



Holy Days & Days of Significance Handbook





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The Lakehead District School Board community includes students and staff from diverse creed, belief, and faith groups. It is the commitment of the board to respect and uphold every individual's right to observe and practice their creed, and as such, the Board endeavors to provide accommodations to all staff and students. The Board upholds the Ontario Human Rights Code (Code) that protects an individual's right to be free from discrimination because of creed.

Creed is not defined in the Code; it includes religious beliefs and practices as well as Indigenous spiritual practices. The duty to accommodate creed is about providing the most appropriate accommodation in the circumstances. It is also about engaging in a meaningful and respectful good-faith process to assess needs and find appropriate solutions. The duty to accommodate is about determining an appropriate solution and providing it, short of undue hardship.

Although creed observances are based on generally accepted practices as defined by a religion/faith group, the Board recognizes that members of faith groups are not homogeneous in their understanding, interpretation, and practice of their faith. It is not the role of schools to monitor students' compliance with a particular observance.

Human rights protection for creed do not extend to practices and observances that are hateful or incite hatred or violence against other individuals or groups or contravene criminal law.

The Holy Days & Days of Significance Handbook is a resource which:

- Lists the upcoming Holy Days & Days of Significance for the upcoming school year;
- Provides sample accommodations which may be requested by students or staff;
- Provides guidance for members of the Board on how to request accommodations; and
- Provides information on planning around Holy Days & Days of Significance.

This guide identifies some of the important Holy Days & Days of Significance from various faiths. While every effort is made for this guide to be inclusive of our entire Board community, it is not an exhaustive list. Students and staff may need time for holy days and related observances which are not listed.

2023 – 2024 Holy Days & Days of Significance

Holy Days are dates that are set aside for religious- or creed-based festivals and observances. Some religions, like Christianity, may use the Gregorian calendar for their Holy Days (i.e. Christmas is observed on December 25 every year). Other religions use different calendar systems, such as a solar calendar, a lunar calendar, or a combination of both (luni-solar calendar). As such, please be sure to note if an observance may begin on the evening before the listed date in the chart below. For example:

- » Holy Days from the Baha’i, Jewish, and Wiccan faith begin at sunset on the evening prior to the listed date, and end at sunset of the listed date.
- » Holy Days from the Islamic faith may vary by a day due to the lunar calendar.
- » The Anishinaabeg follow a lunar calendar, where a ‘month’ is the period from one full moon to the next. The moon names presented in this calendar are an example of the moon names commonly used in and around Animbiigoo Zaagi’igan and Aninshnaabewi Gitchi-Gami. However, every community and region have their own way of recognizing moon cycles and harvesting times.

Days of Significance are dates that are designated to raise awareness or promote action about different social, cultural, or historical events. While these dates may be associated with a particular creed or belief, they are not religious observances. By recognizing Days of Significance, we can help promote a more inclusive and equitable society and climate.

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○ - Avoid scheduling events at any time during days marked with this symbol	◼ - Avoid scheduling events on the evening prior for days marked with this symbol	± - Dates marked with this symbol may vary by a day due to the Lunar calendar.
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Month	Date	Holy Day/Day of Significance	Faith or Organization
September 2023			
Waatebagaa-Giizis (Changing Leaves Moon)	1	Installation of Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib	Sikhism
	3	Farvardegan	Zoroastrianism
	4	Labour Day	Canadian Holiday
	6	Sri Krishna Janmaashtami ○	Hinduism
	7	Arbaeen	Islam
	8	International Literacy Day	United Nations
	9	<u>International FASD Awareness Day</u>	Community Observance
	10	<u>World Suicide Prevention Day</u>	WHO
	11	Nayrouz	Christianity (Orthodox)
	12	Paryushan Parva begins	Jainsim
	16 & 17	Rosh Hashanah ○◼	Judaism
	16	Installation of Holy Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib	Sikhism
	18	Ganesh/Vinayak Chauth ○	Hinduism
	19	Powley Day ○	Indigenous Worldview
	19	Samvatsari/Paryushan Parva ends/Daslakshan Parva begins ○	Jainism
	25	Franco-Ontarian Day	Government of Ontario
	23	Harvestide/Fall Equinox ○◼	Wicca and Indigenous Worldview
	24-25	Yom Kippur	Judaism
	25	Yom Kippur ○◼	Judaism
	27	Milad-un-Nabi	Islam
	27	<u>Rowan's Law Day</u>	Government of Ontario
	28	Anant Chaturdashi	Hinduism and Jainism
	28	Kshamavani/Daslakshan Parva ends ○	Jainism
29 - Oct 6	Sukkot	Judaism	
29	National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (Board Observance)	Indigenous Worldview & Government of Canada	
30	National Day for Truth & Reconciliation	Government of Canada	

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October 2023 Autism Awareness Month Caribbean Heritage Month Islamic Heritage Month Latinx Heritage Month Learning Disabilities Month Women's History Month			
Binaakwe-Giizis (Falling Leaves Moon)	Sept 29 - Oct 6	Sukkot	Judaism
	4	National Day for Action for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited People	Community Observance
	7-8	Simchat Torah	Judaism
	7	Simchat Torah ○🕍	Judaism
	9	Thanksgiving	Canadian Holiday
	10	<u>World Mental Health Day</u>	World Health Organization
	15	Sharad Navratri begins	Hinduism
	15-24	Invisible Disabilities Awareness Week	Government of Canada
	16	Birth of the Báb	Bahá'i
	17	Birth of the Bahá'u'lláh	Bahá'i
	17	<u>International Day for the Eradication of Poverty</u>	United Nations
	20	Installation of Guru Granth as Guru	Sikhism
	22	Durgaashtami	Hinduism
	23	Vijaya Dashmi/Dussehra ○	Hinduism
	28	Kathina Ceremony/Pavarana Day	Buddhism
31	Karva Chauth	Hinduism	
31	Halloween	Community Observance	
November 2023 November (Men's Health Awareness)			
Gashkadino-Giizis (Freezing Over Moon)	1	All Saints Day	Christianity
	1	Samhain ○🕍	Wicca
	2	Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Pravrajya	Buddhism
	5-11	Treaties Recognition Week	Government of Ontario
	7	Inuit Day	Community Observance
	8	<u>Indigenous Veterans Day</u>	Veteran Affairs Canada
	11	<u>Remembrance Day</u>	Canada
12	Diwali ○	Hinduism	

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	13	Bandi Chhor Divas ◉☐	Sikhism
	13	New Year ◉	Hinduism
	13	Diwali/Lord Mahavir ◉	Jainism
	13-17	Workplace Bullying Awareness Week	Community Observance
	14	New Year/Enlightenment day of Gautamswami ◉	Jainism
	16	Louis Riel Day	Indigenous Worldview
	18	Gnan Panchami	Jainism
	20	Transgender Day of Remembrance	Community Observance
	20	World Children's Day	United Nations
	24	Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur	Sikhism
	25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women	WHO
	26	Day of the Covenant	Bahá'i
	27	Dev Diwali	Jainism
	27	Birth of Guru Nanak ◉	Sikhism
	28	Ascension 'Abdu'l-Bahá	Bahá'i
	28	First Day of Advent	Christianity (Orthodox)
December 2023			
Atikomego Giizis (Whitefish Moon) Manidoo Giizisoons (Little Spirit Moon)	3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	United Nations
	3	First Day of Advent	Christianity
	5	International Volunteer Day	United Nations
	6	National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women	Government of Canada
	8	Bodhi Day	Buddhism
	8-15	Chanukah	Judaism
	10	International Human Rights Day	United Nations
	15	Installation of Guru Granth as Guru	Sikhism
	13	Birthday of Imam Aga Khan	Islam
	17	Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur	Sikhism
	21	Yule/Winter Solstice ◉☐	Wicca / Indigenous Worldview
	25	Christmas ◉	Christianity
	26-Jan 1	Kwanzaa	African Canadian and American Celebration
	26	Zarathosht-no-diso	Zoroastrianism
	26	Boxing Day	Canadian Holiday
29	Amitabha Buddha's Birthday	Buddhism	
January 2024			
Manidoo Giizisoons (Little Spirit Moon)	1	Temple Day	Buddhism
	1	New Year's Day ◉	Christianity

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Gichimandoo-Giizis (Big Spirit Moon)	4	National Ribbon Skirt Day	Canada
	5	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh ◦	Sikhism
	6	Epiphany	Christianity
	7	Christmas ◦	Christianity (Orthodox)
	13	Lohri	Hinduism
	13	Maghi	Sikhism
	14	Makar Sankranti	Hinduism
	14	New Year's Day ◦	Christianity (Orthodox)
	17	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh ◦	Sikhism
	18	Sakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment (Nirvana Day)	Buddhism
	19	Epiphany	Christianity (Orthodox)
	21	<u>Lincoln Alexander Day</u>	Government of Ontario
	24	<u>International Day of Education</u>	United Nations
27	<u>International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust</u>	United Nations	
February 2024			
Black History Month			
Namebin-Giizis (Suckerfish Moon)	1-2	Imbolc (Candlemas)	Wicca
	8	Isra'a and Mi'raj	Islam
	10	Lunar New Year/Maiotrey Bodhisattva's Birthday ◦	Buddhism
	13	Vasant Panchami	Hinduism
	14	Ash Wednesday	Christianity
	15	<u>National Flag Day</u>	Government of Canada
	19	Family Day (ON)	Canadian Holiday
	20	World Day of Social Justice	International Day
	24	Lantern Festival/Magha Puja	Buddhism
	25	Nisfu Sha'ban	Islam
	28	Pink Shirt Day	Community Observance
	26-29	Intercalary Days	Bahá'i
March 2024			
Onaabani-Giizis (Snowcrust Moon)	1-19	Bahá'i Fast	Bahá'i
	4-10	Social Work Week	Community Observance
	8	Mahashivratri ◦	Hinduism
	8	<u>International Women's Day</u>	Government of Canada
	11	Ramadan (fasting begins)±	Islam
	14	Sikh New Year	Sikhism
	18	Clean Monday	Christianity

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			(Orthodox)
	16	Louis Riel Day ○	
	19	Ladyday/Spring Equinox	Wicca / Indigenous Worldview
	20	Naw Ruz (New Year) ○■	Bahá'i
	21	<u>International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination</u>	United Nations
	21	<u>World Down Syndrome Day</u>	Community Observance
	21	Eid-e-Navroz	Islam
	21	Navroze (New Year) ○■	Zoroastrianism
	22	World Water Day	Community Observance
	23	Earth Hour	Community Observance
	23-24	Purim	Judaism
	25	Holi	Hinduism
	26	Hola Mohalla	Sikhism
	26	Khordad Sal ○■	Zoroastrianism
	28	Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Birthday	Buddhism
	29	Good Friday ○	Christianity
	31	Easter ○	Christianity
	31	International Transgender Day of Visibility	Community Observance
	31	National Indigenous Languages Day	Government of Canada
April 2024 Arab Heritage Month Earth Month Sikh Heritage Month			
Iskigamizige-Giizis (Sugar Bushing Moon)	1	Easter Monday ○	Christianity
	2	<u>World Autism Awareness Day</u>	United Nations
	5	Jumatul Widha	Islam
	5	Lailat-ul-Qadr	Islam
	8	Farvardegan	Zoroastrianism
	9	Vasant Navratri begins	Hinduism
	9	New Year ○	Hinduism
	10	Eid-ul-Fitr ○ ±	Islam
	12-14	Jalsa Salana ○	Islam
	13	Vaisakhi/Baisakhi	Hinduism
	13	Theravada New Year ○	Buddhism
	13	Vaisakhi ○	Sikhism
	14	Tamil & Sinhala / Sri-Lankan New Year	Community Observance
	16	Shri Ramnavami ○	Hinduism

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	20	First day of Ridvan ○■	Bahá'i
	21	Mahavir Janmakalyanak (Birthday) ○	Jainism
	22	Zarathosht-no-diso	Zoroastrianism
	22	<u>Earth Day</u>	United Nations
	22-29	Pesach (Passover)	Judaism
	23 & 29	Pesach (Passover) ○■	Judaism
	24	Administrative Professionals' Day	Staff Recognition
	28	Ninth day of Ridvan ○■	Bahá'i
	28	National Day of Mourning	Government of Canada
	14-April	Daniel's Decision	
	31- May 1	Beltane	Wicca
May 2024 Asian Heritage Month Jewish Heritage Month			
Zaagibagaa-Giizis (Budding Moon)	1	Twelfth day of Ridvan ○■	Bahá'i
	1-7	Canada's Mental Health Week	Government of Canada
	3	Good Friday ○	Christianity (Orthodox)
	5	Easter ○	Christianity (Orthodox)
	5	National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous	Government of Canada
	5	National Day of Awareness for MMIW2S+ (Red dress Day)	Government of Canada
	5-11	<u>Children's Mental Health Week</u>	Children's Mental Health Ontario
	6	Easter Monday ○	Christianity (Orthodox)
	6	Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)	Jewish
	7	National Child and Youth Mental Health Day	Government of Canada
	15	Sakyamuni Buddha's Birthday	Buddhism
	17	International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia	United Nations
	19	Pentecost (G)	Christianity (Orthodox)
	20	<u>Victoria Day</u>	Canadian Holiday
	22	Zarathosht-no-diso	Zoroastrianism
	23	Declaration of the Báb	Bahá'i
	23	Wesak/Buddha Day ○	Buddhism
	28	Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	Bahá'i

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June 2024			
National Indigenous History Month			
Pride Month			
Ode'imini-Giizis (Strawberry Moon)	6	Anishinabek Nation Holiday (Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin) ○	
	10	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev	Sikhism
	11-12	Shavuot	Judaism
	12	Shavuot ○■	Judaism
	15	Waqfatu'Arafat	Islam
	16	Eid-ul-Adha ○±	Islam
	19	<u>World Sickle Cell Awareness Day</u>	United Nations
	21	National Indigenous Peoples Day ○	Indigenous Worldview
	21	Litha/Summer Solstice ○■	Wicca / Indigenous Worldview
	21	Poson	Buddhism
	23	Pentecost	Christianity (Orthodox)
	27	<u>Canadian Multiculturalism Day</u>	Government of Canada
	27	Métis Nation of Ontario Self-Government Agreement Signing	
	30	All Saints Day	Christianity (Orthodox)
July 2024			
Miinke Giizis (Berry Moon)	1	<u>Canada Day</u>	Canadian Holiday
	7	New Year (Hijra)	Islam
	9	Martyrdom of the Báb	Bahá'i
	11	Imamat Day ○	Islam
	12-14	Jalsa Salana ○	Islam
	16	Ashura ○	Islam
	16	Navroze (New Year) ○■	Zoroastrianism
	20	<u>Global Day of Inclusion</u>	Special Olympics Ontario
	21	Guru Purnima	Hinduism and Jainism
	21	Khordad Sal ○■	Zoroastrianism
	21	Asalha Puja Day	Buddhism
	24	Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Enlightenment	Buddhism
August 2024			
Manoominike-Giizis (Ricing Moon)	1	Lughnasadh/Lammas	Wicca
	3	Farvadeگان	Zoroastrianism
	5	Civic Holiday (ON)	Canadian Holiday
	12-13	Tishah B'Av	Judaism
	15	Navroze (New Year) ○■	Zoroastrianism

	18	Sangha Day/Ullambana	Buddhism
	19	Raksha Bandhan	Hinduism
	20	Khordad Sal ◉	Zoroastrianism
	26	Arbaeen	Islam
	26	Sri Krishna Janmaashtami ◉	Hinduism
	31	Paryushan Parva begins	Jainsim

Additions or Corrections

While the Board attempts to ensure accuracy with the listed dates and creed-observances, we recognize the vast diversity of our community, different calendar systems, and research errors. If you would like to request an addition or amendment to this listing, please contact the Board office.

Requests for Creed-Based Accommodations

Lakehead District School Board will take reasonable steps to provide accommodation to students or staff who believe that the Board's operations or requirements interfere with their ability to exercise their creed beliefs and practices, to the point of undue hardship. A determination of undue hardship will be based on an assessment of costs of the accommodation, outside sources of funding, and health and safety risks to the individual and/or others at the Board.

It is expected that students and their families, as well as staff, will help the Board to understand their creed related needs and will work with the Board and its schools to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students or staff may request an accommodation to observe their creed beliefs, commonly in one or more of the following areas:

1. **School Opening and Closing Exercises:** At minimum, all public schools in Ontario are required to open or closed each day with the national anthem (PPM 108 & Education Act R.S.O. 1990). A student or employee who objects to all or part of opening or closing exercises for faith-based reasons will be exempted and given the option not to participate and to remain in the class or in an agreed-upon location.
2. **Prayer:** Schools should make every reasonable effort to accommodate the requirements for daily prayer by providing an appropriate location within the building for prayer when requested by students or staff. Some accommodation for late school arrival and/or early school leaving may be necessary. Prayer times change in some faiths according to the seasons.
3. **Dietary Requirements:** Schools should be aware of dietary restrictions of various faith groups. This awareness includes breakfast and lunch programs, snacks, overnight outdoor education activities and field trips that cover a meal-time period, and catering for special occasions and community events. Provision of halal, kosher or vegetarian options may be needed.
4. **Fasting:** Schools should accommodate students and staff with respect to fasting observances. Appropriate space other than the cafeteria or lunchroom should be designated during lunch period for fasting students. Field trip plans should also consider the needs of fasting students. Students might need exemptions or alteration of activities in some classes, e.g., physical education. For sporting or athletic activities during fasting periods, attempt to plan these events during time periods where a fasting student would have more energy (i.e. closer to the beginning of their fasting).
5. **Religious Attire:** Student/staff wearing of certain hairstyles and attire, such as, but not limited to: yarmulkes, turbans, hijab (headscarves), crucifixes, stars of David, should be permitted. It is worth noting that harassment based on religious attire or wearing articles of faith is one of the most common forms of discrimination. Staff attitudes are crucial to establishing a positive climate of understanding and respect for differences regarding faith-based attire.
6. **Accommodation of Religion Related Dress for Physical Education:** When a student requests an accommodation for dress code for participation in physical education activities including swimming, the school and family are encouraged to find a mutually agreeable accommodation. Health and Safety must be considered in the accommodation of dress. For example, a head scarf can be tucked into clothing, track pants may be worn instead of shorts. The curriculum requirements should be explained to the family, so the family has sufficient information to understand the physical education curriculum and to select available curriculum alternatives.

7. **Participation in Daily Activities, Curriculum and Program:** When an accommodation is requested, related to the content of curriculum and/or program, it is important to have an open discussion between the parents/guardians and the school. The accommodation applies to the individual who requests it, not the whole class or classroom practices in general.
8. **Observing Faith-based (Creed) Days of Significance:** It is recommended that schools recognize religious holy days and days of significance, pertinent to their school community. Schools are encouraged to recognize the days of significance on the Board's Diversity calendar through announcements, bulletin board displays, assemblies, and other events befitting the school setting and student demographics. Schools will endeavor to be aware of the faith-based observances of their school community when planning activities.
9. **Leave of Absence for Faith-based (Creed) Days of Significance and Celebrations:** All staff and students who observe faith-based (creed) days of significance in accordance with Sec. 21 (2) (g) of the Education Act may be excused from attendance.

Student Requests for Accommodation

Parents/guardians/adult students must present verbal or written notice for the student to their teacher/principal/vice-principal, specifying their accommodation needs relating to creed observances, including holy days on which they will be absent from school. This notice should be made enough in advance (preferably at the beginning of each school year) to ensure that scheduling of major evaluations, such as tests, assignments or examinations, takes the creed observances into consideration.

If a student is unable to attend a major evaluation due to a creed-based observance, members of staff are expected to work with the student and their parent/guardian to develop an accommodation plan.

Student handbooks and parent newsletters should include information about the procedure to follow to request an accommodation for creed observances and/or faith or creed-based days of significance.

Staff Requests for Accommodation

Members of staff requesting accommodation for creed-based observances should advise their supervisor at the beginning of the school year, if possible. Otherwise, staff should endeavor to make their requests as early as possible.

Unresolved Requests

For Staff: If the immediate supervisor is not able to resolve an accommodation request, members of staff should refer the matter to the appropriate superintendent or human resources, if applicable.

For Students: Requests for classroom-based accommodations should first be directed to the classroom teacher. If the classroom teacher is unable to facilitate or grant the accommodation request, parents/guardians/adult students should refer the matter to the school vice-principal/principal. If resolution is unsuccessful at this level, the matter should be referred to the appropriate superintendent.

Planning for Holy Days & Days of Significance

The intent of this guide is to provide Board members with information to promote diversity in their schools, celebrate the diversity of our community, and create awareness about creed-based observances which may prevent students and community members from participating in school events.

When planning events, consult this guide to ensure there is not a conflict with another observance, especially those marked as significant holy days. If a scheduling conflict is unavoidable, consider how you might maximize participation and ensure access for those who may not be able to attend. For example, are you able to provide flexible scheduling so people can attend on a different date as well?

Many creed-based observances may fall on the same date, or during time periods that are recognized provincially or federally as holiday/break periods. It is important for schools to recognize all observances as equally as possible during these periods. Recognition in schools can include, but is not limited to:

- Announcements
- Displays
- Bulletin boards
- Posters
- Student Work
- Assemblies
- Curriculum Connections

Recognition of Days of Significance and Holy Days is not meant to indoctrinate students or staff towards a certain creed or belief. Lakehead District School Board upholds and celebrates not only creed, but every right protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. While staff and students may request accommodations or exemptions from participation in events or activities, the Board will continue to support learning and working environments which celebrate human rights, respect for differences, and anti-discrimination.