

Recognizing and Respecting Faith Diversity

DSBN



DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD
OF NIAGARA

Religious Accommodations Guidelines

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT

The District School Board of Niagara acknowledges each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices, free from discriminatory or harassing behaviours and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodations to staff and to students.

The District School Board of Niagara (the Board) recognizes and values the religious diversity within its community and is committed to providing a safe, respectful and equitable environment for all, free from all forms of discriminatory or harassing behaviours based on religion.

Freedom of religion is an individual right and a collective responsibility. The Board commits to work with the community it serves to foster an inclusive learning environment that promotes acceptance and protects religious freedom for all individuals. While the Board and its staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure freedom of religion and religious practices consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code (the *Code*), it is expected that students and their families will help the Board to understand their religious needs and will work with the Board and its schools to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations. (*Ontario Education Services Corporation*)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was produced with recommendations from the Ontario Education Services Corporation, and with permission from the Toronto District School Board.

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* For a complete list, refer to *The Multifaith Information Manual*.

Section One: Overview of Religious Accommodation Guidelines

I. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

All school boards exist within a broader context of law and public policy that protect and defend human rights. At the District School Board of Niagara, a number of policy statements (see below) have been developed that reinforce both federal and provincial legislation, and also help ensure that the freedoms set out in the legislation are protected within the school system.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Section 15) protects freedom of religion. The *Ontario Human Rights Code* (the *Code*) protects an individual's freedom from discriminatory or harassing behaviours based on religion. In addition to and consistent with this legislation, *The Education Act*, its regulations and policies govern equity and inclusion in schools:

PPM No 108, "Opening or Closing Exercises in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools",

R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 298, "Operation of School-General" s 27-29, under the heading "Religion in Schools"

PPM No. 119, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools".

The Board recognizes, and is committed to, the values of freedom of religion and freedom from discriminatory or harassing behaviour based on religion through its human rights policies, equity and inclusive education policy, safe schools policy and Board created resource documents. All of these will be informed by, and interpreted in accordance with, the principles of the *Code*.

Please refer to the relevant DSBN Policy documents:

E-9 Human Rights

E-11 Equity and Inclusive Education

G-2 Safe Schools/A.P 3-01

G-8 Code of Student Behaviour

G-22 Religious Publications/A.P 1-12

G-28 Student Discipline/A.P 3-26

G-29 Bullying Prevention and Intervention

G-31 Aboriginal Voluntary Confidential Student Self-Identification

II. DEFINITIONS

Accommodation

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances defines "accommodation" as a duty corresponding to the right to be free from discrimination:

The *Code* provides the right to be free from discrimination, and there is a general corresponding duty to protect the right: the "duty to accommodate." The duty arises when a person's religious beliefs conflict with a requirement, qualification or practice. The *Code* imposes a duty to accommodate based on the needs of the group of which the person making the request is a member. Accommodation may modify a rule or make an exception to all or part of it for the person requesting accommodation.

(Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances, Ontario Human Rights Commission, October 20, 1996, pg. 5)

The duty to accommodate is an obligation that arises when requirements, factors, or qualifications, which are imposed in good faith, have an adverse impact on, or provide an unfair preference for, a group of persons based on a protected ground under the *Code*. The duty to accommodate must be provided to the point of undue hardship. In determining whether there is undue hardship, section 24(2) of the *Code* provides that reference should be made to the cost of accommodation, outside sources of funding, if any, and health and safety requirements.

Creed

Creed is interpreted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission's 1996 Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances as "religious creed" or "religion." It is defined as a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances of worship. Religion is broadly accepted by the OHRC to include, for example, non-deistic body of faith, such as the spiritual faiths/practices of Aboriginal cultures.

The existence of religious beliefs and practices are both necessary and sufficient to the meaning of creed, if the beliefs and practices are sincerely held and/or observed.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, every person has the right to be free from discrimination or harassing behaviour that is based on religion or which arises because the person who is the target of the behaviour does not share the same faith. Atheists and agnostics are also protected under the *Code*.

Creed does not include secular, moral, or ethical beliefs or political convictions. This policy or groups, or to practices and observances that purport does not extend to religions that incite hatred or violence against other individuals to have a religious basis, but which contravene international human rights standards or criminal law (Policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances, Ontario Human Rights Commission, October 20, 1996, pg. 4).

Undue Hardship

Accommodation will be provided to the point of undue hardship, as defined by the OHRC (for example in the *Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate*). A determination regarding undue hardship will be based on an assessment of costs, outside sources of funding, and health and safety. It will be based on objective evidence. For more information about the evidence needed to prove undue hardship, see *Human Rights at Work*, p. 133-134 and Appendix E, OHRC Publication.

A determination that an accommodation will create undue hardship carries significant liability for the Board. It should be made only with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Where a determination is made that an accommodation would create undue hardship, the person requesting the accommodation will be given written notice, including the reasons for the decision and the objective evidence relied upon. The accommodation seeker shall be informed of his or her recourse under the Board's Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and DSBN Administrative Procedure 5-10, and under the *Code*.

Where a determination has been made that an accommodation would cause undue hardship, the Board will proceed to implement the next best accommodation short of undue hardship, or will consider phasing in the requested accommodation.

III. ACCOMMODATION GUIDELINES

The purpose of this guideline is to ensure that all Board staff, students, parents and other members of the school community are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the *Code* with respect to religious accommodation. It also sets out the Board's procedures for accommodation and the responsibilities of each of the parties to the accommodation process. In accordance with the Equity Strategy, the *Code* and OHRC's *Guidelines on Developing Human Rights Policies and Procedures*, it is intended that the accommodation process, as well as the accommodation itself, be effective and respectful of the dignity of accommodation seekers.

The Board is committed to providing an environment that is inclusive and that is free of barriers based on creed (religion). Accommodation will be provided in accordance with the principles of dignity, individualization, and inclusion. The Board will work cooperatively, and in a spirit of respect, with all partners in the accommodation process.

Accommodation Based on Request

The Board will take all reasonable steps to provide accommodation to individual members of a religious group to facilitate their religious beliefs and practices. All accommodation requests will be taken seriously. No person will be penalized for making an accommodation request.

The Board will base its decision to accommodate by applying the *Code's* criteria of undue hardship with the Board's ability to fulfill its duties under Board policies and the *Education Act*.

When concerns related to beliefs and practices arise in schools, collaboration among school, student, family, and religious community is needed in order to develop appropriate accommodation. It is the role of the Board and its staff to ensure equity and respect for the diverse religious beliefs and practices of students and their families and other staff in the school system. However, school administrators should not be placed in the position of monitoring a child's compliance with a religious obligation, and enforcing such practices, e.g. performing daily prayers or wearing a head covering is not the responsibility of the school or the Board.

General Procedures for Religious Accommodation

Staff

The person requesting accommodation should advise the administration at the beginning of the school year, to the extent possible. If September notice is not feasible, the person should make the request as early as possible.

The absences of employees are granted for the observance of religious holy days in accordance with the appropriate article within their respective collective agreements. Unless specifically referenced in their collective agreements, employees will be granted absence due to religious observances under the "special circumstances" clause.

Students and/or Parents/Guardians

Students must provide the school with written or verbal notice from their parents/guardians specifying their accommodation needs relating to religious 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 religious observances into consideration. Students age 18 or over may provide own notice. It may be appropriate for school administrators to follow up the request with a face to face meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Information about the procedure to follow to request an accommodation for religious observances and/or holy days may be found in parent newsletters, student agendas and school websites.

Unresolved Requests

Despite the Board's commitment to accommodate, an individual may feel that discrimination based on religion has occurred. The Board will, through its human rights policies, take reasonable and timely steps to address the unresolved issues raised by the affected person which could include a dispute resolution process.

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

This document will consider each of the areas of accommodation in turn.

A. School Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Pursuant to the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 108 ("Memorandum No. 108"), if a student or parent/guardian objects to all or part of the opening or closing exercises due to religious beliefs, the student will be exempted and given the option not to participate and to remain in class or in an agreed upon location through the duration of the exercise.

Memorandum No. 108 states the following:

1. All public elementary and secondary schools in Ontario must be opened or closed each day with the national anthem. "God Save the Queen" may be included.
2. The inclusion of any content beyond "O Canada" in opening or closing exercises is to be optional for public school boards.
3. Where public school boards resolve to include, in the opening or closing exercises in their schools, anything in addition to the content set out in item 1 above, it must be composed of either or both of the following:
 - a. One or more readings that impart social, moral, or spiritual values and that are representative of our multicultural society. Readings may be chosen from both scriptural writings, including prayers, and secular writings;
 - b. A period of silence.
4. Parents who object to part or all of the exercises may apply to the principal to have their children exempted. Students who are over age eighteen may also exercise such a right.

These requirements will be interpreted in accordance with the *Code* and the Board will consider other requests for accommodation as may be made.

B. Absence for Religious Holy Days

The Board is committed to affirm and value equally the faith diversity in our schools. Section 21(2) (g) of the *Education Act* provides that a person is excused from school attendance in observance of a "holy day by the church or religious denomination to which he/she belongs." This requirement will be interpreted in accordance with the *Code*.

All staff and students who observe religious holy days in accordance with section 21(2) (g) of the *Education Act* may be excused from attendance, subject to the particular request for religious leave process.

The Board will encourage members of different faith-based groups to identify their religious holy days at the beginning of each school year. The Board will make reasonable efforts to acknowledge the different observances of their community when planning programs and events, such as Board-wide tests and examinations. To the extent possible, conferences, meetings, workshops, co-curricular activities and exams/tests, will not be scheduled on significant faith days.

Significant Faith Days (days most popularly observed by adherents) which require schedule considerations are listed in Appendix C.

Guidelines for Administrators

In accordance with their rights, all staff and students who request to observe a religious holy day should be allowed this right by following process set out below.

Staff requesting a leave should advise the school administration at, or as close as possible to, the beginning of the school year and leave should be granted in accordance with the terms of the appropriate collective agreement. Requests can be made by completing the appropriate form from Human Resources.

Students requesting a leave should give written or verbal notice from their parent/guardian to the school at, or as close as possible to, the beginning of the school year. Such procedures should be easy to understand and follow. Students who are absent to observe a religious holy day should be entered into Trillium under "G day, Religious Holiday". This also includes Aboriginal students who may request leaves to take part in ceremonies. Students age eighteen and over may provide own written or verbal notice.

All staff members acting on behalf of/representing the Board on other organizations, which in partnership with the Board are planning events or activities that involve students and/or staff of Board schools, have the responsibility to bring this procedure to the attention of these organizations.

For consultation or further clarification of questions, administrators and managers should contact the Superintendent of Human Resources.

Unresolved Requests

a. Employee

In the event that, after an employee's request for leave is denied by the Senior Manager of Human Resources, then any questions or concerns will be referred to the Superintendent of Human Resources.

b. Students

In the event that a student maintains that his or her rights under the Board's Equity and Inclusive Education policy have not been accommodated, the matter will be referred to the appropriate area Superintendent of Education.

C. Prayer

The Board recognizes the significance of prayer in religious practice. Schools will make reasonable efforts to accommodate individuals' requirement for daily prayer by providing an appropriate location within the building for students and staff to participate in prayer, such as a quiet space in the library, or an empty room. Particular accommodation for prayer may include late school arrival, early school dismissal or seasonal adjustment.

D. Dietary Restrictions

The Board is sensitive to the different dietary restrictions of various religious groups. Such sensitivity includes attending to issues related to the menus provided by catering companies, snacks in elementary schools, and food provided within schools, at school-sponsored activities and community events.

Breakfast and lunch programs in both secondary and elementary schools will consider relevant dietary restrictions in their menu planning. Availability of vegetarian options is recommended as a form of inclusive design.

Special attention needs to be given to overnight, outdoor education activities, as well as field trips that extend over a mealtime period. It is best practice to provide students and/or parent/guardians with the opportunity to indicate dietary restrictions in advance so appropriate accommodations can be made.

E. Fasting

The Board is sensitive to religious periods of fasting. Schools will endeavour to provide appropriate space, other than cafeterias or lunchrooms, for individuals who are fasting in religious observance. The Board recognizes that students who are fasting may need exemptions from certain physical education classes and schools should make reasonable efforts to provide appropriate accommodations.

F. Religious Dress

“Dress Code” is the appropriate dress policy established by a school, and may include a school uniform. Such policies should be designed inclusively, taking into account common religious needs that may exist.

The Board recognizes that there are certain religious communities that require specific items of ceremonial dress. The Board understands that some religious attire, which is a requirement of religious observance, may not conform to a school’s Dress Code. Schools will reasonably accommodate students with regard to religious attire. Religious attire is not cultural dress; it is a requirement of religious observation.

Religious attire that should be reasonably accommodated in schools includes, but is not limited to:

- Head covers: Yarmulkes, turbans, Rastafarian headdress, hijabs
- Crucifixes, Stars of David, etc.
- Items of ceremonial dress

Where uniforms are worn, administrators may ask the student to wear religious attire in the same colour as the uniform (e.g. the head scarves for females); however, there may be religious requirements of colour that cannot be modified.

Special attention must be given to accommodations necessary for a student to participate in physical education and school organized sports. Where possible, these should be incorporated into Board policies as part of an inclusive design process.

The Board seeks to foster an atmosphere of cultural understanding in order to be proactive in addressing potential harassment about religious attire. Schools should be aware that harassment about religious attire is one of the most common types of harassment and bullying. The Board and its schools will not tolerate any teasing directed at, or inappropriate actions taken against, an individual’s religious attire and there will be appropriate consequences for individuals who violate this rule. Please refer to relevant Board policies (pg. 5)

There are religious communities that require specific items of ceremonial dress which may be commonly perceived as contravening Board policies, for example the use of the Kirpan by Khalsa Sikh students. For specific guidelines on the accommodation of Khalsa Sikh students wishing to carry a Kirpan, please see Schedule “A” (page 13).

G. Modesty Requirements for Dress in Physical Education Classes and Sports Teams

The Board recognizes that some religious communities observe strict modesty attire in respect of their religion. This can become a matter of concern when students are asked to wear the clothing used in physical education activities. Such policies should be designed inclusively, taking into account common religious needs that may exist.

If a family has concerns that cannot be addressed through inclusive design the school should discuss the modesty requirements with them, and, taking into consideration the Ministry of Education’s mandated expectations in the physical education curriculum, provide reasonable accommodation. The curriculum requirements should be

explained to the family so that it has sufficient information to understand the physical education curriculum and to select available curriculum alternatives.

H. Participation in Daily Activities and Curriculum

The Board will seek to reasonably accommodate students where there is a demonstrated conflict between a specific class or curriculum and a religious requirement or observance. Where academic accommodation is requested, the school should have an informed discussion with the student's parents/guardians to understand the nature and extent of the conflict.

The school should make it clear during the discussion that its role is to protect students and staff from harassment and discrimination because of their religion and cultural practices. Where these conflict with the school routines and activities or curriculum, the school should consider accommodation. It cannot, however, accommodate religious values and beliefs that clearly conflict with mandated Ministry of Education and Board policies.

It is important to note that when an individual requests an accommodation related to the curriculum, the accommodation applies to the individual in question and not to the whole class or to classroom practices in general.

For secondary students, the Ministry of Education recommends substitutions when there are exemptions requested related to a specific curriculum (Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9-12, Program and Diploma Requirements).

In general, the Board recommends an informed, common-sense approach to questions of religion and curriculum. Hopefully, these questions can be solved by an open discussion between the teacher, the student and his/her family.

I. Reporting Guidelines

Every effort should be made to collaborate with parents/guardians to select portions of the curriculum to which accommodations are feasible. In the event that parents/guardians are not comfortable with any of the collaboratively discussed suggestions for curriculum accommodations, a request for full withdrawal or elimination of one or more overall expectation(s) may be considered. The administrator must inform parents of possible short and long term implications from full withdrawal and/or elimination of critical overall expectations. For full withdrawal, "N/A" will be indicated in the subject area on the Ontario Report card with an accompanying comment.

"Due to parent/guardian request NAME was not evaluated for SUBJECT/STRAND during this term."

In the event that one or more of the subject area's overall expectations have been eliminated, the student is to be evaluated on the remaining overall expectations, and it should be reflected in the comment box of the Ontario Report Card.

V. LIMITATIONS TO RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

The Board is committed to preventing and eradicating within its school community discrimination and harassment based on enumerated grounds set out in the Code, including creed. The Board supports freedom of religion and an individual's right to manifest his/her religious beliefs and observances. The right to freedom of religion, however, is not absolute.

The Board will limit practices or behaviour in its schools which may put public safety, health, or the human rights and freedoms of others at risk. As well, the Board will limit practices or behaviours in its schools that are in violation of other Board policies. These decisions will be made in accordance with the principles of the *Code*.

Schedule “A”

GUIDELINE FOR KIRPAN ACCOMMODATION

A Kirpan is a ceremonial sword that must be worn by all baptised Khalsa Sikhs. The Board seeks to accommodate Khalsa Sikhs who wear a kirpan under the following conditions as follows:

- At the beginning of the school year or upon registration, the student and parents/guardians must report to their respective school administration that they are Khalsa Sikhs and wear the five articles of faith, including a Kirpan.
- The principal, in consultation with the student and his/her parents/guardians will develop appropriate accommodations to allow the student to wear the Kirpan while ensuring the safety of others. These may include the following conditions
 - ✓ The Kirpan is six inches or less.
 - ✓ The Kirpan will be sufficiently secured with a stitched flap so it is not easily removed from its sheath.
 - ✓ The Kirpan will not be worn visibly, but concealed under the wearer’s clothing.
 - ✓ There is notification in writing to the principal by the parents/guardians and student and, where possible, from the Guardwara (place of worship), confirming that the student requesting accommodation is a Khalsa Sikh.
 - ✓ Students under the age of eighteen must be accompanied by parents/guardians when discussing the rules regarding the wearing of a Kirpan.

Section Two: Descriptions of Religious Requirements, Practices and Observances

This section has been adapted with permission from “Guidelines and Procedures for the Accommodation of Religious Requirements, Practices and Observances”, Toronto District School Board, 2010.

Introduction:

The DSBN recognizes that there are many faith groups within the community in addition to those described in this section. Any student is eligible to request an accommodation, including those of Christian faith denominations. Only some of the components of the practices and observances that may require accommodation have been included. This list is not exhaustive. For more detail please refer to *The Multifaith Information Manual*, Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care, 2000; or contact the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care, 789 Don Mills Road, Suite 608, Toronto, Ontario, M3C 1T5, telephone: 416-422-1490, email: omcsrc@omc.on.ca, website: www.omc.on.ca.

The descriptions of religions in this document have been developed in consultation with Faith Group representatives from the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care to provide guidance to schools regarding religious accommodation requests. **The description of each religion only outlines aspects of the religion that may require accommodation on the part of the District School Board of Niagara.**

These descriptions are intended for use by those not familiar with the religion. The descriptions cover those practices and observances of the religion (including those followed by more orthodox members) that may lead adherents to ask for accommodation from the Board. Therefore, these are not full explanations of the religion, but provide sufficient information for Board personnel to use when considering a request for accommodation.

Individuals in all religions make personal decisions about the practice of their faith. For some, no accommodation from the DSBN is needed to freely practise their religion, and for others, there is. As well, religious practice varies somewhat within some religions, and there are varying levels of orthodoxy. **Therefore, the descriptions that follow do not necessarily describe the beliefs and practices of all those who follow the religion under discussion. Through respectful dialogue with the individual making the request, the Board will determine the appropriate type of accommodation to be made.**

The role of DSBN with respect to religious requirements, practices, and observances is to work collaboratively with students and parents/guardians to provide suitable accommodations when they are requested.

ABORIGINAL WORLD VIEW/NATIVE SPIRITUALITY

A *world view* refers to the principles, values, traditions, and customs that a society has in order to make sense of the world. Once a world view has been formed, people are able to identify themselves as unique. Since Aboriginal peoples comprise many nations, they have many world views. However, certain themes seem to be prevalent in most Aboriginal societies. There is, for example, less emphasis on hierarchies and more on interactional, mutually beneficial relationships. Co-operation is valued, and all views are respected and taken into consideration. There is recognition that there is harmony in diversity.

In analyzing the beliefs and practices of indigenous peoples from around the world, Knudston and Suzuki (1992) identified the following characteristics as distinguishing indigenous world views:

- The spiritual beliefs of many Aboriginal peoples were based on a relationship to nature. They considered the physical and spiritual worlds to be inseparable.
- Spirituality is embedded in all elements of the cosmos: the land, water, wind, Great Mystery, sun, moon, stars, plants, animals, and humans.
- Time is circular, with natural cycles that sustain all life.
- Humans have responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationships with the natural world.
- There is a need for reciprocity between human and natural worlds—resources are viewed as gifts.
- Nature will always possess unfathomable mysteries.
- Nature is honoured routinely through daily spiritual practice.
- Nature is viewed as a continuous two-way, transactional dialogue.
- The human role is to participate in the orderly designs of nature.
- Respect for Elders is based on compassion and reconciliation of outer and inner directed knowledge.
- There is a sense of empathy and kinship with all other forms of life.
- Human thought, feelings, and words are inextricably bound to all other aspects of the universe.
- The universe is viewed as a holistic, integrative system with unifying life force.

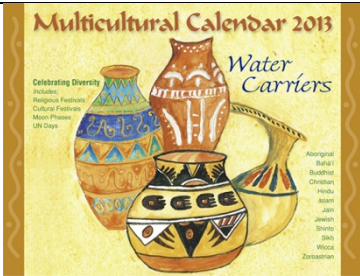
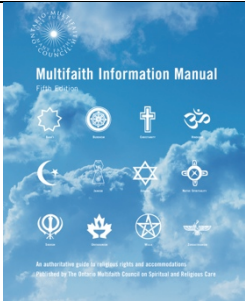
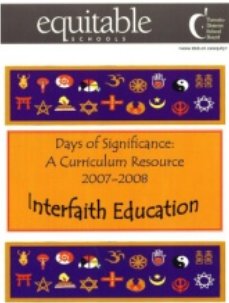
Traditional Aboriginal education systems worked with two processes that supported learning of world views and values. These two processes will be equally effective in teaching non-Aboriginal students about the various Aboriginal cultures and peoples being studied.

Significant Ceremonies and Rituals

Ceremonies are the primary vehicles of religious expression. A ceremonial leader or Elder assures the authenticity and integrity of religious observances. There is no written doctrine. Teachings are passed on verbally by recognized Elders. Tobacco, cedar, sage, and sweet grass are considered sacred medicines and often accompany ceremonies and rituals.

Ceremonies are closely related to seasonal changes, the moon, the provision of food and other living essentials. The Harvest Ceremony, Midwinter Ceremony, Sugar Moon Ceremony, and Strawberry Moon Ceremony are examples of significant ceremonies.

Observations of Holy Days

For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year's multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsbn.org School Year Calendars		One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school.
For more detailed description of significance of Holy Days, please consult "Multifaith Information Manual".		Resources should be easily accessible to all staff members.
For classroom instruction resources please consult, "Days of Significance: A Curriculum Resource".		

Beliefs and Practices Regarding Death

After death, there can be up to ten days of bereavement when the student may be absent from school. Family, friends and special food are important during the wake.

BAHÁ'Í

Founded by Bahá'u'lláh (meaning “The Glory of God”) in 1844, the Bahá'í Faith is a monotheistic religion. The basic beliefs are as follows:

- The oneness of God, the oneness of religion, and the oneness of humanity
- The purpose of religion is to unify humanity
- All great religions and prophets are divine in origin
- All great religions represent successive stages of divine revelation throughout human history
- The eradication of racial and religious prejudice
- The search for truth as an individual responsibility
- The harmony of religion and science as complementary aspects of the truth
- The establishment of an international auxiliary language
- Basic education for all children
- Abolition of extreme wealth and poverty
- Equality of the sexes

Religious Accommodation for Bahá'ís

Prayer and Worship

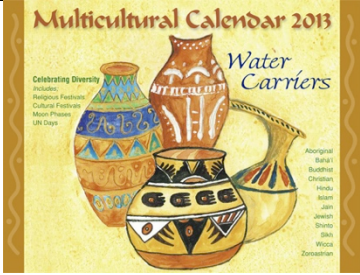
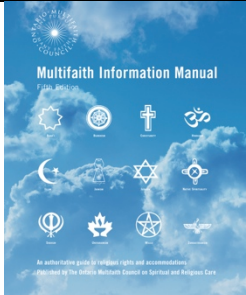
Beliefs and Practices

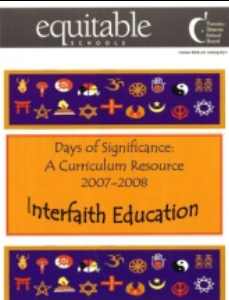
Daily prayer and reading of Bahá'í sacred writings is the individual's responsibility. All work performed in the spirit of service is also considered to be worship.

School Accommodation

If there is a request for accommodation, an appropriate room/space should be made available.

Observations of Holy Days

For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year's multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsb.org School Year Calendars		One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school. Resources should be easily accessible to all staff members.
For more detailed description of significance of Holy Days, please consult “Multifaith Information Manual”.		

<p>For classroom instruction resources please consult, “Days of Significance: A Curriculum Resource”.</p>		
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Dietary Considerations

Beliefs and Practices

Consumption of alcohol or mind-altering drugs is forbidden, except when prescribed by a physician.

Fasting

Beliefs and Practices

The 19-day annual fast occurs from March 2–20. Bahá'ís do not eat or drink from sunrise to sunset on each of the 19 days. It is obligatory for all those who reach the age of 15. Persons may be exempt from fasting for health or medical reasons.

School Accommodation

Students and staff should be allowed to gather in an area apart from the cafeteria during lunch breaks. Students may ask to be excused from strenuous exercise during the fast.

(Developed in consultation with The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Toronto)

BUDDHISM

Buddhism was founded by Lord Shakyamani Buddha in 539 BCE. Buddhism is essentially a monastic religion. However, Lord Buddha also taught spiritual practices for lay people to follow.

All paths of Buddhism embrace the following basic teachings of Lord Shakyamuni Buddha.

The Four Noble Truths:

- Dukkha: Ordinary existence is a state of suffering
- The Arising of Dukkha: Cause of Suffering
- The Cessation of Dukkha: End of Suffering
- The Path: Embracing the Teachings of Lord Buddha

The only method by which one can attain liberation from suffering is to follow the path of Buddhism. This requires mental discipline and the actual practice of Buddha's teaching, which involves many lifetimes of devoted effort and commitment. For lay people, the eightfold noble path involves the following:

- Wisdom: Right Understanding and Right Intention
- Ethical Discipline: Right Speech, Right Action, Right Means of Livelihood
- Mental Discipline: Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration

The eightfold noble path also involves the following five precepts that deal with all aspects of life, body, speech, and mind.

Body

1. Abstention from killing
2. Abstention from stealing
3. Abstention from sexual exploitation

Speech

4. Abstention from lying

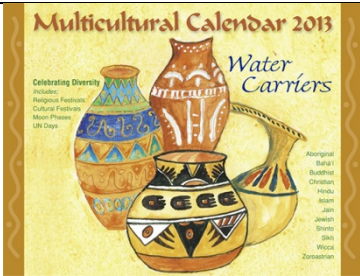
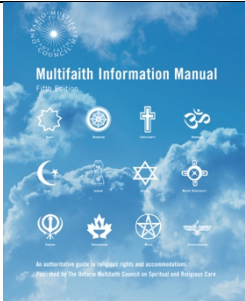
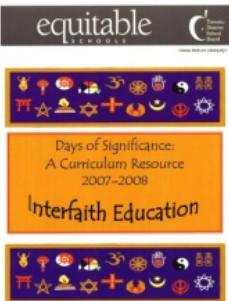
Mind

5. Abstention from all drugs and intoxicants which alter the mind

To worship, Buddhists meet in a group in temples or centres to learn spiritual practices, and follow up with individual practice.

(Source: *Multifaith Information Manual, OMFCSRC*)

Observations of Holy Days

For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year's multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsbn.org School Year Calendars		One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school.
For more detailed description of significance of Holy Days, please consult "Multifaith Information Manual".		Resources should be easily accessible to all staff members.
For classroom instruction resources please consult, "Days of Significance: A Curriculum Resource".		

Dietary Considerations

Generally speaking, Buddhism recommends people eat foods that are grown in their particular location of the world. As well, people are encouraged to eat food that is needed for their unique health requirements, which may not necessarily be vegetarian. However, many Buddhists are strict vegetarians (meaning: no eggs, dairy, fish, or meat).

School Accommodation

Teachers and cafeteria staff must be aware of food restrictions. Availability of strict vegetarian options that include no eggs and dairy are advisable in school cafeterias; elementary school snacks, breakfast or lunch programs; as well as on overnight stays and school or Board events that involve a meal.

(Developed in consultation with Gen-La Venerable Lama Tenzin Kalsang, Faith Representative from the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care)

HINDUISM (HINDU DHARMA)

The term *Hinduism* is commonly used to describe the oldest continuous religion in the world. A more precise and widely used term for describing this belief system is *Sanatana Dharma* or *Hindu Dharma*. The Hindu Dharma has its origin in India. The followers of Hinduism are generally referred to as Hindus. The principal scriptures of Hindus are the Vedas. Because of the antiquity of Hinduism, as well as its inclusiveness and tolerance for diverse expressions and beliefs, an extensive array of philosophical doctrines and dogmas has evolved. This has resulted in the appearance of additional scriptural texts, such as the Upanishads, Puranas, Ramayana, and the Bhagavad Gita.

Hinduism can be considered as a monotheistic religion, where the monotheistic concept of God is considered as not one God, but only God. The Ultimate Reality is called Brahman. Hindus believe that the unmanifest Brahman has an apparent manifestation as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. They comprise the Hindu Trinity, where Brahma is the Creator, Vishnu is the Preserver, and Shiva is the Dissolver. Brahman also manifests as the world of multiplicity and plurality, and assumes divine physical forms (avatara) from time to time for the preservation of righteousness. Three prominent avatars are Rama, Krishna, and Buddha. The many propitiating and presiding Deities worshipped by many Hindus are considered as various aspects of Brahman, and not a substitute for the supreme impersonal Brahman.

There are many prominent concepts and tenets enshrined in Hinduism that have universal relevance and applications. Some of these are:

- the Immanency of Ishwara Avatara (Manifold Incarnations of God)
- the Theory of Punarjanma (Reincarnation)
- the Law of Karma (Action and Reaction)
- the Doctrine of Maya (Illusiveness of Nature)
- the Principle of Gunatraya (Three Gunas of Nature)
- the Proclamation of Varnashrama Dharma (Chaturvarga – Four Objectives of Life; Chaturashrama – Four Stages in Life; Chaturvarna – Four Caste Division)
- the Practice of Sadharana Dharma (Virtues of Purity, Austerity, Detachment Morality, and Non-Injury)
- the Observance of Sadhana Yoga (Karma Yoga – Yoga of Action; Bhakti Yoga – Yoga of Devotion; Jnana Yoga – Yoga of Knowledge)

Hindus use a variety of sacred symbols during worship. Some of these are the OM, Swastika, Trishul, Shivalingam, and Nataraja. Most Hindu rituals are performed in the presence of many of these symbols. *Moorties* (icons) of the various Deities are also used during worship. *Hawan* (fire offerings) is an integral component of all Hindu worship. During worship, devotees must be dressed appropriately, and the body is usually adorned with sacred religious symbols such as *Chandan* (red vermilion or sandal paste or ashes, applied to the forehead as a dot or any other symbolic shape).

Religious Accommodation for Hindus

For devout Hindu students, Sanatana Dharma is a way of life. For these followers, the secular nature of the public school system may present some difficulties. Hence, accommodations may need to be made to allow these students to pursue academic, athletic, and social endeavours at school while being in harmony with their faith.

Prayer and Worship

Beliefs and Practices

Devout Hindu students need to pay homage to Saraswati Devi (Deity of Knowledge and Learning) prior to starting their classes. This is usually done in the early morning before formal teaching and learning commences. The space used for worship is considered sacred and should be conducive to spiritual growth and development.

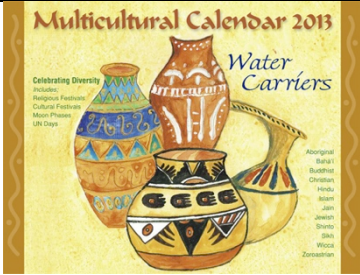
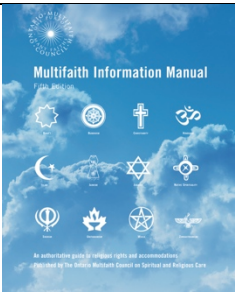
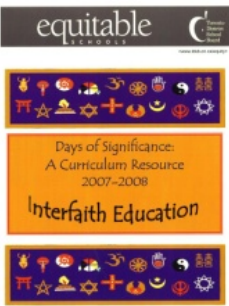
School Accommodation

If there is request for accommodation, an appropriate room/space could be made available to allow students and staff the privacy to perform morning prayer.

Observations of Holy Days

Beliefs and Practices

The dates for Holy Days will vary from year to year because dates are calculated on the lunar and solar astronomical alignments.

For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year's multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsbn.org School Year Calendars		One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school.
For more detailed description of significance of Holy Days, please consult "Multifaith Information Manual".		Resources should be easily accessible to all staff members.
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Navarathri Fasting

School Accommodation

Hindu students and staff may fast during the nine days of Navarathri, which occurs during the spring and autumn. During this time, students/staff will not eat or drink through the day.

Allow for a separate area (e.g., the library) for students so they can avoid the cafeteria during lunch breaks. Excuse students from strenuous physical activity during the fast. Avoid organization of late-night and food-related events (e.g., pizza or hot dog days, overnight school trips) if there are a large number of students in the school who observe the fast.

In addition to accommodating students, schools can use the opportunity to honour those who are taking on the responsibility of fasting. Staff and student awareness of fasting will help avoid misunderstandings.

Dietary Requirements

Beliefs and Practices

Many Hindus are strict vegetarians, and some are lacto-ovo (milk-egg) vegetarians. Meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products are not allowed in these diets.

School Accommodation

Teachers and cafeteria staff need to be aware of food restrictions. Special care must be taken to keep vegetarian and non-vegetarian food separate, and to ensure that the same spoons and serving utensils are not used to serve both kinds of food. Food and snacks that have been prepared using animal by-products (e.g., lard, beef tallow) should be properly labelled and not served to vegetarian Hindu students. Teachers or schools may wish to adjust their snack, pizza/hot dog days, fun fair, or lunch programs to accommodate students who are vegetarians.

Hindu Dress

Beliefs and Practices

Some Hindus cover their heads: males with either a *pagree* (turban) or a *kishtee* (religious cap), and females with an *ornhnee* (scarf). These may be permanently worn head covers, or worn only during special days of significance.

School Accommodation

If Hindu students request accommodation for head cover, see section one, page 8.

Beliefs and Practices

Privacy and modesty are important tenets of Hinduism.

School Accommodation-Physical Education

There could be the following requests for accommodation in physical education classes:

- Girls-only swim programs
- For some Brahmin Hindu boys, a preference for taking a shower individually in order to maintain privacy and modesty

Exemptions for sections of Healthy Active Living Education related to human sexuality may also be requested.

(Developed in consultation with Pandit Suraj Persad, Faith Representative from the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care; Pundit Roopnauth Sharma, President, Hindu Federation and Vice-President Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care; and Pundit Eshwar Doobay, Hindu Chaplain, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)

ISLAM

In Arabic, *Islam* means peace, purity, obedience, total submission and commitment to the one and only God, and to His laws. Islam, therefore, describes an attribute—the attribute of submission to the will of God. A Muslim is anyone who has this attribute of “Islam,” that is, anyone who submits to the will of Almighty God. Consequently, Islam is not founded by anyone. “Muhammadanism” is a misnomer of Islam and offends its very spirit. Muslims are not Muhammadans. They do not worship Muhammad. They worship Almighty God. The word “Allah” is the proper name of God in Arabic.

Muhammed (upon Whom be God’s peace and blessings) was the name of the Prophet through whom the religion of Islam was revealed. The Prophet Muhammed was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in 571 CE. The Prophet died in the year 633.

The practices of Islam are called the Five Pillars, as follows:

- There is only one God and Muhammed is his prophet
- Fasting during the month of Ramadan
- Charity
- Pilgrimage (hajj)
- Daily prayers

Islam promotes teaching of tolerance from a humanist perspective, that is the right to life, dignity and respect for all human beings should be acknowledged.

(Source: *Multifaith Information Manual, Ontario Mutlifaith Council*)

Religious Accommodation for Islam

Daily Prayer

Beliefs and Practices

Prayer in Islam is required and must be performed at specific times, which change throughout the year, depending on the time of sunrise and sunset. Before prayer, Muslims are required to wash their faces, hands, head, and feet. Children are encouraged to begin praying at an early age, and prayer becomes compulsory at puberty. Prayer can be performed individually or in congregation, and men and women pray in separate areas within the same room. Women do not pray during menstruation.

Prayer times will vary according to the changing time of sunrise and sunset. Holy days are governed by the lunar calendar, and may move by as much as several months from year to year.

School Accommodation

There may be times during the year when prayer times conflict with the school schedule. Early afternoon prayer times often fall within the lunch period. Students can use all or part of their lunchtime for prayers. During Eastern Standard Time (November to March), noon prayer will fall within the school day.

When prayer obligations occur during class time, students should be allowed time for prayer. Teachers should be aware of the Muslim prayer schedule during exams and/or tests, class outings, and overnight outings.

Prayer takes an average of about 5–10 minutes. The school could provide a private designated area or a room for prayer. Where possible, a washroom within the school should be identified for washing before prayers (up to 10 minutes may be required for washing). A private washroom would be most appropriate.

Muslims pray five times a day:

- At dawn – fajr
- At noon – duhr/zuhr
- In the afternoon – asr
- At sunset – maghrib
- At night – isha

Each prayer must be performed within a certain period of time, and Muslims can offer each prayer at any time during that period. The period of time for one prayer ends when the period of time for the next prayer begins. The period of time for each prayer varies slightly day to day.

Muslim students and staff will usually have to pray during school hours for the noon prayer, since the period allotted for that prayer will fall during school hours. However, this will only occur during the months we are not following Daylight Savings Time (November to March). On November 1, for example, Muslims have to perform noon prayer between 12:01 p.m. and 3:25 p.m. The time for afternoon prayer begins at 3:25 p.m. and ends at sunset.

Friday Congregational Prayer

Beliefs and Practices

Friday is the Muslim weekly holy day. Congregational prayer on Fridays is required after puberty. This afternoon service consists of a sermon and prayer. The entire service can take 15–45 minutes. The service is congregational, and its performance in a mosque is preferred. The scheduled period of time for Friday Congregational Prayer is consistent throughout the year, but may vary from mosque to mosque.

School Accommodation

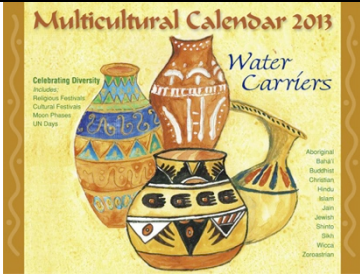
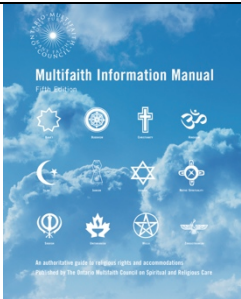
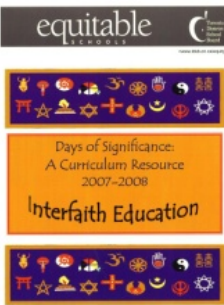
Students should be allowed to attend Friday afternoon prayer services. Where possible, schools should allocate space for congregational prayer. Thirty to forty-five minutes should be allotted for students performing Friday prayer in the school. If students are praying in a nearby mosque, they should be allowed a maximum of one hour.

Observations of Islamic Holy Days

Beliefs and Practices

There are several days in the Islamic calendar with special religious significance, but the major celebrations common to all Muslims are the two Eids. The first Eid (Eid-ul-Fitr) is celebrated the day after the end of the month of Ramadan. The month of Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic Calendar. The second Eid (Eid-ul-Adha) is celebrated on the tenth day of the twelfth Islamic month. The festivities include congregational prayer and gatherings with family and friends.

Observances of Holy Days

For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year's multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsbn.org School Year Calendars		One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school.
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Pilgrimage (Hajj)

Beliefs and Practices

Hajj is the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is compulsory for every Muslim who can afford it and is able to go.

School Accommodation

Students, whose families are travelling to Mecca, should be accommodated. Consideration should also be given to accommodating staff for this pilgrimage.

Fasting during Ramadan

Beliefs and Practices

The month of Ramadan lasts for 29 or 30 days, depending on the lunar calendar. During Ramadan, Muslims do not eat or drink from the break of dawn to sunset. Ramadan is a continued period of enhanced commitment to self-restraint, and a time to focus on moral conduct. Fasting is required when children reach the age of puberty. However, younger children are encouraged by their parents/guardians to participate in the fast so they may

become accustomed to the practice. Women and girls who are menstruating are exempt from fasting. Certain persons may be exempt from fasting for health or medical reasons.

Dietary Restrictions

Beliefs and Practices

Muslims are careful about the food they consume and how it is prepared. Muslim dietary law prohibits consumption of alcohol, pork, and any pork by-product or derivatives. Standards, called *halal*, regulate the slaughter and preparation of meat and poultry.

Some objectionable food items include pepperoni, pork hot dogs, bacon; gelatin-based candies and desserts; animal shortening in breads, puddings, crackers, cookies; rennet and pepsin in cheese. Vegetable shortening is acceptable.

School Accommodation

School snack and lunch items containing ingredients derived from pork must be clearly identified, both in elementary and secondary schools. Vegetarian and halal food is appropriate for Muslim students. In general, school and cafeteria staff should be aware of food restrictions and carefully plan appropriate menus, snacks, and other food. Consideration should be given to food served on “pizza day,” “hot dog day,” or at annual school fairs.

Food	Concern	Alternative	Availability
Crackers	A small number of crackers are made with animal shortening (lard).	Almost all crackers are made with vegetable shortening. Choose one of those brands.	Supermarkets
Cookies	A small number of cookies are made with animal shortening (lard).	Almost all cookies are made with vegetable shortening. Choose one of those brands.	Supermarkets
Cheese	Most cheese is made with rennet and pepsin, which are animal by-products.	Cheese is available that is made without rennet and pepsin. Instead, microbial enzymes are used.	Some supermarkets and available on order
Pizza	Some pizza outlets use cheese that is made with rennet and pepsin, which are animal by-products.	Many pizza retail food chains, upon request, will use cheese that is made without rennet and pepsin.	Larger pizza chain outlets and other smaller outlets.
Beef and poultry	Animals must be slaughtered using the halal method.	Purchase halal or kosher beef. Consider veggie hot and other vegetarian substitutes.	Halal or kosher beef is available in some supermarkets or can be ordered. Veggie substitutes are available in all supermarkets.
Pork or pork by-products	Muslims don't eat pork. Some food is made with pork by-products.	No pork or pork by-products are acceptable.	

Gelatin-based desserts and candies	Jell-O wine Starbursts, gummi bears, gums, gumdrops, and similar desserts and candies contain gelatin, an animal by-product.	Choose other candies and desserts.	Supermarkets
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Male/Female Interactions

Beliefs and Practices

Gender relations in the Islamic community are predicated upon social distance between members of the opposite sex. After puberty, Islam does not allow any kind of casual touching or privacy between unrelated people of the opposite sex.

School Accommodation

It would be best to allow the individual in question to be the one to determine his or her degree of comfort with gender-related issues. For some students and their families, shaking hands, touching, or any other close physical contact between members of the opposite sex should be avoided (e.g., shaking hands with students of the opposite sex in graduation ceremonies or when greeting parents/guardians). When having one-to-one meetings with students or parents/ guardians of the opposite sex, doors should be left open. Some students may feel more comfortable if accompanied by a friend. In group work or in paired assignments, some students may not be comfortable sitting next to members of the opposite sex.

Islamic Dress

Beliefs and Practices

Islam prescribes that both men and women behave and dress modestly. Muslims believe that an emphasis on modesty encourages society to value individuals for their wisdom, skills, and contribution to the community, rather than for their physical characteristics. Although the Islamic dress code is required once a student reaches puberty, many Muslim parents/guardians seek to instill modest habits in their children from a much earlier age.

Hijab

The hijab is commonly referred to as a “veil” or head cover, which characterizes the appearance of many Muslim women. It also refers more generally to the loose-fitting, non-revealing clothes worn by Muslim women. The wearing of hijab is primarily an Islamic requirement and is seen within Islam as a symbol of identity and modesty. Another way to understand the importance of the hijab is by recognizing that there are different cultural constructions of the concept of “nakedness.” For Muslim women and girls, the amount of their body that they feel comfortable showing in public is governed by a different sense of what it means to be “naked” (e.g, showing even their arms or legs would make them feel naked).

Niqab

Some women extend the concept of nakedness to include covering their faces with a niqab.

Kufi

Males may also choose to wear a head covering called a kufi.

School Accommodation

Although the Islamic dress code is required once a student reaches puberty, many Muslim parents/guardians seek to instill modest habits in their children from a much earlier age. Students who wear Islamic dress may be subject to social pressure; the wearing of a head and/or face covering may lead to teasing by other students. Muslim students should feel supported, and there should be a climate of acceptance of Islamic dress. The student body should be aware of the consequences of harassing students because of their religious dress.

It is important to understand that while some non-Muslims may consider Islamic dress to be restrictive, Muslim women who wear it see it as a way to be noted for their character and intellect, rather than for their bodies.

School Curriculum

Islam encourages the study of meaningful and useful areas of human knowledge, but there are certain areas or aspects of the school curriculum where families may request accommodation, since they may find them to be in conflict with their religious requirements.

Physical Education

Beliefs and Practices

In Islam, physical education for both males and females is highly valued. The primary issues of concern to Muslim parents/guardians with regard to physical education centres on the Islamic dress code and male/female interaction. It is important to preserve and maintain the importance of Islamic dress requirements in physical education.

Males

The area from the navel to the knee must be covered. The covering should be loose so as not to define the contours of the body, and should be of an opaque material so that the body cannot be seen through it. For males, a track suit or jogging pants with a T-shirt should be worn. If shorts are worn, they should be of the Bermuda type, reaching the knees.

Females

The whole body, except the face and hands (and feet according to some scholars), should be covered with clothing that is loose and opaque, as described above. For females, loose jogging pants and long sleeved baggy T-shirt or top should be worn, as well as head covering.

School Accommodation

Schools should ensure that Muslim parents/guardians know and understand the Physical Education curriculum so that they can come to an informed decision about co-educational activities, as well as about acceptable attire for gym, swimming, and spectator sports. Muslim families should also understand what the alternatives are to compulsory high school credits.

Showers and Change Rooms

Muslims are not permitted to undress or shower in front of members of the same or opposite sex, so communal change rooms and showers are a source of much consternation and distress for many Muslim students and their families. Facilities should be made available for those students who require privacy. Males should be allowed to wear shorts or appropriate covering in showers if there is no access to private showers. Females should be allowed to wear appropriate covering if there is no access to private showers.

Swimming

Western swimsuits are not acceptable. A combination of jogging suit pants/spandex leggings with leotard or T-shirt, plus a swimming cap, may be acceptable. Swimsuits that are acceptable to Islam are available.

Human Sexuality – Healthy Active Living Education

Beliefs and Practices

In Islam, the teaching of sexuality is strictly regulated and also predicated upon principles of modesty and issues of separation of males and females. Sex education is grounded in Islamic teachings.

School Accommodation

Modesty may preclude students in co-ed classrooms from participating in discussions or asking questions about some aspects of sexuality. The explicit nature of pictures and videos sometimes used in the teaching of health and sexuality units may be considered inappropriate by some parents/guardians, especially if introduced in elementary classes. It is advisable to inform parents/guardians of the content of the curriculum prior to teaching the units. Exemptions may need to be provided with alternative programming, if requested by parents/guardians.

Trips and Camping Out

Beliefs and Practices

Islam allows the absence of children away from home for legitimate reasons, such as field trips, camping, or track meets.

School Accommodation

Allow parents/guardians reasonable time to review detailed information about the purpose and nature of trips and camping-out activities. For overnight and camping excursions, the provision of separate sleeping facilities for males and females should be communicated and explained to parents/guardians. Meals, snacks, and drinks must consider Muslim dietary restrictions (halal). School-accommodation suggestions for male/female interactions should be followed. Provide alternative activities in the areas of dancing and music, when necessary.

Social Events and School Dances

Beliefs and Practices

Social events and school dances constitute an area of great concern to many Muslim families. Gender relations in the Islamic community are predicated upon social distance between unrelated people of the opposite sex.

School Accommodation

Consideration should be given to the timing of the event within the school day. Students should be given valuable alternative activities if a dance happens during the school day.

Music

Beliefs and Practices

Music is not in itself forbidden; it all depends on the type of music, its use, its instruments, and the persons involved. The use of string and wind instruments is prohibited. The only sanctioned musical instruments are certain percussion instruments, specifically the bassless drum, which are usually limited to weddings and religious celebrations. Songs and lyrics cannot conflict with Islamic teachings and morals.

School Accommodation

There is a wide spectrum of views related to music. There are some Muslims who find music incompatible with their Islamic orientation. These parents/guardians may wish their children to be exempted from any participation in the music curriculum. Accommodations could include rhythm-focused music as an alternative. Singing, clapping, and snapping fingers are Islamically viable alternatives that would allow students to demonstrate rhythm and the performing and creating requirements of the curriculum. Students' use of computerized and/or digital music programs may be permitted, as it involves playing neither wind nor string instruments. Appropriateness of song lyrics should be taken into account, and religious exemptions provided, when necessary. For example, unaccompanied songs about the purpose of human life, the well-being of society, and the appreciation of nature could be acceptable to families requesting accommodation.

Dance

Beliefs and Practices

Concerns about music and male/female interactions do not allow for dance education for students. Dancing is allowed, if it is not vulgar. There should be no co-ed dancing. Some Muslim parents/guardians might like to see their children exempted.

School Accommodation

Requests from Muslim parents/guardians to withdraw their children from dance activities should be accommodated and an agreement reached about viable alternatives.

Visual Arts

Beliefs and Practices

Certain traditions within Islam do not allow for the depiction, portrayal, or representation of human beings and animals. This is seen as replicating the creation of God, and therefore an unacceptable Islamic practice. However, there is a long and renowned artistic tradition within Islam. Islamic art is characterized by calligraphy and intricate geometric patterns and floral art forms, which have been traditionally used to decorate buildings, rooms, and objects.

School Accommodation

Teachers can adjust curriculum and create alternatives for study and practice. For example, assignments in line pattern, colour, and texture can be substituted. In art appreciation, the development of calligraphy, tile design, and architecture in Muslim cultures can be substituted. Special attention should be paid to assessment and placement practices that require students to draw human and animal pictures. Muslim children may object to or have limited or no experience drawing human and animal pictures.

(Developed in consultation with Muslim community organizations, the Ontario Multifaith Council, and the Islamic Council of Imams – Canada: Abdul Hai Patel, Director, Interfaith Relations, Canadian Council of Imams; and Habeeb Alli, Secretary, Canadian Council of Imams)

JAINISM

An ancient religion, Jainism was founded by several Jinas—men who have conquered the endless cycles of life and enlightenment—such as Lord Mahavir. Many more Jinas will exist in the future.

Jainism is a system of thought and a way of life, whose basic beliefs rest upon five “pillars”:

- Ahinsa: Non-violence, ranging from an act of simple kindness to a comprehensive outlook of universal fraternity. Intolerance is violence that violates the other person’s right.
- Asteya: Non-stealing means not taking anything that does not belong to us, or which is not given to us by its owner.
- Aparaigraha: Non-acquisition (non-hoarding), or setting limits to one’s desires so that one does not deny others. This means not accumulating wealth, possessions, power, etc., beyond the minimum that is absolutely essential.
- Satya: Truth includes honesty to oneself and to others in all interactions and relationships.
- Brahmacharya: Celibacy or chaste living refers to curtailing sexual activity. The idea is to learn to control our desires and our mind.

Prayer and Worship

Beliefs and Practices

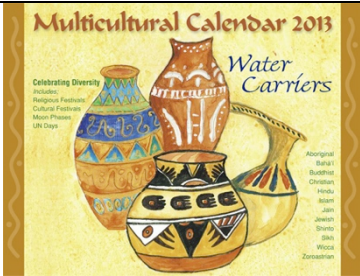
Worship prayers are done individually in the mornings (Chaitya Vandan) for about 30 minutes, and the one done in the evening or night (Pratikramam) is for 48 minutes.

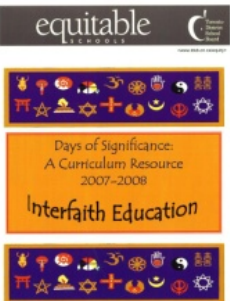
School Accommodation

Accommodation will be needed for students attending overnight camps. Worship is done after a bath, in clean clothes, at a clean, quiet place on a rug or mat. Teachers should be aware of the length of each prayer time to ensure students have enough time to pray before breakfast and dinner.

Observance of Holy Days

Jain festivals are sober and pious and are based on the lunar calendar.

For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year’s multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsbn.org School Year Calendars		One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school.
For more detailed description of significance of Holy Days, please consult “Multifaith Information Manual”.		Resources should be easily accessible to all staff members.

<p>For classroom instruction resources please consult, “Days of Significance: A Curriculum Resource”.</p>		
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Dietary Requirements

Beliefs and Practices

The Jain motto is “Live and Let Live” by being kind to all. This principle extends to all living beings, including humans, animals, and even plants. Hence, Jains are mostly vegetarians. Some do not eat root vegetables and some are vegan or lacto-ovo vegetarians. Meat, fish, eggs, wine, honey, butter, and cheese (unless rennet-free or of a specific variety) are not acceptable. Animal by-products or items with non-vegetarian ingredients are not consumed. During the holy days of Paryushan (eight days) and Daslakshana (ten days), green leafy vegetables and root vegetables grown under the ground, like potatoes and onions, are also not consumed.

School Accommodation

Cafeterias (for students and staff) should be aware of such food restrictions. Providing alternative vegetarian food options is suggested. Special care should be taken to keep vegetarian and non-vegetarian food separate, and not to use the same utensils (e.g., spoons, knives) for both. A Jain child or youth who is vegetarian at home may not be able to join school parties if vegetarian food is not made available. Participation in projects related to Easter celebrations or Thanksgiving, where eggs and turkey are important, may be inappropriate for Jain students.

Fasting

Beliefs and Practices

Practicing Jains may observe fasting on full/half-moon days, as per the lunar calendar, and during the holy days, including Paryushan and Daslakshan Parva.

School Accommodation

Heavy exercises should be avoided when students are fasting during holy days. In addition to accommodating students, schools can use the opportunity to honour students who are taking on the responsibility of fasting. Staff and student awareness of fasting will help avoid misunderstandings.

Dress Requirements, Religious Attire

Beliefs and Practices

It may be noted that *Tilak* or *Chandlo* (dot/symbol/design) on the forehead after visiting the temple is retained for the day and should be considered acceptable. It is common to wear pendants with religious symbols and designs.

School Accommodation

Consideration to students using *Tilak* or *Chandlo* after temple is recommended.

(Developed in consultation with Mr. Prakash Mody, Jain Representative from the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care)

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Charles Taze Russell, along with a small group of Bible students, founded the Jehovah's Witnesses in the late nineteenth century. They were first known as "International Bible Students." In 1879, they began publishing the Bible journal now called *The Watchtower*. In 1931, they adopted the name "Jehovah's Witnesses."

Jehovah's Witnesses base their beliefs solely on the principles found in the Bible and view first-century Christianity as a model. They believe that in addition to drawing one closer to God, living by Biblical principles gives purpose to life, promotes strong family ties, and develops productive and honest citizens.

Observations of Holy Days

Beliefs and Practices

Annually, Jehovah's Witnesses commemorate Christ's death. This commemoration is referred to as the Lord's Evening Meal. A simple religious ceremony is held at the Kingdom Hall after sundown. The Lord's Evening Meal occurs in March or April (based on the Jewish lunar calendar).

Jehovah's Witnesses hold weekend assemblies twice each year. In addition, they attend a three- or four-day Bible Education Convention annually.

School Accommodation

Students/staff may ask to be excused from attendance at school/Board evening meetings on the day of the Lord's Evening Meal celebration.

Celebrations, Birthdays, Holidays, Functions, and Social Events

Beliefs and Practice

Jehovah's Witnesses celebrate special events such as weddings, anniversaries, engagements, or baby showers. Witness families find enjoyment in spontaneous giving throughout the whole year as expressions of love and affection. They encourage generosity, gift giving, and other expressions of appreciation.

Holidays

Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate religious or semi-religious holidays that have non-Christian religious origins or those that promote patriotic exercises or expressions of patriotism.

Birthdays

Jehovah's Witnesses respect the rights of others to celebrate birthdays, but do not share in such celebrations for religious reasons.

School Accommodation

Do not extend invitations or expect participation in festivities or social functions surrounding celebrations such as Christmas, Valentine's Day, New Year's Eve, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Halloween. Provide alternative activities if celebrations happen during class time and exemptions are requested.

Jehovah's Witnesses respect the rights of others to celebrate birthdays and holidays. Their right to not participate should also be respected. In the event of classroom birthday celebrations, provide alternative activities. If there are Jehovah's Witnesses in class, teachers are encouraged to be careful when choosing curriculum that focuses on birthday celebrations. Consultation with Witness parents/guardians in this area is advised.

Opening or Closing Exercises

Beliefs and Practices

Jehovah's Witnesses respect the country's flag and show this respect by obedience to the laws of the land. Yet, they do not share in patriotic exercises or expressions of patriotism, nor do they participate in any activities promoting nationalism. While others stand for the national anthem, Jehovah's Witnesses remain seated. In the case of students who are Jehovah's Witness practitioners, if they are already standing when the anthem is played they will not necessarily sit down. If a group is expected to stand and sing, Witnesses may choose to stand out of respect, but not sing.

School Accommodation

Accommodate as per request. Follow General Guidelines and Procedures, Section One, IV.

Health Issues

Beliefs and Practice

Jehovah's Witnesses actively seek medical care when needed, and accept the vast majority of treatments available today, with the exception of blood transfusions. They accept reliable non-blood medical therapies, which are increasingly recognized in the healthcare field. Each baptized mature minor Witness carries an Advance Medical Directive that provides emergency contact instructions. His or her conscientious decision, outlined in this document, should be respected. Younger children carry an Identity Card which similarly provides parental contact information and directives for emergency situations.

School Accommodation

In the event of serious injury during school trips and other activities, school staff should endeavour to contact the parents/guardians and provide emergency medical personnel with the medical directive instructions.

Curriculum Concerns

Music/Art/Drama

Witness youths do not participate in any kind of music and art instruction in connection with religious or patriotic holidays.

Human Sexuality – Healthy Active Living Education

Beliefs and Practices

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that teaching children about sexuality is the responsibility of parents/guardians. Some parents/guardians may request that their children be excused from human sexuality classes.

School Accommodation

For accommodation see Section One, III.

(Developed in consultation with Public Affairs Department, Watch Tower Society of Canada)

JUDAISM

Jews believe that the Almighty chose Abraham to introduce the concept of monotheism, thus establishing an individual covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their families on to further spiritual teachings that would be later identified with Jewish theology. The nature of this individual covenant was transformed to one of a national orientation, when the Jewish people collectively received the Torah at Mount Sinai. According to Jewish tradition, this occurred after Moses led the people to freedom from slavery in Egypt. (Source: *Multifaith Information Manual*)

Daily Prayer

Beliefs and Practices

Jews pray three times daily—in the evening, morning, and afternoon. Many Jews try to pray in a *minyan*, which is a public quorum that enables the saying of specific prayers. Morning prayers may be said from the time the sun comes up until approximately mid-morning. Afternoon prayers are said from shortly after midday until the sun sets.

School Accommodation

When requested, schools should accommodate students and staff before and after school time so that they may attend morning and afternoon services, especially during November, December, and January, when there are fewer hours of daylight.

Bereavement Rituals

Beliefs and Practices

Jewish law formally considers the bereaved to be those who have lost any of the following close relatives: father, mother, spouse, son, daughter, brother, sister.

During the seven days following the burial, the bereaved sits Shiva in the home of the deceased. During this time, the mourner emerges into a new frame of mind, talks about his or her loss, and accepts comfort from friends. The mourner will not be in school, and will welcome visitors to the Shiva house. For 11 months from the death of a close relative, the bereaved is obligated to recite the Kaddish prayer in memory of the departed. Kaddish is said each morning and evening in a quorum of ten persons and is part of the daily prayer obligation.

School Accommodation

Students and staff who are sitting Shiva should be accommodated. Schools should accommodate students and staff before and after school time so that they may attend morning and afternoon services, especially during November, December, and January, when there are fewer hours of daylight.

Preparation for the Sabbath and Holy Days

Beliefs and Practices

Jewish holy days start the previous evening at dusk and end after sunset. Preparation for the holy day is seen as an integral part of its observance. During Eastern Standard Time, especially during days when the sun sets early, getting ready for Shabbat (the Sabbath) is greatly complicated by the lack of adequate preparation time. Similarly, the holy day of Passover requires immense advance preparation.

School Accommodation

Schools should accommodate Jewish students and staff in the scheduling of before- and after-school requirements prior to holy days and the Jewish Sabbath. Note that Jewish holy days begin the prior evening.

Shabbat (The Sabbath)

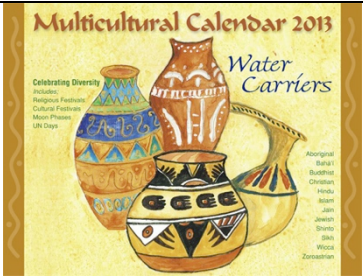
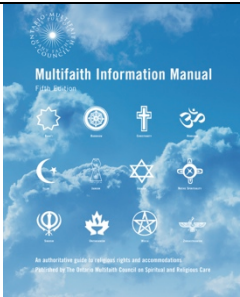
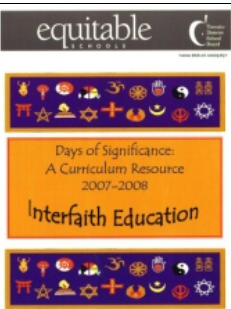
The Jewish Sabbath begins Friday at dusk and concludes Saturday after nightfall each week. Many activities undertaken on this day accentuate the fact that Shabbat is to be devoted to one's spiritual needs.

School Accommodation

Schools should be mindful of the Jewish Sabbath when planning weekend activities.

Observations of Holy Days

All the Jewish holy days follow the lunar calendar.

<p>For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year's multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsbn.org School Year Calendars</p>		<p>One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school.</p>
<p>For more detailed description of significance of Holy Days, please consult "Multifaith Information Manual".</p>		<p>Resources should be easily accessible to all staff members.</p>
<p>For classroom instruction resources please consult, "Days of Significance: A Curriculum Resource".</p>		

Minor Fast Days

There are a number of “minor” fast days on the Jewish calendar, where one can attend school and be involved in normal activities. These fasts begin at sunrise and end at nightfall.

Minor fast days include:

- 10th Day of Tevet
- 17th of Tammuz
- 3rd of Tishrei (The Fast of Gedaliah)
- 13th of Adar (Fast of Esther)
- 14th of Nisan (Fast of the Firstborn)

School Accommodation

School administration and staff ought to be aware and sensitive to the fact that some Jewish students and staff may be experiencing the hardships associated with fasting.

Dietary Requirements

Beliefs and Practices

The Hebrew word *kosher* means that a given food is permitted and acceptable. All fresh fruits and vegetables are kosher. The Jewish dietary regulations begin when dealing with foods that derive from animals, fish, or fowl.

Animals

Kosher is any mammal with split hoofs that chews its cud. Not kosher are pigs.

Fish/Seafood

Kosher are fish that have fins and scales. Not kosher are catfish and seafood such as lobster, shrimp, crab, squid. Amphibians (e.g., frogs, turtles) are also not kosher.

Fowl

Kosher are chicken, goose, and duck. Not kosher are fowl specifically listed in the Torah.

Separation of Dairy and Meat

It is not permitted to mix milk with meat foods, to cook milk and meat together, or to serve them together at the same time.

Kosher rules are complex, as they also involve a specific approach to food preparation and processing.

School Accommodations

Staff and students who observe the Jewish Dietary Laws and only eat food certified as kosher will not consume food prepared in the absence of rabbinic supervision. If possible, teachers or schools may wish to make available packaged kosher snacks that have reliable certification markings visible on the item’s packaging.. Teachers or schools may wish to adjust their snack, pizza/hot dog days, fun fair, or lunch programs to accommodate students who keep kosher. This general chart outlines some of the foods to be aware of.

Food	Concern	Alternative	Availability
Crackers	A small number of crackers are made with animal shortening (lard).	Kosher food products require rabbinic certification to be considered kosher. This is determined by the presence of one of these symbols on the product label: COR MK U. In the absence of rabbinic certification, the product is not kosher.	Supermarkets
Cookies	A small number of cookies are made with animal shortening (lard).		Supermarkets
Cheese	Most cheese is made with rennet and pepsin, which are animal by-products.		Some super-markets and available on order
Pizza	Some pizza outlets use cheese that is made with rennet and pepsin, which are animal by-products.		Kosher outlets
Beef and poultry	Meat and poultry must be slaughtered in a certain way.	Consider veggie hot dogs and burgers and other vegetarian substitutes.	Vegetarian substitutes are available at all supermarkets.
Pork or pork by-products	Pork is forbidden. Some food is made with pork by-products.	No pork or pork by-products are acceptable.	
Combination of milk and meat products	Milk and meat products are not eaten together.	Ensure adequate alternatives to milk beverages. Don't automatically add cheese to hamburger or meat to pizza.	
Gelatin-based desserts and candies	Jell-O wine Starbursts, gummi bears, gums, gum-drops, and similar desserts and candies contain gelatin, an animal by-product.	Choose other candies and desserts.	Supermarkets

Gender Relations

Beliefs and Practices

Jewish tradition and custom prohibit direct physical contact between men and women who are not related. How this is interpreted will depend on one's level of religious observance. Formal contact, such as a handshake, may be seen by some as a form of greeting. However, others may include a handshake in the prohibition of physical contact.

School Accommodation

It is important to be aware that some Jews will observe this tradition. It would be best to allow the individual in question to be the one to determine his or her degree of comfort with gender-related issues.

Dress Requirements

Beliefs and Practices

Jewish tradition requires men and women to dress modestly. This can be interpreted in different ways, depending on one's level of observance. For those who are very observant, males will wear only long pants when in public, and females will only wear clothing that doesn't reveal the shape of their bodies.

Jewish males keep their head covered; however, there is no prescribed covering. Over time, specific head coverings were developed in different parts of the world. Jewish males may choose to wear a specific kind of covering, such as a *kippah* (also known as a yarmulke). Even a baseball cap is acceptable.

School Accommodation

Sensitivity to this issue is necessary. It may be an issue of concern during physical education. There may be cases that will require an exemption from gym uniforms that do not meet traditional dress codes. It is hoped that schools breed an atmosphere of inclusivity and ensure that students are not teased or harassed due to this visible sign of their beliefs. Jewish students should feel supported and there should be a climate of acceptance of their dress. The student body should be aware of the consequences of harassing students because of their religious dress.

Curriculum Concerns

Music

School choirs are sometimes taught classical works that come from Christian prayer services.

School Accommodation

School staff should be sensitive to the religious roots of some music and accommodate students if they express a concern in this area.

(Developed in consultation with Rabbi Ronald Weiss, Faith Representative from the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care)

RASTAFARI

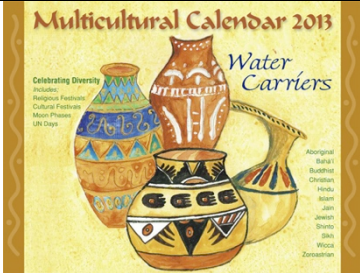
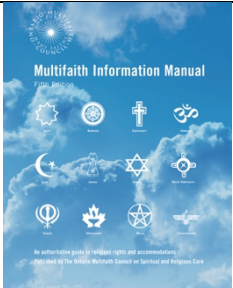
The Rastafari faith and culture as a way of life is deeply entrenched in many world communities. Though the Rastafari religion may seem to be a twentieth-century development, some of their practices and principles are as ancient as the way of the Nazarite of Biblical times. The religion's beliefs are based on the Bible and on many African beliefs and traditions. Rastafari embrace the divinity of their ancestors and owe their allegiance to the throne of David, of the line of Solomon, of which throne the 225th king was Haile Selassie 1st. Rastafari do not believe in nationalism or patriotism. In fact, they claim no attachment to any "ism." Their reverence is to their King and only to their king.

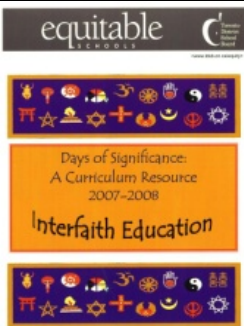
Many Rastafari practices are also embedded within the tradition of Ethiopian Orthodoxy. Historically, African peoples in the New World have traced memories of an African homeland through the trauma of slavery and through ideologies of struggle and resistance. The Rastafari fashion their vision of an ancestral homeland through a complex of ideas and symbols known as Ethiopianism, which has informed concepts of nationhood, independence, and political uplift since the late sixteenth century. The belief in Ethiopia as a promised land is derived from references in the Bible to African peoples as Ethiopians, and it has expressed the political, cultural, and spiritual aspirations of Africans in the Caribbean and North America for over three centuries. From the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the present, Ethiopianism has at various times provided for the Rastafari a basis for a common sense of destiny and identification among African peoples in the North American colonies, the Caribbean, Europe, and the African continent.

The Rastafari have a faith and culture based, among other beliefs, on an Africentric reading of the Bible, communal values, a strict vegetarian code known as *I-tal*, use of herbs for medicinal and ritual purposes, and a calendar devoted to the celebration of Ethiopian holy days.

Observances of Holy Days

Many Rastafari celebrations of faith, more particularly for the Nyahbinghi tradition, happen over a period of seven days and seven nights. There are Rastafarians who observe the calendar of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

<p>For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year's multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsbns.org School Year Calendars</p>		<p>One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school.</p>
<p>For more detailed description of significance of Holy Days, please consult "Multifaith Information Manual".</p>		<p>Resources should be easily accessible to all staff members.</p>

For classroom instruction resources please consult, “Days of Significance: A Curriculum Resource”.		
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Opening and Closing Exercises

Beliefs and Practices

Rastafari do not embrace nationalism or patriotism. There may be requests for exemptions from having to sing “O Canada” or “God Save the Queen.”

Dietary Requirements

Beliefs and Practices

Rastafari of the orthodox Nyahbinghi tradition follow strict vegetarian principles. Their diet is called *I-tal*. *I-tal* food is special food that never touches chemicals or that is natural and not from cans. The food is cooked, but served in the rawest form possible; without salts, preservatives, or condiments. No form of beef, fish, or eggs, nor their by-products are eaten. Those Rastafari who do eat beef would still not eat pork (considered scavengers of the earth) or derivatives. Fish is *I-tal* food, but lobster, crabs, and shrimp (considered scavengers of the sea) are not allowed. The fish allowed is small (no more than 12 inches long). Tea and herbal drinks are permitted. Coffee, milk, soft drinks, and liquor are considered unnatural and are not allowed.

Rastafari require a supportive and spiritually comfortable environment for eating.

School Accommodation

Many Rastafari parents/guardians are concerned that alternative diets, such as theirs, are not considered in school cafeteria programs. Strict vegetarian options are recommended.

Rastafari students dietary needs should be considered with regards to out-of-school activities that require students to be away from home for more than a day. Outdoor facilities need to ensure appropriate dietary alternatives. There may be Rastafari students/staff who request the possibility of cooking their own meals in these situations.

Dress

Beliefs and Practices

Rastafari focus on modesty and cleanliness as opposed to clothing for fashion. Choices of adornment show a respect for that which is natural, simple, and practical. Red, gold, and green, representing the rainbow land of Ethiopia and throne of God from the Scriptures Ezekiel, Ch. 1, are important symbolic colours.

Rastafari grow their hair untouched and uncut as a vow or covenant with their creator. Children and adults cannot cut their hair. The vow is similar to the Nazarite vow made by the ancient Biblical prophets (“They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in the

flesh.” Leviticus 21:5). Hair is never cut nor combed (worn in “dreadlocks”). Facial hair is never cut either. Head covering is necessary to protect the locks. Head coverings include cloth wraps, knitted tams, or shawls.

Rastafari do not object to their children wearing a school-mandated uniform as long as the uniform in its physical and or metaphysical functioning does not offend or impinge on the rights and principles of the faith.

Rastafari should be permitted the right to cultural norms of formality (e.g., the right to wear an African outfit in lieu of a suit and tie to formal occasions of the Board). Small tokens, emblems, buttons, badges, and shawls depicting symbolic colours of relevance to the culture should be allowed to be worn.

School Accommodation

Schools with no-hat policies should be aware of Rastafari needs to cover dreadlocks. A letter from parents/guardians or elders regarding this need for accommodation is advisable to avoid misunderstandings.

School Curriculum: Family Studies

Beliefs and Practices

When the body bleeds, it is going through a stage of purification and should be in a state of withdrawal. Females do not worship during menstruation, and they abstain from cooking.

School Accommodation

Rastafari females may request to be allowed to refrain from cooking activities in Family Studies during their menstrual period.

(Developed in consultation with Ras Ishaka Williams, TDSB)

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has grown from a small group of individuals from the New England region of the United States, to a worldwide community of 16 million members. In 1860, at Battle Creek, Michigan, the Adventists chose the name Seventh-day Adventist and in 1863, formally organized a church body.

Adventists base their faith in God as revealed through Jesus Christ and as shown through the Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit. They believe the Bible is the sole rule of faith and practice, and that it is the unequivocal word of God. Seventh-day Adventists observe the Sabbath on Saturday as Jesus observed the seventh-day Sabbath while on earth. They demonstrate their belief and commitment to their faith through baptism (being immersed in water), following the example of Jesus.

The writings of Ellen G. White, one of the Church's founders, are an aid to Bible interpretation. She also prescribed a dietary regimen of vegetarianism and abstention from tobacco and alcohol. (Source: *Multifaith Information Manual*)

Observation of the Sabbath

Beliefs and Practices

The Sabbath is a 24-hour unit of time that begins at sunset on Friday and concludes the following evening.

School Accommodation

Schools should accommodate Seventh-day Adventist students and staff in the scheduling of school requirements prior to and during the Sabbath, sunset Friday to Saturday. Weekend expectations should not include school activities on the Sabbath (e.g., work expectations or attending music festivals or camp).

Dietary Considerations

Seventh-day Adventists encourage a vegetarian lifestyle and in general do not eat animal products.

School Accommodation

Teachers and cafeteria staff must be aware of food restrictions wherever and whenever food is served. Availability of vegetarian options are advisable in school cafeterias, elementary school snacks, breakfast or lunch programs, as well as during overnight stays and school or Board events that involve a meal. Vegetarianism is not considered a test of faith, but is encouraged in the interest of better health. Where animal products are eaten, such is confined to:

- animals that chew the cud and have split hooves (e.g., cattle, sheep, goat, deer)
- fish with both fins and scales
- no pork and pork products
- no coffee, tea, and other caffeinated beverages

Curriculum Concerns

Halloween

Halloween is considered to be a pagan celebration that in the past included rituals with some ties to chasing away evil spirits.

School Accommodation

Some Seventh-day Adventist parents/guardians may request that their children be exempted from any activities related to Halloween. If exemptions are requested, provision of curricular alternatives is recommended.

Developed in consultation with Giuseppe De Meo, Faith Representative from the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care; and Maurice Jordine, Chaplin, Hospital for Sick Children)

SIKHISM

The founder of the Sikh religion was Guru Nanak, born in 1469. He preached a message of love and understanding. Guru Nanak passed on leadership of this new religion to nine successive gurus. The final living guru, Guru Gobind Singh, died in 1708.

During his lifetime, Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa order (meaning “The Pure”), soldier-saints. The Khalsa uphold the highest Sikh virtues of commitment, dedication, and social consciousness. The Khalsa are men and women who have undergone the Sikh baptism ceremony, strictly follow the Sikh Code of Conduct and Conventions, and wear the prescribed five physical articles of the faith.

Sikhs believe in direct linkage with God, with no intermediary needed. There is no such class as priesthood in Sikhism. However, the one who performs the daily service at a Sikh place of worship is called the *granthi*, the custodian. Sikhs only have custodians of the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy scripture). Any Sikh is free to read the Guru Granth Sahib in the *gurdwara* (a Sikh temple) or in their home. People of all religions are welcome to the gurdwara. A free community kitchen can be found at every gurdwara, which serves meals to all people, regardless of their faith. Sikhs believe in equality of humankind and respect for all faiths.

Prayer and Worship

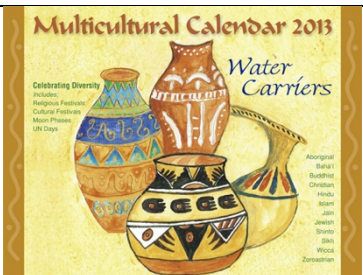
Beliefs and Practices

Sikhs generally pray early in the morning and twice at night. The morning prayer may take as long as 50 minutes, has three segments, and is usually done just before dawn or breakfast. It consists of reciting specific verses from Guru Granth Sahib. The evening prayer is said just before supper and may take up to 20 minutes. The last prayer of the day takes about five minutes and is offered just before bedtime. Whenever possible, it is best to say the morning and evening prayers in congregation. The last prayer is generally done individually.

School Accommodation

Accommodation will be needed for students attending overnight camps. A clean, quiet room is needed for worship. Worshippers normally sit on a rug or a mat and, before worshipping, there should be time for washing. Teachers should be aware of the length of each prayer time to ensure that students have enough time to pray before breakfast and supper.

Observances of Holy Days

<p>For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year’s multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsbn.org School Year Calendars</p>		<p>One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school.</p>
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For more detailed description of significance of Holy Days, please consult “Multifaith Information Manual”.		Resources should be easily accessible to all staff members.
For classroom instruction resources please consult, “Days of Significance: A Curriculum Resource”.		

Dress Requirements, Religious Attire

Beliefs and Practices

Men and women who have been initiated (baptized) into the Khalsa order (baptized Sikhs) uphold the five articles of faith, commonly referred to as the 5 Ks: Kesh, Kangha, Kirpan, Kara, Kash.

Baptized Sikhs wear the five Ks as symbols of their freedom, commitment, and identity. Initiation into Khalsa is a very personal decision and can happen at any age, depending on the individual’s readiness and knowledge of the faith. The family plays an important part in the decision, and family members may be initiated at different ages.

Kesh

Kesh is the uncut hair of a Sikh and is a symbol of spirituality, commitment to life, and obedience to God’s will. Sikhs do not ever cut their hair. Men’s hair is always protected by a turban, which women may also wear. Boys wear a handkerchief called a *patka* until they are old enough to be able to wear a turban. The turban itself is a five- to seven-metre piece of cotton cloth.

School Accommodation

The turban is an essential adjunct to the uncut hair of a Sikh. It is an identity symbol for all Sikhs, even those who are not yet Khalsa Sikhs. The wearing of a turban or patka may lead to teasing by other students. The knocking off of the turban is a great affront to the Sikh religion and is a personal insult to the wearer. All students should understand the serious consequences of harassing students because of their religious dress.

Sikh students/staff should be allowed to wear the turban or a patka. School uniforms and/or no-hat policies should be modified to accommodate Sikhs. Sikh students will usually replace the turban with a patka when participating in organized sports or for swimming. Accommodations for wearing/protecting of a turban and/or a patka in Physical Education, swimming, and organized sports should be made.

Kangha

The *kangha* (a wooden comb) is a symbol of physical cleanliness, orderliness, discipline, and commitment to life. A Sikh is required to keep uncut hair clean and to comb it twice a day. The kangha is tied into the knot of hair and is concealed in the turban or patka.

School Accommodation

See the accommodations under *Kesh*.

Kirpan

The *kirpan* (a ceremonial small sword, approximately six to seven inches long) is a symbol of courage, self-sacrifice, and defence of the weak and righteousness. Wearing the kirpan is a requirement of being a Khalsa Sikh. This ceremonial knife symbolizes each individual's duty toward other human beings, particularly the poor and oppressed, and is worn on the person. This is not a weapon, and strict rules prohibit its use as such. It is never to be removed from its sheath. For safety reasons, two or three clasps hold the kirpan securely in the sheath. Only a baptized Khalsa Sikh is required to wear a kirpan.

School Accommodation

Schools will accommodate Khalsa Sikh students and staff who wear a kirpan under the following conditions:

See Section One: Schedule A, pg. 13.

Kara

The *kara* (a steel bracelet worn on the right wrist) is a symbol of commitment to God and eternity. The bracelet has no beginning or end, just as God has no beginning or end.

School Accommodation

No religious accommodations are needed.

Kach

Kach (a specially designed undergarment) is a symbol of chastity and modesty.

School Accommodation

There may be need for accommodation in Physical Education uniforms. Some students may want to wear their kach under their gym shorts.

(Developed in consultation with Harsharan Singh and Mohinder Singh, Faith representatives from the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care)

CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

Christian Science dates to the 1860s in Massachusetts, when Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910) began to teach and practise spiritual healing successfully, based on her intensive study of the Bible and Jesus' healing ministry. In Rudimental Divine Science, she defined Christian Science as: "The law of God, the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the divine Principle and rule of universal harmony." In 1875, she published the basic teachings of Christian Science in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. In 1879, she founded the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Since then, 60 000 testimonies of healing, experienced by adherents and others, have been published in the church's periodicals. These have been of virtually every illness, many diagnosed as incurable or terminal. Christian Science also teaches the healing of moral problems and addictions.

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, page 496:

"The following is a brief exposition of the important points, or religious tenets, of Christian Science:

1. As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life.
2. We acknowledge and adore one supreme and infinite God. We acknowledge His Son, one Christ; the Holy Ghost or divine Comforter; and man in God's image and likeness.
3. We acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.
4. We acknowledge Jesus' atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man's unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life, and Love, as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death.
5. We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.
6. And we solemnly promise to watch, and pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; to do unto others as we would have them do unto us; and to be merciful, just and pure."

Health Care/Immunizations

Beliefs and Practices

While spiritual healing is central to the practice of Christian Science, adherents comply with all federal and provincial laws governing quarantine, the reporting of contagious disease, and mandated vaccinations. In addition, Christian Science parents/guardians recognize that teachers and especially principals must "give assiduous attention to the health and comfort of the pupils" (*Education Act*, s. 265(j)). Within the framework of Canadian and Ontarian law, Christian Science parents/guardians make healthcare decisions regarding their children, with no intervention from the Church."

School Accommodation

Where religious accommodations provide for exemption from immunizations (such as the *Ontario Immunization of School Pupils Act*), Christian Scientists typically exercise this option.

Parents or legal guardians should inform the principal, upon registration, if they choose care for their child that would differ from the care ordinarily provided. When this is done, if a Christian Science student becomes ill or incapacitated while at school or on a school supervised field trip, the teacher(s) responsible for the child will know what steps the parents/guardians wish to be taken.

Some Christian Science parents/guardians may request, as well, exemptions from classes in human sexuality, disease awareness, human biology, and other health-related courses. They may also request to have their children excused from school-sponsored medical-intervention programs.

(Developed in consultation with Lyle Young, Christian Science Committee on Publication for Ontario, and representative of the Ontario Congregations of the Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Science) on the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care)

ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroastrianism was founded by Prophet Zarathustra sometime in the period 1700–1500 BCE. The religion originated in North Central Asia in the region of the Aral Sea, close to the present-day Tajikistan. It is believed to be the first monotheistic faith in the history of humankind and the first-revealed religion in the world. It is a universal religion that recognizes Ahura Mazda (Lord Wise) as the godhead. Zarathustra teaches active participation of humankind in life through thinking with a Good Mind and choosing the path of Truth and Benevolence through good words and deeds. This is the central element in the Prophet's concept of free will. The highest ideal for humankind is to emulate the values of Amesha Spentas (Bounteous Immortals): thinking through Good Mind, and choosing the path of Truth and Righteousness, which are the emanations of Ahura Mazda. The religion is dedicated to creations of nature—heavenly bodies, earth, water, plants, animals, and man—all believed to be sacred and worth caring for. The fundamental concepts enshrined in the Zoroastrian faith is the freedom to think with Vohu Manah, the Good Mind, endowed by the creator, and living through Truth and Righteousness embodied in the concept of Asha. This can help bring Divine Rule and Prosperity and Harmony in the corporeal world through Peace

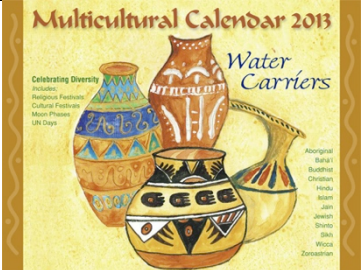
Prayer and Worship

School Accommodations

A devout Zoroastrian is expected to say his or her prayers five times a day. School will need to make accommodation to provide a secluded location for a Zoroastrian child who wishes to fulfill his or her spiritual devotion to the Creator. For devotional practice, the head of a Zoroastrian should be covered with a scarf or a cap. Some students may choose to have the cap on all the time as part of their dress code.

Every young Zoroastrian between the ages of 7 and 15 is invested through the Navjote (initiation) ritual, with an undergarment called *sudreh* (the pure path) and a *girdle* (cord) woven out of 72 woolen threads known as *kusti*. During the devotional prayers, as well as after gym-class showers, a devout Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) unties and reties the girdle (*kusti*) through the recital of Holy Mantra. Tolerance and respect should be exercised by those who are not familiar with such ritual practice.

Holy Days

<p>For complete listing of Holy Days and actual dates, please consult current year's multi-cultural calendar. An online version is available at www.dsbn.org School Year Calendars</p>		<p>One copy of each of these resources has been provided to every DSBN school.</p>
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<p>For more detailed description of significance of Holy Days, please consult “Multifaith Information Manual”.</p>		<p>Resources should be easily accessible to all staff members.</p>
<p>For classroom instruction resources please consult, “Days of Significance: A Curriculum Resource”.</p>		

(Prepared in consultation with the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario)