



GUIDELINES CONCERNING RELIGION

Lower Merion School District Policy/Administrative Regulation No. 130

MAINTAINING BALANCE

“As educational centers, public schools have the basic responsibility to develop in students an understanding of their diverse history and culture and the significance of religion in that history and culture. They also have the responsibility to teach understanding of and respect for group differences in our society including religious differences. In fulfilling these responsibilities the teaching must be objective, avoid any doctrinal impact, and clearly demonstrate religious doctrines do not have the support of state authority. . . .

Further, it is the policy of the District not to prevent, or otherwise deny participation in, constitutionally protected prayer in the District’s schools, consistent with guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education and applicable judicial decisions interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.”

Text excerpted from LMSD Policy 130

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES

- As a public school entity, LMSD employees must show no preference for one religion over another or non-religion and refrain from the promotion of any and all religions. There should be no inculcation of sectarianism in the school through religious services, observances, or participation in liturgical rituals, such as prayers or songs connoting an affirmation of faith.
- Any dramatic or musical displays and activities in art or music, regardless of the season, must be determined by their educational function and must avoid the atmosphere of a religious ceremony or observance. This depends on the sensitivity, understanding and good judgment of the teacher.
- Care should be exercised to avoid indoctrination through exhibits of religious artifacts and symbols. The meaning of religious holidays may be explained through the use of religious symbols.
- Whatever the circumstances students should be able freely and comfortably to refrain from participation in any program in the context of the guidelines without either direct or subtle pressures upon them.
- In order to avoid scheduling conflicts between our schools and religious life in the community, calendars which denote religious holidays should be consulted by teachers and administrators in planning the instructional program and school activities. Major examinations should not be scheduled when a significant number of student absences are anticipated due to religious holidays. In areas such as lesson planning (tests, introduction of new units), extra-curricular sports, special programs (music, drama, etc.), and elective classes the dates of religious holidays including the Sabbath should be taken into account. Absence in observance of religious holidays is excused and there should be no academic penalty or non-academic deprivation for non-participation in activities resulting from the students’ observation of religious holidays and other observances, including weekly observances.
- Questions or concerns regarding the implementation of these guidelines should be directed to your Supervisor or Principal/Assistant Principal.
- A calendar of religious holidays is included herein and is intended to serve as a reference guide. Note that Baha’i, Jewish, and Muslim holidays begin at sunset on the evening before the date listed. Thus, when scheduling events close to major holidays, school activities should conclude approximately two hours before sunset. At the high school level, activities must conclude in sufficient time to allow students to catch the 4:30 p.m. late bus.



For More Information Contact:

Megan Shafer,
Assistant to the Superintendent for
District Administration
Shaferm@lmsd.org
610-645-1955 or 610-645-1928
OR your Supervisor or Building
Principal/Assistant Principal

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The full text of the policy and administrative regulation should be consulted and can be found on the District's website:

https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1529686325/lmsdorg/oyv7pf7ybj07lnybiay3/Policy_P130.pdf

https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1529686335/lmsdorg/e8hltxagkv4qqveosp0y/Policy_AR130.pdf

- Multifaitth calendar resources and information regarding religious holidays and celebrations:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/multifaith-calendar/>

<https://www.csee.org/page/Religiouscalendar>

<http://www.interfaith-calendar.org/>

REFERENCE CALENDAR of RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS 2022 2023					
July		August		September	
8	Yawm al-Arafa (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	1	Fast in Honor of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus (E.O. Christian and Wicca)	1	Ecclesiastical Year begins (E.O.Christian)
9	Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha' i)			7	His Holiness Sakya Trizin's Birthday (Buddhist)
	Eid al-Adha (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	2	Naga Panchami (Hindu)	8	Nativity of Mary (Christian)
7-12	Hajj Day (Islam)	6	Tish'a B'Av (Jewish)	16	Chehlum Imam Hussain (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)
13	Asalha Puja Day (Buddhist)		Transfiguration of the Lord (E.O. Christian)	21	Nativity of the Theotokos (E.O. Christian)
	Guru Purnima	7	Yawm Aashura (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	21-29	Mabon (Wicca/Pagan)
17	Eid-e-Ghadeer (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	9	1st Muharram (Islamic New Year)	26-27	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
29	1st Muharram (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	11	Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)		Feast of Trumpets (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)
29-	Ashara Mubarakka (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	12	Ulambana (Buddhist)	26 -	Navaratri (Hindu)
Aug 7		13-15	Obon (Buddhist)	Oct 5	
		15	Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Catholic Christian)	27	The Elevation of the Holy Cross (E.O.Christian)
			Dormition of the Theotokos (Orthodox Christian)		
		19	Krishna Janmashami (Hindu)		
		23-24	Paryushana (Jain 1 st)		
		20	Muharram (Islamic New Year)		
		30 -	Onam (Hindu)		
		Sep 8			
		31	Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)		
October		November		December	
5	Yom Kippur	1	All Saints' Day (Christian)	8	Immaculate Conception (Christian)
	Day of Atonement (Christian, (Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God)		Samhain-Beltane (Wicca)	19-26	Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
7	Milad an-Nabi (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	2	All Souls' Day (Christian)		Hanukkah (Jewish)
8	Maulid al-Nabi (Islam)	8	Guru Nanak Dev Sahib Birthday (Sikh)	21	Yule (Wicca and Christian)
9-16	Sukkot (Jewish)	14	Milad Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	25	Christmas (Christian)
	Feast of the Tabernacles (Church of God)	21	The Presentation of the Theotokos to the Temple (E.O.Christian)	26	The Nativity of Christ (E.O.Christian)
11	Urus-Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	24	Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom (Sikh)		Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian)
	Last Great Day (Church of God)	25	Day of Covenant (Baha'i)		
17-18	Sh'mini Atzeret (Jewish)	26	Day of Covenant (Baha'i)		
18	Simchat Torah (Jewish)	27	First Sunday of Advent (Christian)		
20	Installation/Scriptures as Guru Granth (Sikh)	28	Ascension of 'Abdu'l Baha (Baha'i)		
22-26	Diwali (Hindu, Jain, Puja, Deepavali and Sikh)		Nativity Fast begins (E.O.Christian)		
26	Goverdhan Puja (Hindu)				
27	Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)				
29	Milad Imam-uz-Zamaan (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)				
January		February		March	
1	Gantan-sai (Shinto)	2	Imbolic-Candlemas (Wicca and Christian)	3	Govinda Dwadashi (Hindu)*
	Mary, Mother of God (Catholic)		The Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple (E.O.Christian)	6	Holika Dahan (Hindu)*
3-10	Holy Convocation (Church of God, Saints of Christ)	5	Ayyam al Beez (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	7	Purim (Jewish)
5	Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (Sikh)	6	Tu B'shvat (Jewish)	8	Lailat al Bara'ah (Islam)
6	Feast of Epiphany (Christian)	9	Urus-Syedna Taher Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)		Holi (Hindu)
	Feast of Theophany (E.O.Christian)	15	Jonah's Passover (E.O. Christian)	8-10	Hola Mohalla (Sikh)
	Nativity of Christ (Armenian Orthodox)	17	Nirvana Day (Buddhist)	13	L. Ron Hubbard's Birthday (Church of Scientology)
	Feast of the Nativity (E.O.Christian)	18	Yawm al-Mab'ath (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)	14	Meena Sankranthi (Hindu)*
7	Maghi (Sikh)		Maha Sivaratri (Hindu)*	20	Ostara (Wicca)
13	Makar Sankranti and Pongal (Hindu)		Lailat al Miraj (Islam)	21	Naw-Ryz (Baha'i)
15	World Religion Day (Baha'i)	21	Shrove Tuesday (Christian)	22	Nowruz (Zoroastrian)
	Chinese/Lunar New Year (Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist)	22	Ash Wednesday (Christian)		Souramana Yugadi (Hindu)*
22	Midwinter Ceremonies (Native American)	26 -	Intercalary Days (Baha'i)	22	Chandramana Yugadi (Hindu)*
24-		Mar 1		23-Apr	Ramadan (Islam)
Feb 2	Vasant Panchami (Hindu)*	27	Clean Monday (E.O Christian)	21	
26				25	The Annunciation of the Theotokos (E.O.Christian)
				26	The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (Christian)
				26	Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian)
				30	Ramnnavami (Hindu)*
April		April cont.		May cont.	
2	Palm Sunday	10	Easter Monday	1	Beltane (Wicca)
4	Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)	12	Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread (Church of God and Saints of Christ)	2	Twelfth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
	Lord's Evening Meal (Christian, Jehovah's Witness)		Last Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)	9	Lag B'Omer (Jewish)
5-13	Memorial of Feast of Lord's Passover (Church of God, Saints of Christ)	12-13	Laylatul Qadr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*	18	Ascension of Our Lord (Christian)
	Passover (United Church of God)	13	Holy Thursday (E.O.Christian)		
	Passover (Jewish)		Milad Syedna		
6	Holy Thursday (Christian)		Mufaddal Saifuddin (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*		
	First Day of Unleavened Bread (Church of God)	14	Holy Friday (E.O.Christian)		
	Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)*		Aakhir Jumo'a (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)		
6-8	Theravadin New Year (Buddhist)		Vaisakhi (Sikh)		
6-12	Days of Unleavened Bread (Philadelphia Church of God)	16	Easter (E.O.Christian)		
	Holy Friday (Christian)	17	Bright Monday (E.O.Christian)		
7	The Last Day of the Great Lent (E.O.Christian)	18	Laylatul Qadr (Islam)		
	Visakha Puja (Buddhist)	21	First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)		
8	Lazarus Saturday (E.O. Christian)		Eid al-Fitr (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)		
	Easter (Christian)	21, 22	Eid al Fitr (Islam)		
9	Palm Sunday (E.O. Christian)	25	The 11th Panchen Lama's Birthday (Buddhist)		
	Shahadat - Amirul Mumineen (Islam Dawoodi Bohra)*	26	Yom Ha'Azmaut (Jewish)		
		29	Ninth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)		
		May cont.		June	
		24	Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)	4	Pentecost (E.O. Christian)
		25	Feast of Ascension (E.O. Christian)	12-19	Fast of the Holy Apostles (E.O. Christian)
		26	Buddha's Birthday/Buddha Day	16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib (Sikh)
		26-27	Shavuot (Jewish)	24	Litha (Wicca)
		28	Pentecost (Christian)		
		29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)		

Note: This calendar is based on the list of religious holidays permitting absence from school from the State of New Jersey's Board of Education for the 2022-23 school year, listed on <https://www.nj.gov/education/holidays20222023> (Pennsylvania does not provide such a calendar) and is intended to serve as a reference and may not be fully inclusive and representative of all religious holiday celebrations.