



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

School attendance and religious festivals guidance 2026 and 2027

Audience

The entire teaching workforce, government and national partners, including regional education consortia, local authorities and governing bodies.

Action required

None – for information only.

Further information

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

OGL

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Welsh Government attendance guidance

This document provides overarching guidelines, which head teachers may use in determining whether to grant an authorised absence for learners who practice a faith under the Religion Values & Ethics (RVE) shown in the new curriculum.

Parents and carers are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. Only head teachers, and not parents or carers, can authorise an absence. Schools must consider whether the reason for absence is reasonable before doing so.

In Wales, the pattern of the school year takes account of most of the western Christian festivals and holy days. Important days of religious observance in the calendars of other religious traditions and denominations, however, often fall in term time and specifically on school days.

[The Welsh Government guidance on attendance, registration practices and codes can be found here.](#)

The following advice is provided for religious observance:

Brief meaning – Religious observance

Statistical meaning – Authorised absence

Physical meaning – Out for whole session

Legal meaning – Absent

Use – Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. **Parents [or carers] should be encouraged to give advance notice.**

This is interpreted to mean that if the parent or carer's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival then the school must authorise the absence.

Where appropriate, religious bodies have confirmed if the day is not set apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence. Additional holidays and days off linked to the religious festival but not “exclusively set aside for religious observance” by the religious body are not marked using Code R.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2010](#).

Days of religious observance 2026 to 2027

(Dates set aside for religious observance which fall on a standard school day)

	Autumn Term 2026	Spring Term 2027	Summer Term 2027
Baha'i	Twin Holy Days (Births of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb) – 10/11/2026 & 11/11/2026 Day of the Covenant – 26/11/2026	Ayyám-i-Há – 26/02/2027 & 01/03/2027 First day of Ridvan – 21/04/2027 Ninth day of Ridvan – 29/04/2027	Martyrdom of the Báb – 10/07/2027
Buddhist	Loy Krathong – 25/11/2026 Bodhi Day – 08/12/2026	Losar (Tibetan New Year) – 08/02/2027–10/02/2027 Nirvana Day – 15/02/2027	Visakha Puja / Buddha Day – 20/05/2027
Christian	Western Christmas Day – 25/12/2026	Epiphany – 06/01/2027 Orthodox Christmas Day – 07/01/2027 Western Lent – 10/02/2027–26/03/2027 Good Friday – 26/03/2027	

Hindu	Durga Puja – 16/10/2026–20/10/2026	Holi – 22/03/2027	
Islam / Muslim		Ramadan – 08/02/2027–09/03/2027 Eid-al-Fitr – 09/03/2027-11/03/2027	
Jainism	Paryushana Parvarambha – 08/09/2026 Jain New Year – 9/11/2026		Mahavir Jayanti – 19/04/2027
Judaism	Rosh Hashanah – 11/09/2026 – 13/06/2026 Yom Kippur – 21/09/2026 Sukkot – 25/09/2026–02/10/2026 Shemini Atzeret – 02/10/2026–03/10/2026 Chanukah – 04/12/2026–12/12/2026	Purim – 23/03/2027	Pesach / Passover – 21/04/2027–29/04/2027 Shavuot – 10/06/2027–12/06/2027
Sikh	Guru Nanak Dev Ji Jayanti – 24/11/2026	Hola Mohalla – 22/03/2027–24/03/2027	Vaisakhi – 14/04/2027 Martyrdom of Guru Arjan – 16/06/2027

		Pesach / Passover – 21/04/2026 – 29/04/2026	
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Dates set aside for religious observance which fall on a weekend in 2026 to 2027:

	Autumn Term 2026	Spring Term 2027	Summer Term 2027
Baha'i	Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá – 28/11/2026	Ayyám-i-Há – 27/02/2027– 28/02/2027 Naw Rúz – 21/03/2027	Twelfth Day of Ridvan – 02/05/2027 Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh – 29/05/2027 Martyrdom of the Báb – 10/07/2027
Buddhist		Chinese New Year – 06/02/2027	
Christian		Western Easter Day – 28/03/2027	Orthodox Easter Day – 02/05/2027 Pentecost – 16/05/2027
Hindu	Diwali – 08/11/2026	Maha Shivaratri – 06/03/2027	

Islam / Muslim			When Eid-al-Adha – 16/05/2027 Islamic New Year (Hijra / Muharram) – 06/06/2027
Jainism	Diwali – 08/11/2026		
Judaism	Simchat Torah – 03/10/2026 – 04/10/2026		
Sikh	Diwali / Bandi Chhor Divas – 08/11/2026		

Additional useful information

There are many different kinds of calendars being actively used around the world; they generally fall into three categories:

- The **solar** calendar is concerned with the Sun, or, more precisely, is based on the Earth's rotation around the Sun. The Gregorian calendar, which is the most widely used calendar in the world today is a solar calendar based on a 365-day¹ common year divided into twelve months of irregular lengths.
- **Lunar**² calendars are based on the rotation of the Moon around Earth and are used mainly for religious and cultural purposes,
- **Lunisolar or solilunar** calendars combine the two kinds and are solar calendars with dates indicating the Moon phase. They are used mainly for religious and cultural purposes.

¹ However, nearly every four years is a leap year, when one extra – or intercalary – day, is added on 29 February, making the leap year in the Gregorian calendar 366 days long.

² Dates may vary as a lunar month can be 29 or 30 days long

For this reason dates set aside for religious observance in some religions may vary geographically and year on year.

Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and Religion, Values and Ethics (WASACRE)

WASACRE is the umbrella organisation for Standing Advisory Councils (SACs) across Wales.

The Welsh Government supports the following WASACRE advice:

- Any application made by a parent for their child to receive an authorised absence for religious observance is treated with sensitivity and considered carefully and fairly
- Absence should only be authorised for a date '*exclusively set apart by the religious body*'
- If a date has not been '*exclusively set apart*' by the relevant religious body, it is suggested that the head teacher enquires whether the learner/s can fulfil their religious observance outside of school hours
- If a festival falls on a weekend or during a school holiday, absence taken on a school day for that festival should not be authorised
- Similarly, absence taken on a school day either side of a festival that has been '*exclusively set apart*' by the relevant religious body should not be authorised (in such situations parents should apply for a leave of absence instead).

It is important to note that within some religious traditions, observance varies between different denominations and communities. Whilst one festival might be considered relatively minor within a particular community, therefore not requiring absence from school, the same festival may be celebrated as a holy day of major significance within a different community from the same religious tradition and might require, with authorisation, absence from school.

Also, the level of observance will differ amongst families within the same religious tradition or community and some children, despite growing up within a particular faith community, might prefer to attend school on festival days, whilst others may not.

Therefore, whilst head teachers must ensure that requests are genuine and reasonable, they are advised to maintain open and honest dialogue with the families to cover their individual circumstances and contact their local SAC for support if needed.

Furthermore, the lunar nature of Islamic calendar and the different authorities that Muslims rely on for the announcement of the start and end of Ramadan, means that there is the potential for Muslim learners in the same school to start/ finish the fasting month and celebrate Eid a day before or after each other. In practical terms, this means that Muslim learners in the same school may also be requesting absence for the Eid day(s) on different dates.

Head teachers should also be mindful that the nature of the moon-sighting means that it is only the night before Eid that Muslim families may know that Eid is the following day. As such, parents and carers may be able to give advance notice to school of the approximate dates of Ramadan (in particular), but stress that it may differ by a day either side of the dates appearing in this guidance.

WASACRE best practice advice

WASACRE would consider it good practice for schools to:

- learn and understand the diversity of their communities with regards to a child's faith/belief.
- Encourage parents and carers to give the school as much notice as possible of a proposed absence and be willing to discuss with the teachers how their child/children will catch up on work missed
- make appropriate provision for the needs of children who outwardly show or have a faith/belief that requires them to perform specific rituals on a regular basis throughout the year. For example, by allocating a prayer room, or a quiet place. There may also be a need for some children to have access to a private washing facility, and having these facilities in school would enable children to remain on school site without the need for regular absences
- Reach out to their local faith based communities and to remain in regular contact and dialogue with them throughout the year. This will enable schools to develop mutually beneficial relationships with local faith communities that will promote and open up opportunities for good quality learning experiences for the children and support head teachers in determining whether to grant an authorised absence for religious observance for learners in their school

- Be aware of the religious communities represented in their locality and take reasonable steps to ensure, whenever possible, that events in the school diary do not clash with days of significant religious importance for their learners and their families.

Useful Websites:

<https://orsl.usc.edu/life/calendar/>

<https://www.bahai.org/calendar>

<https://www.yja.org/jaincalendar>

<https://icalendars.co.uk/religion/>

<https://www.sikhnet.com/>

<https://www.chabad.org/jewish/>

<https://www.drikpanchang.com/calendars/hindu/>

<https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/islamic-calendar/>

<https://handfulofleaves.life/buddhist-calendar>

Annex 1: Religious Festival events 2026 in chronological order

Date (chronological order)	Event	Religion	Academic Term 2026
September			
08/09/2026	Paryushana Parvarambha	Jainism	Autumn term
11/09/2026–13/09/2026	Rosh Hashanah	Judaism	Autumn term
21/09/2026	Yom Kippur	Judaism	Autumn term
25/09/2026–02/10/2026	Sukkot	Judaism	Autumn term
October			
02/10/2026–03/10/2026	Shemini Atzeret	Judaism	Autumn term
03/10/2026 - 04/10/2026	Simchat Torah	Judaism	Autumn term
16/10/2026–20/10/2026	Durga Puja	Hinduism	Autumn term
November			

08/11/2026	Diwali	Hinduism	Autumn term
08/11/2026	Diwali	Jainism	Autumn term
08/11/2026	Diwali / Bandi Chhor Divas	Sikh	Autumn term
09/11/2026	Jain New Year		
10/11/2026 & 11/11/2026	Twin Holy Days (Births of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb)	Bahá'í	Autumn term
25/11/2026	Loy Krathong	Buddhism	Autumn term
26/11/2026	Day of the Covenant	Bahá'í	Autumn term
24/11/2026	Guru Nanak Dev Ji Jayanti	Sikh	Autumn term
28/11/2026	Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	Bahá'í	Autumn term
December			
04/12/2026–12/12/2026	Chanukah	Judaism	Autumn term
08/12/2026	Bodhi Day	Buddhism	Autumn term

25/12/2026	Western Christmas Day	Christianity	Autumn term
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Annex 2: Religious Festival events 2027 in chronological order

Date (chronological order)	Event	Religion	Academic Term 2027
January			
06/01/2027	Epiphany	Christianity	Spring term
07/01/2027	Orthodox Christmas Day	Christianity	Spring term
February			
06/02/2027	Chinese New Year	Buddhism	Spring term
08/02/2027–09/03/2027	Ramadan	Islam / Muslim	Spring term
08/02/2027–10/02/2027	Losar (Tibetan New Year)	Buddhism	Spring term
10/02/2027–26/03/2027	Western Lent	Christianity	Spring term
15/02/2027	Nirvana Day	Buddhism	Spring term
26/02/2027–01/03/2027	Ayyám-i-Há	Bahá'í	Spring term
March			
06/03/2027	Maha Shivaratri	Hinduism	Spring term
09/03/2027- 11/03/2026	Eid-al-Fitr	Islam / Muslim	Spring term

22/03/2027–24/03/2027	Hola Mohalla	Sikh	Spring term
21/03/2027	Naw Rúz	Bahá'í	Spring term
22/03/2027	Holi	Hinduism	Spring term
23/03/2027	Purim	Judaism	Spring term
26/03/2027	Good Friday	Christianity	Spring term
28/03/2027	Western Easter Day	Christianity	Spring term
April			
14/04/2027	Vaisakhi	Sikh	Summer term
19/04/2027	Mahavir Jayanti	Jainism	Summer term
21/04/2027	First Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í	Summer term
21/04/2027–29/04/2027	Pesach / Passover	Judaism	Summer term
29/04/2027	Ninth Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í	Summer term
May			
02/05/2027	Twelfth / Last Day of Ridvan	Bahá'í	Summer term
02/05/2027	Orthodox Easter Day	Christianity	Summer term

16/05/2027	Pentecost	Christianity	Summer term
16/05/2027	Eid-al-Adha	Islam / Muslim	Summer term
20/05/2027	Visakha Puja / Buddha Day	Buddhism	Summer term
June			
06/06/2027	Islamic New Year (Hijra / Muharram)	Islam / Muslim	Summer term
10/06/2027–12/06/2027	Shavuot	Judaism	Summer term
16/06/2027	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan	Sikh	Summer term