



Jewish Observances: Considerations

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Purpose:

- To raise awareness among administrators, teachers, parents, and other PSD community members about the diverse religious/spiritual beliefs and practices of PSD students and families.
- To implement inclusive educational practices so PSD students and families from diverse religious/spiritual backgrounds feel valued and included.

Jewish calendar: The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar that adjusts on a yearly basis to correlate with the solar calendar. This adjustment process means the Jewish holidays can vary relative to the solar/Gregorian calendar by up to a month from one year to the next. **Jewish holidays begin and end at sundown.** Therefore, the secular calendar may indicate that a Jewish holiday begins on a certain day, but **the holiday actually begins at sundown the previous evening.** A good website for a Jewish perpetual calendar is www.chabad.org.

Jewish students may miss school on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover in order to observe the holidays with their families and attend services. ***School events should not be scheduled on Rosh Hashanah evening and days, Yom Kippur evening and day, and the 1st and 2nd evenings and days of Passover.*** School events include concerts, plays/musicals, carnivals, dances, major exams, sporting events, and field trips.

2015-2016:

Rosh Hashanah	September 14-15	(Begins at sundown Sept. 13)
Yom Kippur	September 23	(Begins at sundown Sept. 22-Kol Nidre service is held evening of Sept. 22)
Passover	April 23-30	(Begins at sundown April 22-Seders are held evenings of April 22 & 23)

2016-2017:

Rosh Hashanah	October 3-4	(Begins at sundown Oct. 2)
Yom Kippur	October 12	(Begins at sundown Oct. 11-Kol Nidre service is held evening of Oct. 11)
Passover	April 11-18	(Begins at sundown April 10 – Seders are held evenings of April 10 & 11)

2017-2018:

Rosh Hashanah	September 21-22	(Begins at sundown Sept. 20)
Yom Kippur	September 30	(Begins at sundown Sept. 29 – Kol Nidre service is held evening of Sept. 29)
Passover	March 31-April 7	(Begins at sundown March 30 – Seders are held evening of March 30 & 31)

****See following page for a detailed description of these observances**

High Holy Days

Rosh Hashanah: Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, begins the yearly calendar cycle. The holiday is observed for either one or two days. Rosh Hashanah begins the holiest time of year, the Days of Awe, a time of reflection and repentance for one's misdeeds. Observance consists of worship services in the synagogue the first evening followed by a festive meal. Worship services continue into the next two days. After morning services on the first day of the holiday, Jews may gather at a body of running water for "Tashlich," the symbolic casting away of one's misdeeds. Students may miss school to attend services with their family.

Yom Kippur: Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement, considered the holiest day of the Jewish year. Observance consists of a 25 hour fast from sundown the first evening to one hour after sundown the following day, during which no food or water is consumed. Preceding the fast on the evening Yom Kippur begins, a festive meal is enjoyed and Jews attend Kol Nidre services afterwards. Worship services and study sessions continue throughout the entire next day. There is a communal and celebratory "break the fast" the night the holiday concludes. Students may miss school to attend services with their family.

Festival

Passover (Pesach): A spring festival lasting 8 nights, Passover commemorates the Biblical Exodus. During Passover, no foods with leavening agents such as yeast, baking powder or baking soda are eaten, nor are foods which "puff up" when water is added such as most grains and beans/legumes. A Seder, a festive family and communal meal, is held the first two evenings of the festival. During the Seder, special prayers are recited and the story of the Exodus is re-enacted through readings, discussion, songs, and the eating of symbolic foods. Passover is a time for families to gather together, spend time preparing their home for the holiday, and cooking food for the Seder. Therefore, students may miss school during the first two days of Passover to participate in these activities.