

**Maryland State School Law requires that public schools be closed on the following days:**

- **Thanksgiving Day and the day after**
- **Christmas Eve through January 1**
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
- **Presidents' Day**
- **The Friday before Easter through the Monday after Easter**
- **Memorial Day**
- **Primary and General Election Days**

**In addition, the Howard County Public School System is also closed on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.**

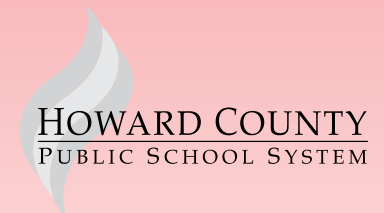
The Howard County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, physical or mental disability, age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs. For more information, contact the Equity Assurance Office of the Howard County Public School System at 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, MD 21042 or call 410.313.6654.



10910 Route 108  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
410.313.6600  
[www.hcpss.org](http://www.hcpss.org)

PI07.08

# *A Parents' Guide to Accommodations for Religious Observance by Students*



# Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity is one of the Howard County Public School System's greatest strengths.

**A**s the Howard County community becomes more diverse, our students and teachers are truly enriched by the many cultures and customs that come together in our classrooms.

The Board of Education recognizes the diversity of religious traditions represented among the staff and students of the Howard County Public School System and the value such diversity adds to the educational program. The Board respects the religious practices of staff and students and is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for religious obligations.



## Attendance and School Work

Parents must complete the *Absence for Religious Obligation form* if their child is planning to miss school in order to participate in a religious observance. The form should be turned into the school, which will forward the request to the Equity Assurance Office for disposition. If the student's absence is approved, the absence will be considered a lawful absence either for the day or any portion of the day.

- That request should be received by the school before the date of the religious obligation. A student may make up work and receive a recorded grade when an absence for religious observance is approved. This includes opportunities to make up any missed tests or assignments.
- If a note from the parent explaining the absence is not received by the school within two school days of the student's return, the absence may be coded as unlawful (unexcused).
- If the religious obligation requires a student to leave prior to the end of the school day, the student must sign out according to the school's early dismissal procedures.
- Students who complete the school year with no absences, other than those resulting from religious obligation, will not be denied school attendance certificates where such are regularly awarded.



## Athletic and Extracurricular Activities

The policies of the Howard County Public School System related to religious observance apply to student participation in athletic practices and games, as well as other extracurricular activities.

Students are excused from attendance at, or participation in, any extracurricular activity when their attendance or participation conflicts with their religious observance. Athletic practices and events are optional for students on any religious holiday.

These provisions are documented in Howard County Board of Education Policies 9010, Attendance, and 3000, Religious Observances. Copies of the policies are available on the school system's website, [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org), or through the Public Information Office at 410.313.6682.