






HDSB Equity Days of Significance Calendar 2014-2015

	 Christianity RC-Roman Catholic P-Protestant E-Eastern Orthodox(Saint Days are not listed here but may be taken off)	 Judaism *holidays begin at sundown of previous day	 Bahá'í	 Sikhism	 Islam ** Dates – Subject to moon sighting (I) - Ismaili	 Hinduism	 Buddhism	 First Nations	 Jainism	 Wicca	 Zoroastrianism (F)-Fasli (S)-Shenshahi	Equity/ UN Days
September		24-26 Rosh Hashana				25 – Oct 9 Navaratri		19 Powley Day		22 Harvestide		5 Int. Literacy Day 15 Int. Day of Democracy 21 Int. Day of Peace
October		4 -Yom Kippur 9-15 Sukkot 17 Simchat Torah	20 Birth of the Bab	20 Installation of Holy Scriptures as Guru Granth Sahib	4-6 Eid Ul Adha**	4 Dasera 23 Diwali (local customs may use a variation of this date)			23 Lord Mahavir Nirvan/Diwali 24 – Jain New Year	31 Samhain		1 Islamic History Month begins 2 Int. Day of Non-Violence 5 World Teachers Day 10 World Mental Health Day 14 World Sight Day 16 World Food Day 17 Int. Day for the Eradication of Poverty
November	1 All Saints (RC, P) 2 All Souls		12 Birth of Baha'u'llah 26 Day of Covenant 28 Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha	6 Birth of Guru Nanak 24 Martyrdom of Teg Bahadur	5 Tenth day of Muharram - Ashura			16 Louis Riel Day				11 Remembrance Day 20 Universal Children's Day 25 Int. Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
December	1 Advent Begins (RC,P) 25 Christmas, birth of Jesus Christ (RC,P)	17-24 Hanukkah			13- Saligrah Khushali (I)		8 Bodhi Day			21 Yule	26 Death Anniversary of Zarathustra (F)	2 Int. Day for the Abolition of Slavery 3 Int. day for Persons with Disability 6 National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women 10 Human Rights Day 26 Kwanzaa
January	6 Epiphany (RC, P) 7 Christmas (E)			5 Birth of Guru Gobind Singh	3 Miladun Nabi 8 Mlladun Nabi (Shia)		30 Mahayana Buddhist New Year				24 Jashan-e-Sadeh (F)	17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day 27 Int. Day of Commemoration in Memory of the victims of the Holocaust
February	18 Ash Wednesday (RC, P)		26-1 Intercalary Days				8 or 15 Nirvana Day 19 Lunar New Year			1 or 2 Imbolc (Candlemas)		1 Black History Month begins 17 Family day (Canada) 19 Lunar New Year 20 World Social Justice Day 21 Int. Mother Language Day
March		5 Purim	2-20 onth of Ala Fasting from 21 NawRuz	6 Hola Mohalla	21 Nawroz (I)	6 Holi 21 New Year 21 Ramayana 28 Shri Ramnavami	5 Magha Puja Day			20 Ostara (Ladyday)	16-20 Gambar Hamaspathmaedem 21 Now Ruz (New Year (F) 28 Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra (F)	8 Int. Women's Day 21 Int. Day for the Elimination of Racism 25 Int. Day for Remembrance of Victims of Slavery 28 National Day of Mourning
April	3 Good Friday, crucifixion of Jesus Christ (RC, P) 5 Easter (RC,P) 6 Easter Monday, resurrection of Jesus Christ (RC, P) 10 Holy Friday (O) 12 Easter/Pascha (O)	4-11 Pesach Passover 16 Yom HaShoah	21 Ridvan (absent April21,29,May2)	14 Baisakhi New Year			4 Theravada Buddhist New Year		2 Mahavira Jayanti 21 Akshaya tritiya		4 Gambar Maidyozaem 8 –30 May Farvardingan (F)	2 World Autism Day 8 Int. Day of Pink (second Wed. of April)
May	2 Ascension (RC and E) 24 Pentecost (RC,P) 31 Pentecost (O)	24-25 Shavuot	23 Declaration of the Bab 29 Ascension of Baha'u'llah			2 Mahavir Jayanti	4 Visakha Puja Wesak day (Buddha's Birth)			1 Belatane (May Eve)	27 Zarathoshtno Diso (Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra (S)	Asian Heritage Month 15 Int. Day of Families 17 Int. Day Against Homophobia
June	7 All Saints (O)			16 Martyrdom of Guru Arjun	18 Ramadan Begins		19 Poson (Start of rainy season retreat for monks, Full Moon Day in June)	21 First Nations Day		21 Litha (Midsummer's Eve)	29 July 3 Gambar Maidyoshem	17 World Day Against Child Labour 20 World Refugee Day

The intent of this calendar is to create awareness of the many days of significance in Halton, to promote inter-faith understanding and awareness among staff, students, parents and communities, and to assist schools in the scheduling of events thereby avoiding conflicts. This calendar is not comprehensive, but a selected representation. Every attempt has been made to ensure accuracy. Students and/or staff may not necessarily be absent. Employees should consult the Religious Holy Days Memo published by Human Resources for leaves of absence. Other days of significance for which a day off with pay is required can be applied for through the Manager of Human Resources.

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First Nations Spirituality

Native cultures have practiced and maintained their spirituality over centuries through ceremonies, customs and traditions that are an integral part of their being. The Supreme Being, the creator, is a fundamental figure in their religious pursuits. Spirituality for Aboriginal people is closely linked to Nature and Mother Earth. In their quest for spirituality, they strive for balance and harmony in their lives. Their spiritual and cultural life is interconnected. Followers of Aboriginal spirituality celebrate seasonal festivals.

Bahá'í

Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892) founded the Bahá'í faith on the belief of the oneness of God, religion and humanity. Adherents value universal principals such as love, equality, social justice, honesty, kindness etc. while accepting social and scientific changes in their day-to-day lives. Followers of the faith take personal responsibility for their spiritual growth. The Bahá'í faith is governed by spiritual assemblies made up of nine or more members and does not have clergy to guide worship.

In the Bahá'í calendar, there are 19 months of 19 days each with four intercalary days (five in leap year). Each month represents an attribute of God. The first month starts with the New Year (March 21) and the last ends with 19 days fast. The Bahá'í day starts at sunset.

Buddhism

Siddhartha Gautam, the first Buddha, founded Buddhism in the 6th century BCE in Northern India. Two major forms of Buddhism evolved as it spread across Asia. The Theravada (southern) tradition is found in Burma, Cambodia, India, Laos, Malaysia Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and parts of Vietnam. The Mahayana (northern) tradition is found in China, India, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Tibet and Vietnam. Buddhist teachings guide followers to attain liberation from rebirth through Dharma (Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path) and Karma (action with cause and effect). Buddhist calendars vary based on the diverse traditions of the adherents' school of thought. This calendar reflects major dates in all three of the Buddhist calendars.

Christianity

Christians follow the life and teachings of Jesus, also called Christ. Christianity shares its roots and some religious texts with Judaism. Jesus was born a Jew. His followers spread Christianity after his death. It is the world's largest religion. There are many denominations, traditions and churches within Christianity. Three main branches of the faith are Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant. Both the Old and New Testaments guide followers in their spiritual quest. Christians believe in one God, the Holy Trinity and

divinity of Christ. Adherents follow either the Julian or Gregorian calendars.

Hinduism

Hinduism, also called Sanatana Dharma, is the world's oldest organized religion. It evolved over many centuries in the Indian subcontinent and has no single founder or scripture. Adherents believe in one omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient God. Followers refer to a number of holy texts – Veda, Purana, Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata – and may worship many male and female manifestations of God either in a temple or at home. Hinduism's core beliefs include:

- Dharma (righteous practices)
- Karma (action with cause and effect)
- Moksha (liberation from cycle of rebirth)
- Atman (eternal soul)
- Ahimsa (non-violence)
- Bhakti (devotion)
- Jnana (knowledge for spiritual enlightenment)

The Hindu calendar – Vikram Samvat and Panchang – uses both lunar and solar calculations.

Islam

Islam, meaning “peace” in Arabic, was revealed through the Prophet Muhammad. The message is recorded in the *Quaran*, which is the holiest book for followers of Islam. Muslims believe in submission to one God (Allah), Muhammad as his messenger, angels of God, holy books revealed to mankind, other prophets (Adam to Jesus), the day of judgment and resurrection after death. Follower of the faith have five duties (Pillars of Islam) to perform:

- Declaration of faith
- Five prayers daily
- Fasting in the month of Ramadan
- Payment of Zakat (annual charity)
- Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) at least once during their lifetime. Sunni and Shia are the two main schools of Islam. All Muslims follow a code of behaviour that clearly lays out what is Halal (acceptable/permitted) and what is Haram (prohibited/unacceptable) in their daily lives. Islam follows a lunar – Hijri – calendar.

Jainism

Jainism was founded on the teachings of 24 Tirthankaras (liberated and enlightened persons) of whom Vardhamana Mahavira was the last. The religion has its roots in Hinduism and the Indian sub-continent. Jain philosophy provides a way of life for adherents. Shwetamber and Digamber are the two divisions of Jainism. These two sects differ in some of their religious beliefs, interpretations of scripture and daily and ascetic practices. Jains believe in:

- '4Aiva (eternal soul)
- Ahimsa (non-violence)
- Veganism

- Aparigraha (non-acquisition)
- Karma (cause and effect action)
- Samsar (cycle of transmigration, birth and death)
- Anekantvada (multiplicity of views)
- Moksha (liberation from cycle of birth)

Jains fast regularly during the course of a year and also during many festivals and holy days. Jains follow the Vir Nirvan Smavat calendar with its roots in the Hindu calendar.

Judaism

Judaism is a monotheistic faith. Followers believe that God entered into a covenant with Abraham, and it was later renewed with Moses and the Jewish people to reveal his laws and teachings through the Torah. The Jewish people practice these teachings in their worship and customs. The synagogue is their place of worship. Jews observe the Sabbath weekly, beginning at sunset on Friday and ending at sunset on Saturday. It is the time for spiritual reflection for adherents and they suspend work for the day. Followers of the faith may pray three times –morning, afternoon and night each day. Many Jews observe kashrut (or kosher) dietary rules. The Jewish faith is divided into groups depending on adherents' religious beliefs and practices. Some of these include Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist. The Jewish calendar is a combined lunar and solar calendar. The holy days may be celebrated either for a day or over two days based on their religious beliefs.

Sikhism

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak (1469-1539). The religion was further developed and defined by nine gurus that came after him and has its roots in the Indian sub-continent. Holy scriptures called *Guru Granth Sahib* have guided adherents spiritually after the ten gurus. Sikhs believe in one Supreme Being. The key beliefs of Sikhism include:

- oneness of humanity
 - the release from birth-cycles through enlightenment
 - worship, meditation and service
 - rejection of caste system, rituals and idol-worship.
- Khalsa (baptised) Sikhs are required to follow Reht Maryada (the Sikh code of conduct) at all times. Reht Maryada includes both the religious and social practices for Sikhs. The Sikh calendar was modified in 1999 and has moved from lunar to tropical solar calculations. Some groups within the faith continue to use the previous calendar and therefore some holy-day celebrations may vary based on adherent's affiliation.

Wicca

Wicca is a newly revived religion with roots in pre-Christian religious beliefs, traditions and practices of Europe. Wiccans worship the one Supreme Being and its two aspects – male and female – equally. The faith also recognizes many other deities venerated from ancient times. Earth-centered practices and harmony with nature are important beliefs of the faith. Followers believe in Karma (actions with cause and effect) and reincarnation. Many Wiccans are members of covens (local Wicca groups). They gather for worship in sacred circles. Most rituals of the faith relating to life cycle and seasonal changes are held in a circle, outdoors when possible. Wiccans celebrate eight Sabbats (seasonal celebrations) spaced 45 days apart during a year. Wiccans follow a yearly cycle of the sun in a fixed calendar.

Zoroastrianism

Zarathushtra also called Zoroaster founded the faith in ancient Persia (Iran). Believers worship Ahura Mazda – the one God. Zoroastrians believe that an individual has a choice between good and evil in life. The path for perfecting oneself is through good thought, good speech and good actions. Fire is sacred to the faith and it is always kept burning in the temple and in followers' homes. Followers also believe in angels, heaven and hell, God and Satan, an immortal soul and the last judgement. Priesthood is hereditary in Zoroastrianism, and all religious ceremonies are lead by priests. Both male and female followers are initiated into the faith through the Navjote ceremony. Initiated adherents have to follow dress codes of the faith. Shenshahi, Qadimi and Fasli are three major denominations and the three calendars that followers of the Zoroastrian faith use. be a complete listing of religious days. Students and staff from a particular faith background may or may not be absent from school on these special days. If they do attend, certain accommodations may be required.

Time is measured either according to:

- The Sun – Solar Calendar (Aboriginal, Bahá'í, Christian, Sikh and Zoroastrian calendars)
- The Moon – Lunar Calendar (Islamic calendar)
- Combination of both the Sun and the Moon – Lunisolar Calendar
- Buddhist, Chinese, Hindu, Jain and Jewish calendars)

(Excerpt from Peel DSB Multifaitth Calendar created by Varsha Naik, Community Liaison)