by ten days of remembrance of the dead. It symbolizes the renewal of the world after winter. Irrespective of their religion, many Iranians celebrate this day. Naw Ruz is also observed/celebrated by many other faith and cultural groups around the world. This celebration may also fall on March 20 based on the time of sunrise.
March 26
Birthday of Prophet Zarathushtra, the founder of the Zoroastrian faith.
# March 2020 Calendar

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<td>Spring Ohigan</td>
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<td>Naw Ruz (Ismaili and Zoroastrianism)</td>
<td>Miraj-un-Nabi</td>
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**Notes**

Have a wonderful and safe March Break!

First Day of Lent (Eastern)

Eve of Purim

Purim

Sikh New Year's Day

Ghambar

Hamaspadhmaedem

Ostara

Spring Ohigan

Naw Ruz (Baha'i Faith)

Naw Ruz (Ismaili and Zoroastrianism)

Miraj-un-Nabi

Navaratri begins

Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra

The Baha'i Fast Begins

- Ghambar
- Hamaspathmaedem
- Ostara
- Spring Ohigan
- Naw Ruz (Baha'i Faith)
- Naw Ruz (Ismaili and Zoroastrianism)
- Miraj-un-Nabi
- Navaratri begins
- Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra
- The Baha'i Fast Begins

Kiana Tavana, Julliard P.S., Grade 2

Emma Lee, Woodland P.S., Grade 7A

Ostara

Navaratri

Miraj-un-Nabi

Navaratri begins

Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra

The Baha'i Fast Begins

Kiana Tavana, Julliard P.S., Grade 2

Emma Lee, Woodland P.S., Grade 7A
**BAHA’I FAITH**

April 20-28 ◆ **Ridvan.** Baha’u’llah, the founder of the Baha’i Faith, declared his mission as the most recent messenger of God. Baha’is observe the first, ninth and twelfth days of this period. The actual event occurred in a garden, called Ridvan (Paradise) in Baghdad, Iraq in 1863 C.E. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

**CHRISTIANITY**

April 5 ◆ **Palm Sunday.** The Sunday before Easter, the beginning of the Holy Week celebrating Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. (Western Calendar)

April 9 ◆ **Maundy Thursday** (Holy Thursday) is the commemoration of the institution of the Lord’s Supper (Western Calendar).

April 10 ◆ **Good Friday** commemorates Jesus’ death by crucifixion (Western Calendar).

April 12 ◆ **Easter Sunday** celebrates the resurrection of Christ. It is the most important festival in the Christian year (Western Calendar).

April 12 ◆ **Palm Sunday.** The Sunday before Easter (Eastern Calendar).

April 17 ◆ **Holy Friday** commemorates the passion of Jesus Christ, i.e. his submission to death by crucifixion. The Eastern churches focus on his burial (Eastern Calendar).

April 19 ◆ **Easter Sunday** in the Orthodox churches. The church calendar year begins with Pascha (Eastern Calendar).

**HINDUISM**

April 2 ◆ **Ramanavami** On this day Lord Rama the 7th incarnation of Lord Vishnu is said to have been born.

April 14 ◆ **Chaitra/Chithirai New Year.** The first day of the Solar year is an agricultural festival celebrating the harvest. This day is also celebrated as the Tamil New Year, Varusha Pirappu, Vishu, Ugadi, Rongali Bihu and Naba Barsha.

**ISLAM**

April 19 ◆ **Nisfu-Shaban** is known as the Night of Forgiveness or repentance. Many Muslims spend the preceding night in prayer seeking God’s guidance.

April 24 ◆ **Ramadhan** is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. All Muslims who are physically able, fast during this month abstaining from food and drink each day from dawn to sunset. The beginning of Ramadhan depends on the sighting of the moon on the previous evening.

**JAINISM**

April 5 ◆ **Mahavir Janmakalyanak** is the celebration of the birthday of Lord Mahavira (meaning the Great Hero) of Jina (the Conqueror).

**JUDAISM**

April 9 -16 ◆ **Pesach** (Passover) is a “Festival of Freedom” that commemorates the exodus of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. Symbolic foods, such as matzo, are eaten and leavened products are prohibited. First Seder is on the evening of April 8th. Although the second and last two days of Pesach are not identified as Diamond Days, they are also observed as full holy days by Jews. Staff are asked to take this into consideration when scheduling P.D. sessions, meetings, and other activities as some staff members may not be able to attend.

**SIKHISM**

April 14 ◆ **Vaisakhi.** This day celebrates the founding of the Khalsa order (Sikh religion) in 1699 C.E. by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Many Sikhs choose to be baptized into the Khalsa Panth (Brotherhood of the Pure) on this day. Also on this day, male Khalsa Sikhs are named Singh (lion), female Khalsa Sikhs are named Kaur (princess). It is the most important holy day of the year for Sikhs.
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Please note: Second Semester break for Bill Crothers S.S, is from April 20 - April 24, 2020.
**BAHA’I FAITH**

May 23  
**Declaration of the Bab.** On this day in 1844 C.E., a man known as the Bab, a title which means “the Gate,” announced his mission as a manifestation of God whose purpose was to prepare the world for the coming of the promised manifestation of all religions, Baha’u’llah. The Baha’i calendar is dated from this day. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

May 28  
**Ascension of Baha’u’llah.** This date marks the passing in 1892 C.E. of Baha’u’llah, the prophet-founder of the Baha’i Faith, near Haifa, in the Holy Lands. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

**BUDDHISM**

May 6  
**Wesak Day / Buddha Day** is celebrated on the full moon. It is considered the most auspicious day of the year, celebrating Buddha’s Birth, Enlightenment, and Final Demise. In Canada, many Buddhist groups join together to celebrate the three festivals of Buddha’s life as one event. They do this on the day of the fourth full moon after the lunar new year, or the Sunday closest to that day. This is usually around mid-May.

**CHRISTIANITY**

May 21  
**Ascension Day** (Western) marks Jesus’ ascension into heaven and is observed through prayers and music. It occurs forty days after Easter.

May 31  
**Pentecost** (Western) celebrates the renewal of faith that Jesus’ followers felt after his death. It commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus. It comes fifty days after Easter.

**ISLAM**

May 20  
**Lailat-ul-Qadr** (literally the Night of Power) commemorates the night in 610 C.E. on which the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) received the first revelation of the Islamic Holy scriptures (the Qur’an) from God through the Angel Gabriel. For many Muslims, any odd nights in the last ten days can be observed as Lailat-ul-Qadr.

May 24  
**Eid-ul-Fitr** is a celebration that marks the end of Ramadhan, the month of fast. It falls on the first day of the following month Shawal. The beginning of the month depends on the sighting of the new moon. It is the first day in which those who were fasting can eat and drink during the day.

**JUDAISM**

May 29-30  
**Shavuot** celebrates the Israelites receiving the Torah.

**WICCA**

May 1  
**Beltane** meaning “May”, the greening of the Earth, blossom time, when Goddess and God are reunited. Beltane has long been celebrated with feasts and rituals.
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Please refer to the Board's Scheduling of Events on Faith Days document list before scheduling Conferences, Workshops, Co-curricular Activities, Staff meetings, Exams/Tests, Field trips etc.
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY
June 21
A day declared by the Assembly of First Nations. All First Nations’ organizations cease work during this day. This is a day where all Canadians can celebrate the contributions Indigenous peoples have made to Canada. This day was chosen because it is also the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. For generations, many Aboriginal people have celebrated their culture and heritage on or near this day. For more information about the day’s activities, visit the Indian & Northern Affairs Canada Website at www.inac.gc.ca and look in the “Culture and History” section. Additional resources on First Nation, Metis, Inuit (FNMI) can be found on the Equity page, as well as on the Ontario Ministry of Education Indigenous Education Strategy.

SIKHISM
June 16
Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. The fifth Guru (1563 - 1606 C.E.), who built the Temple of God in Amristar, was martyred on this day.

WICCA
June 20
Litha is the name given to the Wiccan Sabbat celebrated at the Summer Solstice. This is the longest day and shortest night of the year, marking the pinnacle of the Sun’s power to fuel the growing season. From here on out, the Sun will set a little earlier each night until Yule, and so we recognize and give thanks for its warmth.

ZOROASTRIANISM
June 29 - July 3
Ghambar Maidyoshem celebrates the creation of water, the sowing of the summer crop and the harvesting of grain.

◆ Conferences, meetings, workshops, exams, field trips, etc. are not to be scheduled on these dates.
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**Notes**

Do you need a translator/interpreter?
The translator/interpreter list is posted on the Portal at bww.yrdsb.ca. Select Board Documents and click on "T". Scroll through to Translators / Interpreters.
BAHA'I FAITH
July 9
Martyrdom of the Bab
The Bab was put to death at the age of 31, by a firing squad in the market square of Tabriz (Persia), in 1850 C.E. The event is observed at noon. Work and academic studies are suspended on this day.

BUDDHISM
July 5
Asalha Puja Day is celebrated on the full moon. It marks the beginning of the three month Rains Retreat for monks and nuns.

Canada Day
July 1
153rd anniversary of Confederation.
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**Notes**

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Felice Zhang, Sir Wilfrid Laurier P.S., Grade 6

Maha Siddiqui, Bayview Glen P.S., Grade 6

**Have a safe and happy summer!**
We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the

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