

JEWISH HOLY DAYS & WINTER FRIDAYS

HOLY DAYS

This document is written to enable schools to understand on which days a Jewish teacher or pupil has the right to be absent from school.

There are 13 Jewish Holy Days in the calendar year, when a fully Orthodox Jew will not write, travel or do any creative work. On those days, the fully Orthodox Jew will spend a number of hours, particularly in the morning, in synagogue.

It is rare that all 13 days will be school days, as some may occur in certain years on weekends or during school holidays.

It is recognised that different families will have different degrees of observance and some may choose to observe and be absent from school on some days but not on others. Some may choose to be absent on the first day of a festival but not on the second. This may particularly apply to members of Progressive Synagogues.

The 13 days, with the dates they occur on during 2016 are

Pesach – Passover 1 st & 2 nd days	Saturday & Sunday 23 & 24 April 2016
Pesach – Passover 7 th & 8 th days	Friday & Saturday 29 & 30 April 2016
Shavuot – Pentecost – 2 days	Sunday & Monday 12 & 13 June 2016
Rosh Hashanah – New Year - 2 days	Monday & Tuesday 3 & 4 October 2016
Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement	Wednesday 12 October 2016
Succot – Tabernacles 1 st & 2 nd days	Monday & Tuesday 17 & 18 October 2016
Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah	Monday & Tuesday 24 & 25 October 2016

There are a number of other festival days, such as Chanukah and Purim, and fast days, such as the Fast of Av. Such days have special observances, but do not require a person to be absent from work or school.

WINTER FRIDAYS

The Jewish day begins with the evening as in 'and it was evening and it was morning' in Genesis Ch.1. The Jewish Sabbath is brought in approximately a quarter of an hour before sunset. In London and Hertfordshire, this can be as late as 9.00 pm in midsummer, but as early as 3.30 pm in midwinter. In order to be ready for the Sabbath, it is reasonable for a Jewish teacher or pupil to be able to leave school at the time it takes to return home plus – dependent on circumstances - half an hour to be prepared for the Sabbath prior to the time the Sabbath comes in.