

Proposed Multicultural and Religious Accommodation Policy

Augusta Schools are committed to a partnership between students, teachers, family and community. This policy ensures that students are free to celebrate religious holidays with their respective families and communities. It supports the students in their development and honors the core values of empathy and respect.

1. Augusta Schools will ~~list~~include major holidays for religions represented in the school district on the School Calendar distributed to parents and staff each year. These holidays will also be listed on the website and school-wide electronic calendars.
 - The Augusta Superintendent's Office will work annually with local leaders from the interfaith community to provide a listing of dates of significant holidays to be included on official calendars. These leaders will be available to staff, faculty, and board members for consultation and trainings, if desired.
 - The list of holidays is not intended to be all inclusive and will list only those ~~major~~ holidays that fall during the school year and for which celebrating students would be expected to miss school. Augusta Schools will also accommodate student absences for the observance of religious beliefs and religious holidays which are not listed in this Policy.
2. Augusta Schools will take these holidays into consideration when planning school-wide events including but not limited to: picture day, field trips, assemblies, back to school night, parent teacher conferences, homecoming, prom, concerts, theater performances, and testing.
 - Teachers will avoid scheduling activities that involve the serving or sharing of food during Ramadan or Passover in consideration of students who are fasting or observing dietary restrictions during those times.
3. The right of parent/guardians to excuse their children from school attendance for purposes of religious observance is understood and such absence will entail no penalty, academic or otherwise.
 - It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the teacher or coach of religious holidays observed by their child.
 - Students absent for a religious holiday will not be expected to sit for testing the day they return as they are unable to prepare for the exam during religious observations.
 - Students will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete missed work (reference excused absence policy).
 - Students who play sports or participate in other school-sponsored after-school activities will not be penalized due to an excused religious absence.
4. Children who miss school due to a religious observance will remain eligible for attendance awards. While the absence will count as an absence when the district reports numbers to the state, it will not count as an absence when counting days for attendance awards within the individual school.

5. Students who are fasting for religious purposes (documented by a note from the parent/guardian) will be allowed to spend lunch outside of the cafeteria at a location to be determined by the school.

Violations of this policy will be reported to school administrators and then to the Superintendent and School Board if necessary.

Listed Major Religious and Cultural Holidays for the 2021-2022 School Year

Rosh Hashanah* Sept. 6
Yom Kippur* Sept. 15
Diwali begins+ Nov. 4
Christmas* Dec. 25
Eastern Orthodox Christmas* Jan. 7
Chinese New Year Feb. 1
Ash Wednesday March 2
Eastern Orthodox Easter April 24
Good Friday April 15
Passover* April 15-23
Easter April 17
Ramadan*+ April 2-May 2
Vesak+ May 6
Eid ul-Fitr*+ May 2

*Observance of Jewish and Muslim holidays and Christmas start at sundown on the preceding day.

+ Date may vary by one day (or more for Vesak) because of the lunar calendar.

Note: Holidays which occur in the summer are not listed.

Updated 06/22/21