

Management Guidance on Prayer Breaks and Religious Observance

(The Council's response to the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and approach to addressing faith issues at work)

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This Guidance document summarises the Council's provisions for prayer breaks and religious observances in the workplace by promoting a positive and equitable approach. The Guidance applies to all employees other than school-based staff for whom separate arrangements apply.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 became effective from 2nd December 2003. The Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against, victimise, or harass workers because of their religion or belief.

The Regulations cover discrimination on all aspects of the employer-employee relationship including recruitment, terms and conditions, access to training, promotion, transfer/secondments, and dismissals. This is similar to both the Sex Discrimination and Race Relation Acts.

The Equality Act 2006 alters the definition of "religion" or "belief" in the Regulations to specifically protect "lack of belief" and extends the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises and the exercise of public functions.

Aside from this, other Acts of Parliament can impact on an individual's religion/belief. For example:

- Race Relations Act 1976

The Act defines 'racial grounds' as grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins. The courts have accepted, however, that Sikhs and Jews fall within the ambit of the Act because they are members of groups that can be defined in terms of their ethnic groups in that each group has a shared history and cultural traditions.

- Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. The protection of 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion' in the Act is wider than the concept of 'religion or belief' in the new Regulations. Unjustifiable discrimination on grounds of religion or belief could be contrary to Article 9 of the Act.

2. VALUING DIVERSITY POLICY & STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

The Council's Statement of Commitment to Equality sets out our vision and its delivery. This Statement was launched in December 2003 and supports the Council's existing Valuing Diversity Policy. Both the Statement and the Policy embrace groups that can be disadvantaged on account of unlawful discrimination on the basis of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation, age, or other minority status. For the future, a more comprehensive and detailed policy will be developed covering all aspects of equality and will replace the existing Valuing Diversity Policy and Statement of Commitment to Equality.

2.1 Calendar of events/Religious festivals

Many religions or beliefs have special festivals or spiritual observance days. Until the Courts and Tribunals have had an opportunity to consider which religions or beliefs are covered by these Regulations, it is not possible to provide definitive list of religions/beliefs. Indeed a definitive list may never be possible given that new beliefs are likely to emerge from time to time.

In the meantime, however, Appendix 1 provides a list of commonly practiced religions and beliefs in Britain and a calendar indicating festivals is available on the HR Intranet site for easy reference. This is not exhaustive and is intended for guidance only. Please note that some festivals are movable with dates set by the lunar calendar. Therefore, the dates shown may vary annually. The calendar will be revised annually to reflect the changes.

Not all members of a religion will request time off for each and every festival because not all members follow all the practices and observances. In some instances, an adjustment to the working day to allow time to attend a prayer meeting before or after work may be all that is requested.

3. RECRUITMENT

The Council's job application form has been reviewed to enable applicants to advise the Council of where specific adjustments may be needed during the interview process or for the job itself to accommodate the applicant's religion or belief.

Senior HR Advisers can provide you with guidance on:

- Flexibility over interview times and dates to avoid important religious festivals where possible. A calendar of religious events is also available on Bexweb as a guide.
- Religious and cultural differences, expectations, and requirements of applicants. For example, awareness that some applicants will avoid eye contact for religious reasons or may not wish to shake hands.
- The impact on job specification requirements e.g. applicants requiring Friday afternoons for prayer, extended lunch breaks, adjusting working hours/days – flexible arrival and departure times, use of lunch time in exchange for early departure or attending religious activities, staggered work hours and adjusting working arrangements e.g. remote/flexible working.
- The preparation of job references and the impact of including an employee's religious requirements in responses.

Managers will also be provided with guidance on the preparation of job references and the impact of their response in terms of religion or belief and other discrimination.

3.1 Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR)

As with other discrimination legislation, in exceptional circumstances, an occupational requirement can be claimed, where it is necessary for the relevant duties to be carried out by someone of specific religion or belief. Senior HR Advisers

will provide specific advice although this is unlikely to have a major effect in the Council.

4. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Council already delivers an extensive programme of equality/diversity training to ensure that all employees fully understand the issues and implement Council policy. Where reasonable to do so, the delivery of training programmes considers whether arrangements disadvantage someone because of their religion or belief. This may also be relevant if training takes place outside normal working hours, away from the workplace or in a residential environment. Managers are encouraged to advise delegates to raise specific requirements with the Organisation & Employee Development Unit so that accommodation can be made where practicable.

5. FAIR TREATMENT AT WORK, DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE, VIOLENCE POLICY

The Council's Fair Treatment at Work Policy and Procedure has been reviewed and forms the basis for reporting issues of religious discrimination. The examples of disciplinary offences provided in the Disciplinary Procedure covers all forms of discrimination including offensive language. All staff are made aware of their obligations not to act in a discriminatory manner and that behaviour amounting to discrimination, harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated. A new publicity campaign has been produced to continue to raise awareness amongst the workforce.

The Council also has a responsibility to protect staff from harassment from third parties such as customers or clients and the Council's Violence Policy will continue to deal with actual or potential situations of this kind.

6. DRESS CODE/APPEARANCE

The Council does not have a corporate dress code but expects all employees to dress appropriately to project a good image of the Council and to fulfil health & safety requirements. Some religions have particular dress requirements, which can be accommodated subject to Health & Safety and business needs. However, if an employee's dress conflicts with health & safety requirements, the Council may consider this accommodation unreasonable. Further advice, if needed, can be obtained from HR Service.

7. TIME OFF ARRANGEMENTS

The Regulations do not oblige the Council to give paid time off for religious observance where the time is not made up.

Reasonable time off for prayer breaks can be accommodated in existing working arrangements. This would need to be made up, either through the flexi-time scheme or otherwise by local agreement with the line manager.

In some cases, where the flexi scheme does not operate, days off for religious observances can be requested through the normal annual leave procedure or through the Council's TOIL procedures where these apply. Where it is not possible to take annual leave or TOIL, employees can request time off as unpaid special leave. Revised special leave provisions are available on the HR intranet site.

8. WORKING PATTERNS

In circumstances where the needs of the service require a change in the existing working arrangements, or sections where the working pattern varies with the needs of the service, it may be possible to objectively justify a requirement for employees to work shifts at times or on days that they do not wish to work for religious reasons. However, before a decision is made, managers are advised to contact a Senior HR Adviser in the first instance to discuss and explore further alternatives.

Although managers are encouraged to seriously consider requests to accommodate employees' religious needs, the focus must be on operational efficiency and effectiveness when making a decision on requests for time off and/or change in working patterns for religious reasons.

9. ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

The Regulations do not require employers to enter into significant expenditure and/or building alterations for religious needs, and in any event, many needs will involve little or no change. Therefore when the Council's offices close during the Christmas period, a request by a non-Christian to work because they do not celebrate Christmas can be refused due to the financial impact of opening the offices at this time. This covers any extra statutory day granted to Council employees during the Christmas period.

9.1 Provision of 'Quiet Room'

The Regulations place a requirement on the Council to proactively seek reasonable accommodation for religious and spiritual needs within the context of work processes where a request is received. The pressures on Council accommodation mean that the provision of a dedicated room is not considered operationally feasible.

Individuals requiring facilities should be encouraged to discuss their needs with their manager to see if they can be accommodated within the department. Alternatively, where this is not possible, a room can be booked through the usual room booking arrangement for up to one hour during the lunch period subject to availability. This can include block bookings. All bookings will be carefully monitored to ensure all groups/individuals can be accommodated and to assess demand.

9.2 Room booking procedure

When booking a meeting room, it is essential that the booking form state that the room is booked for 'religious observance' and the name of the religion or belief specified on the booking form. This will be used for monitoring purposes only.

If a room, for whatever reason, is not available, the individual should ask if a room has already been booked for religious observance and if so, consideration should be given to the sharing of facilities.

10. MONITORING

Under the Regulations, there is currently no obligation on the Council to monitor religions and beliefs of job applicants and staff. However, the Council has decided to collect this information as it is useful to test the appropriateness of recruitment processes and to predict when people are likely to request annual leave.

The April 2004 workforce survey provided information on the religion/belief of 51% of the Council's employees. All HR monitoring systems have been reviewed to include religion or belief so that assessments can be made to ensure our policies and procedures do not have a disproportionate impact on religious groups.

11. REVIEW

This guidance document will be reviewed and updated to provide further guidance as and when appropriate.

APPENDIX 1

COMMON RELIGIONS/BELIEFS – REQUIREMENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

The Regulations state that "religion or belief" means any religion, religious belief, or similar philosophical belief. This is not a comprehensive definition although the Regulations go on to define religion as having all or some of the following elements:

- Collective worship
- Clear belief system
- Profound belief affecting way of life or view of the world
- Belief in a superior being
- Worship of that supreme being
- A group or following of people who observe the belief, values, customs, and traditions as set down by the Supreme Being.

Belief means;

- Opinion or deeply held feelings
- Holding of spiritual or philosophical convictions, which have an identifiable formal content.

This does not include any philosophical or political belief unless that belief is similar to a religious belief.

Examples of common religions/beliefs in the UK include:

BAHA'I

Baha'is believe that, through life, the soul - which comes into being at conception and which exists after death – develops spiritually and grows in knowledge either nearer to God (Heaven) or more remote from God (Hell). Baha'is should say one of three obligatory prayers during the day. Prayers need to be recited in a quiet place where the Baha'i will wish to face the Qiblah (the Shrine of Baha'u'llah, near Akka, Israel), which is in a southeasterly direction from the UK. Two of the prayers require movement and prostrations. Baha'is are required to wash their hands and face before prayers but can use a normal washroom facility for this purpose.

Festivals: Baha'i festivals take place from sunset to sunset and followers may wish to leave work early in order to be home for sunset on the day prior to the festival date. Baha'is will wish to refrain from working on the key festival dates.

- The Baha'i Fast 2 March – 20 March
Baha'is refrain from eating or drinking from sunrise to sunset during this period. Baha'is working evening or night shifts will appreciate the opportunity to prepare food at sundown. There are exemptions from fasting for sickness, pregnancy, traveling and strenuous physical work.
- Naw-Ruz (Baha'i New Year) 21 March
- Ridvan 21 April – 2 May
Ridvan is the most important of the Baha'i festivals and includes three holy days on which Baha'is would wish to refrain from working. They are:
 - 1st Day of Ridvan 21 April
 - 9th Day of Ridvan 29 April
 - 12th Day of Ridvan 2 May
 - Declaration of the Bab 23 May
 - Ascension of the Baha'u'llah 29 May

- Martyrdom of the Bab 9 July
- Birth of the Bab 20 October
- Birth of Baha'u'llah 12 November

Food: As a matter of principle most Baha'is do not take alcohol. Otherwise there are no dietary restrictions.

Bereavement: Burial should take place as soon as possible after legal formalities and funeral arrangements can be put in hand. The body should be transported no more than one hour's journey from the place where the person died, so funerals take place relatively close to the place of death. The usual arrangements for compassionate leave should generally suffice. Baha'is have no specific period of mourning.

BUDDHISM

Buddhists wish to take advantage of being born as a human being, by developing energetically the qualities of kindness and awareness in order to achieve freedom from suffering and to help others to do the same.

Festivals: There are a number of different traditions in Buddhism arising from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Different traditions will celebrate different Festivals. Some Buddhist traditions do not celebrate any festivals. Buddhist members of staff should be asked which festivals are important to them. Festivals follow the lunar calendar and will therefore not take place on the same day each year.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| ▪ Saindran Memorial Day | January |
| ▪ Parinirvana | February |
| ▪ Magha Puja Day | February/March |
| ▪ Honen Memorial Day | March |
| ▪ Buddha Day (Vesak or Visakah Puja) | May |
| ▪ The Ploughing Festival | May |
| ▪ Buddhist New Year varies according to tradition | |
| ▪ Asalha Puja Day (Dhamma Day) | July |
| ▪ Ulambana (Ancestor Day) | July |
| ▪ Abhidhamma Day | October |
| ▪ Kathina Day | October |
| ▪ The Elephant Festival | November |
| ▪ Loy Krathorg | December |
| ▪ Bodhi Day | December |
| ▪ Uposatha weekly on the lunar quarter day | |
| ▪ Avalokitesvara's Birthday | |

Food: Most Buddhists are vegetarian reflecting their adherence to the precept of non-harm to self and others. Many would not want to prepare or serve meat for others. Buddhists upholding the precept to avoid intoxication may not wish to drink alcohol, or serve it.

Clothing: Many Buddhists would prefer to wear clothing, which reflects their adherence to non-harm e.g. not wearing leather clothing and leather shoes.

CHRISTIANITY

Christians belief is to live according to the loving nature of God as revealed by Jesus' life and death, helped in this task by the Holy Spirit and communicating with God through

prayer. Christians study 'The Bible' and meet for worship in church, chapel, meeting house or in people's homes. The cross is a symbol of Jesus' means of execution and reminds Christians of Jesus' redemptive love and triumph over death.

Jesus – 'The Christ' (The Anointed One)

There are a wide variety of Christian Churches and organisations all of which have their own specific needs, rituals and observations.

Festivals:

- Christmas Day 25 December
- Ash Wednesday Feb/March (date set yearly)
This is a day of fasting/abstinence for many Christians.
- Maundy Thursday March/April (date set yearly)
- Good Friday March/April (date set yearly)
- Easter Sunday March/April (date set yearly)
- All Saints Day 1 November
- Christmas Eve 24 December

In addition there are a number of 'holy days of obligation' when Christians may wish to attend a church service and request a late start to the working day, or early finish in order that they can attend their local church. Many practicing Christians will wish to attend their Church on Sundays throughout the year.

Food: Some Christians avoid alcohol.

Clothing: Some Christian churches forbid the use of cosmetics and require their female members to dress particularly modestly.

Bereavement: No special requirements beyond normal compassionate leave.

HINDUISM

Hindu belief entails learning, through life, how to be reunited with God – of whom all living beings are eternally part – and to learn this through study, devotion, prayer and service to others. Hindus study 'The Vedas' and epics such as 'The Ramayana'. They may worship at a shrine at home or in a 'mandir' or temple.

Festivals: Hinduism is a diverse religion and not all Hindus will celebrate the same festivals.

- Makar Sakranti 14 January
- Maha Shiva Ratri February
- Holi March
- Ramnavami April
- Rakshabandham August
- Janmashtami August
- Ganesh Chaturthi August/September
- Navaratri September/October
- Dushera (aka Vijayadashmi) September/October
- Karava Chauth October
- Diwali Late October/Early November
- New Year Late October/Early November

There are a number of occasions through the year when some Hindus fast.

Clothing: Hindu women will often wear a *bindi*, which is a red spot worn on the forehead and denotes that she is of the Hindu faith. In addition, many married Hindu women wear a necklace (*mangal sutra*), which is placed around their necks during the marriage ceremony and is in addition to a wedding ring. A few Orthodox Hindu men wear a small tuft of hair (*shikha*) similar to a ponytail but this is often hidden beneath the remaining hair. Some Orthodox Hindu men also wear a clay marking on their foreheads known as a *tilak*.

Food: Most Hindus are vegetarian and will not eat meat, fish or eggs. None eat beef.

Bereavement: Following cremation, close relatives of the deceased will observe a 13 day mourning period during which they will wish to remain at home. The closest male relatives may take the ashes of the deceased to the Ganges, in India. They may therefore request extended leave. Close male relatives of the deceased may shave their heads as a mark of respect.

ISLAM (MUSLIMS)

Muslim belief entails submitting one's life to the will of Allah as revealed by the Prophet Muhammad through the 'Qur'an' and to do so through a declaration of faith, regular prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage.

Observant Muslims are required to pray five times a day. Each prayer time takes about 15 minutes and can take place anywhere clean and quiet. Prayer times are:

- At dawn (Fajr)
- At mid-day (Zuhr) in winter sometime between 1200 –1300hrs and in summer between 1300 – 1600hrs
- Late Afternoon (Asr) in winter 1430 – 1530
- After Sunset (Maghrib)
- Late Evening (Isha)

Friday mid-day prayers are particularly important to Muslims and may take a little longer than other prayer times. Friday prayers must be said in congregation and may require Muslims to travel to the nearest mosque or prayer gathering. Before prayers, observant Muslims have to perform ablution. This involves the use of running water to wash hands, face, mouth, nose, and arms up to the elbows and feet up to the ankles.

Festivals: The dates of festivals are reliant on a sighting of the new moon and will therefore vary from year to year. Whilst approximate dates will be known well in advance, it is not always possible to give a definitive date until much nearer to the time. Ramadan, which takes place in the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar, is a particularly significant time for Muslims. Fasting is required between dawn and sunset. Most Muslims will attend work in the normal way but in the winter they may wish to break fast with other Muslims at sunset. This could be seen as a delayed lunch break. For those working evening or night shifts, the opportunity to heat food at sunset and/or sunrise will be appreciated.

- Eid Al-Fitr – three days to mark the end of Ramadan – most Muslims will only seek annual leave for the first of the three days.
- Eid al-Adha takes place two months and 10 days after Eid Al- Fitr and is a three-day festival. Again, most Muslims will usually only seek leave for the first of the three days.

All Muslims are required to make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime. Muslims may therefore seek one extended leave period in which to make such a pilgrimage.

Clothing: Muslims are required to cover the body. Men may therefore be unwilling to wear shorts. Women may wish to cover their whole body, except their face, hands and feet.

Food: Muslims are forbidden to eat any food, which is derived from the pig, this includes lard which may be present in bread or even ice cream. In addition they are forbidden to eat any food, which is derived from a carnivorous animal. Meat that may be consumed must be slaughtered by the Halal method. Islam also forbids the consumption of alcohol, which includes its presence in dishes such as risotto or fruit salad.

Bereavement: Burial must take place as soon as possible following death and may therefore occur at short notice.

Other:

1. Any form of gambling is forbidden under Islam.
2. Observant Muslims are required to wash following use of the toilet and will therefore appreciate access to water in the toilet cubicle, often Muslims will carry a small container of water into the cubicle for this purpose. By agreement with other staff and cleaners, these containers could be kept in the cubicle.
3. Physical contact between the sexes is discouraged and some Muslims may politely refuse to shake hands with the opposite sex. This should not be viewed negatively.

JAINISM

Jains wish to purify the reborn soul from accumulated 'karma' (fate) and to guard against gathering new 'karma' s as to escape the cycle of death and rebirth and to do this by living a life based on right faith, right knowledge and right conduct.

Jains are required to worship three times daily, before dawn, at sunset and at night. Jains working evening or night shifts may wish to take time out to worship or take their meals before sunset.

Festivals: Jain festivals are spiritual in nature.

- Oli April and October
Eight days semi-fasting twice a year when some take one bland, tasteless meal during daytime.
- Mahavira Jayanti April
Birth anniversary of Lord Mahavira
- Paryusan August/September
During this sacred period of fasting and forgiveness for eight days Jains fast, observe spiritual rituals, meditate and live a pious life taking only boiled water during daytime.
- Samvatsari September
The last day of Paryushan when Jains ask for forgiveness and forgive on another.
- Diwali October/November
Death anniversary of Lord Mahavira includes a two-day fast and listening to the last message of Mahavira.

Food: Jains practice avoidance of harm to all life – self and others. They are, therefore, strict vegetarians including the avoidance of eggs; some may take milk products. Many also avoid root vegetables. Jains do not eat between sunset and sunrise. Jains do not drink alcohol.

Bereavement: Cremation will take place as soon as practical after death (usually three to five days). There is no specified mourning period and normal compassionate leave arrangements will suffice.

JUDAISM (JEWS)

Jews live according to God's laws, as revealed by Moses, the most important of which is to believe in one God and to learn to love God through study, prayer and by celebrating the yearly cycle of holy days. The Jewish scriptures are known as the 'Tanakh' and Jews meet for worship at a 'synagogue'.

Observant Jews are required to refrain from work on the Sabbath and Festivals, except where life is at risk. This includes traveling (except on foot), writing, carrying, switching on and off electricity, using a telephone and transactions of a commercial nature (that is buying and selling). The Sabbath and all other Festivals begin one hour before dusk and so practising Jews need to be home by then. Sabbath begins one hour before dusk on Friday.

Festivals:

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|------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Passover | March/April 2 sets of 2 days |
| ▪ Pentecost (Shavuoth) | May/June 2 days |
| ▪ New Year | Sept/Oct 2 days |
| ▪ Day of Atonement | Sept/Oct 1 day fasting |
| ▪ Tabernacles (Sukkot) | Sept/Oct 2 sets of 2 days |

Clothing: Orthodox Jewish men keep their head covered at all times. Orthodox Jewish women will wish to dress modestly and may not want to wear trousers, short skirts or short sleeves; some may wish to keep their heads covered by a scarf or beret.

Food: Jews are required to eat only kosher food (which has been treated and prepared in a particular manner).

Bereavement: Funerals must take place as soon as possible following the death – the same day where possible – and therefore take place at short notice. Following a death, the immediate family must stay at home and mourn for seven days (Shiva). Following the death of a Father or Mother, an observant Jewish man will be required to go to a Synagogue to pray morning, afternoon and evening for 11 months of the Jewish calendar.

MUSLIM (SEE ISLAM)

OTHER ANCIENT RELIGIONS

These include religions covered by the Council of British Druid Orders and examples are Druidry, Paganism and Wicca.

Festivals: Some examples of Festivals

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|--------------------|-----------------|
| ▪ Candlemas | 2 February |
| ▪ Spring Equinox* | 21/22 March |
| ▪ Beltaine | 30 April |
| ▪ Summer Solstice* | 21/22 June |
| ▪ Lughnasadh | 2 August |
| ▪ Autumn Equinox* | 21/22 September |
| ▪ Samhain | 31 October |
| ▪ Winter Solstice* | 21/22 December |

* Dates moveable due to astronomical times set in accordance with GMT.

Food: Generally vegetarian or vegan, although not always.

Clothing: Some items of jewellery as associated with Pagan faiths such as ankh, pentagram, hammer and crystal.

Bereavement: No specific requirements beyond that of normal compassionate leave.

There are also other ancient religions such as Astaru, Odinism and Shamanism.

PARSI (SEE ZORASTRIANISM)

RASTAFARIANISM

Rastafarian belief entails revering 'Ras Tafari' (Emperor Haile Selassie I) as a manifestation of God (Jah) and opposing all forms of oppression, sustaining these beliefs through self-discipline, meetings for drumming and prayers and by studying the Bible.

Festivals:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| ▪ Birthday of Haile Selassie I | 23 July |
| ▪ Ethiopian New Year | 11 September |
| ▪ Anniversary of the Crowning of Haile Selassie I | 2 November |
| ▪ Christmas | 25 December |

Food: Vegetarian including the avoidance of eggs. Many Rastafarians eat only organic food as close to its raw state as possible.

Clothing: Hair is worn uncut and plaited into 'dreadlocks'. It is often covered by a hat, which is usually red, green and gold.

Other: Whilst the faith supports the smoking of ganja (marijuana) this practice remains unlawful in the UK, and is unaffected by the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.

Bereavement: No specific requirements beyond that of normal compassionate leave.

SIKHISM

Sikhs wish to enable the soul at death to reunite with God – of whom it is part – and to achieve this by remembering God constantly in daily life and by truthful living, with service to others being particularly important.

Festivals:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| ▪ Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh | 5 January |
| ▪ Baisakhi | 14 April |
| ▪ Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev | 16 June |
| ▪ Sri Guru Granth Sahib Day | 1 September |
| ▪ Divali (Diwali) | October/November |
| ▪ (date set by lunar calendar) | |
| ▪ Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur | 24 November |
| ▪ Birthday of Guru Nanak | November |

Food: Sikhs do not eat Halal meat. Some do not eat beef and many are vegetarian.

Clothes: Practising male Sikhs observe the 5 Ks of the faith. These are:

Kesh	Uncut hair. Observant Sikhs do not remove or cut any hair from their body. Sikh men and some women will wear a turban.
Kangha	Wooden comb usually worn in the hair.
Kara	Metal bracelet worn on the wrist
Kachhahera	Knee length underpants
Kirpan	Short sword worn under the clothing so that it is not visible.

Bereavement: Sikhs are cremated and have a preference for this to take place as soon after the death as possible. There is no specified mourning period and normal compassionate leave arrangements will suffice.

ZOROASTRIANS (PARSI)

Zoroastrians choose to aid Ahura Mazda – the Absolute Creator who is responsible for good – to defeat evil and bring in the final judgment and the establishment of Paradise.

Zoroastrians are required to pray five times during the day, saying a special prayer for each part of the day.

- Hawab (sunrise to midday)
- Rapithwin (midday to mid-afternoon)
- Uzerin (mid-afternoon to sunset)
- Aiwisruthrem (sunset to midnight)
- Ushahin (midnight to dawn)

Prayers should be said in front of a fire – or a symbolic replica of fire. In addition, a ritual is performed each time a Zoroastrian washes his/her hands although the ritual is not always strictly performed in all its detail. When it is performed, the individual will stand on the same spot and must speak to no one during the ritual. No special facilities are required. A prayer will also be said before eating.

Festivals: Dates follow the lunar calendar and will therefore vary from year to year.

- Khordad Sal – The Prophet’s Birthday

Source:

- ACAS Guidance on Religion or Belief and the Workplace
- Multi-faith Calendar – The Festival Shop