Days of Religious Significance Calendar 2014-2015

Saskatoon Public Schools recognizes the diversity of our community and acknowledges the celebrations that different faith and culture groups bring to our schools. The dates below represent some of the most common celebrations of our newcomer families. *This is not meant to be an exhaustive list and there may be some faith groups and celebrations that are not included.*

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Saskatoon Public Schools recognizes the diversity of our community and acknowledges the celebrations that different faith and culture groups bring to our schools. The following descriptions do not address all of the celebrations and religions of our students and their families.

*Observances which begin at sundown prior to the day listed.*

**October 2014**

Ends Oct. 9  Navaratri in Hinduism

The festival of Navaratri takes place over a period of nine nights. It honours the worship of the Goddess Durga, the Divine Mother. This is a time of music and devotion and is recognized as one of most auspicious occasions.

*October 4-6 Eid al-Adha in Islam

Eid al-Adha falls within the month of the Islamic calendar when Muslims may make the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj).

During Eid-ul-Adha, which lasts for four days, Muslims remember the story of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) and his son Ismail. In the story, Ibrahim was willing to sacrifice his son to show his love and obedience towards God. However, God replaced Ismail with a ram, showing that true trust and faith are rewarded. Hence, Eid-ul Adha is known as the Festival of Sacrifice.

Those performing Hajj return for Eid-ul-Adha, where they traditionally proceed to slaughter a lamb or other suitable animal. The meat is then divided into thirds; one-third is given to those in need, one-third goes to neighbours and friends, and one-third stays with the family. The celebrations typically involve visiting friends and family, sharing in a
October 23  
Diwali in Hinduism

Diwali is dedicated to the Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. This celebration is known as the festival of lights and many people will light small lamps, candles or fireworks. During the festival, people gather together with friends and family and exchange small gifts.

November 2014

*November 5  
Ashura in Islam

Ashura begins at sundown the day before. Ashura is a Muslim holy day observed on the 10th day of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar. Muslims observe these days by fasting.

November 23  
Bandi Chhor Divas in Sikhism

On this day, Sikhs celebrate the return on the sixth guru (Guru Har Gobind Ji) to the holy city of Amritsar after his release from jail.

December 2014
Hanukkah is known as the festival of lights and begins at sunset November 27. In Judaism, Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days and on each day, one candle is lit on the menorah (the Hannukah lamp).

Kwanzaa is a cultural observance created in 1966 to celebrate African-inspired traditional values and African-American ancestry and heritage. Kwanzaa (“first fruits of the harvest” in Swahili) is being observed by increasing numbers of African-Canadian families.

On each day of the week during Kwanzaa, a candle is lit in a seven-branched candelabrum, called a kinara, to represent one of the seven principles celebrated during Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, co-operative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. Children often receive educational and cultural gifts, and the week may end with a great feast—the Kwanzaa Karamu—followed by dance, music, and readings.

Source: http://www.tdsb.on.ca

January 2015

January 5 Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji in Sikhism

Guru Gobind Singh Ji was the tenth and last of the living gurus of the Sikhs. He lived from 1666 to 1708 and founded the Khalsa order within the Sikh tradition. Birth
anniversaries of the ten gurus in Sikhism are celebrated as festivals and may last for several days.

January 7  Orthodox Christmas Day for Orthodox Christians (eg. some Ukrainians and Russians)

Many Orthodox Christians in Canada celebrate Christmas Day on or near January 7. It is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, who is believed to be the son of God.

Source: http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/canada/orthodox-christmas-day

January 14  Makar Sankrati in Hinduism

Makar Sankranti is one of the most important festivals of the Hindu calendar and celebrates the sun's journey into the northern hemisphere, a period which is considered to be highly auspicious.

There is a wide variation in the celebration of Makar Sankranti throughout India, in particular the name. It is also known as Thai Pongal.

Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/holydays/makar.shtml

January 31  Lunar New Year (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese)

For many people of Asian descent, this day marks the beginning of the new year or spring. 2014 is the year of the horse.

February 2015

February 14  Nirvana Day in Buddhism
Parinirvana Day, or Nirvana Day, is a Mahayana Buddhist holiday celebrated in East Asia. By some it is celebrated on 8th of February, but by most on 14th of February. It celebrates the day when the Buddha is said to have achieved Parinirvana, or complete Nirvana, upon the death of his physical body. Buddhists celebrate the death of the Buddha because they believe that since he was Enlightened, he was free from the pain of physical existence.

Source: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/buddhism/nirvana.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/buddhism/nirvana.shtml)

March 2015

March 6   Holi in Hinduism

This colourful festival celebrates the triumph of good over evil as well as the coming of spring. Hindus sing, dance and throw coloured paint or water at each other as part of the fun.

April 2015

April 14   Vaisakhi in Sikhism

Vaisakhi is the celebration of the Sikh New Year as well as the founding of the Khalsa order (Sikh religion) by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Many Sikhs choose to be baptized into the Khalsa order on this day.

May 2015

May 4   Wesak/Buddha Day in Buddhism
**Wesak** is the most important of the Buddhist festivals and is celebrated on the full moon in May. It celebrates the Buddha's birthday, and, for some Buddhists, also marks his enlightenment and death.

Source: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/buddhism/buddha_day.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/buddhism/buddha_day.shtml)

**June 2015**

June 18       Ramadan begins

**Ramadan** is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, and a time when Muslims across the world will **fast** during the hours of daylight.

Source: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/islam/ramadan.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/islam/ramadan.shtml)