



KEY RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY GUIDANCE 2023

WHAT IS THE GUIDANCE FOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS?

It is important to consider colleagues and clients who are celebrating important religious festivals.

Employers should plan for any impact these may have in the workplace and speak to employees to prepare and make arrangements to manage expectations.

EMPLOYERS SHOULD KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN MIND

- Be aware of holiday requests
- Consider the practical elements of observing religious holidays, for example not scheduling lunch meetings with someone who is fasting
- Be respectful of information that is shared
- Offer flexibility where possible

KEY RELIGIOUS DATES

Date	Celebration	Notes
22 February - 6 April	Lent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some Christians may fast or give up certain foods and will donate the money saved to charity.• If you have a colleague or employee who has given something up for Lent, be respectful of this if the information is shared with you.
22 March - 21 April	Ramadam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The beginning of Ramadan depends on the sighting of the new moon so the dates often vary slightly by region and country.• This is the holiest month for Muslims.• During the month of Ramadan Muslims are required to fast from daybreak until after sunset. No food or drink may be consumed during the hours of fasting.• During Ramadan, some Muslims may seek adjustments at work to allow for fasting. When arranging meetings with colleagues or clients who are fasting for Ramadan, be mindful of the time and format of these meetings including evenings when prayers and breaking of the fast take place.
5 April - 13 April	Passover	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Seder meal is held in family homes during the first two evenings of the festival.• During the 8 days, Jews refrain from eating food containing grains that rise (wheat, barley, rye, oats), eating Matzah (unleavened bread) in place of bread products, which represents the dough that did not have time to rise when their ancestors fled from slavery.



KEY RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY GUIDANCE 2023

KEY RELIGIOUS DATES

Date	Celebration	Notes
9 April	Easter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easter Sunday is 9 April this year for the Western Church, with Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday preceding.• Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter Sunday on 16 April.• Many Easter traditions, such as the giving of chocolate Easter eggs, symbolise the gift of new life.• Many of the UK's statutory holidays are fixed around Christian festivals. However, colleagues may seek some adjustments to attend certain masses and services (for example, on Maundy Thursday).
14 April	Vaisakhi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sikhs who observe Vaisakhi do so by visiting their local Gurdwaras, a place of worship in Sikhism where traditional colours of yellow and orange are worn.• Large processions are held all over the world, known as Nagar Kirtan. Celebrations include devotional singing and chanting hymns and Guru Granth Sahib Ji is carried in the procession in a place of honour.
21 April - 22 April	Eid al-Fitr	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a time - once the fast of Ramadan has been completed - for making gifts to the poor. It is especially a time for new clothes, good food, and presents for children. Families get together and contact friends, especially those who live far away.• The traditional greeting is 'Eid Mubarak' - 'a happy and blessed Eid'.
5 May	Wesak/ Buddha Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Houses are decorated with lanterns and garlands, and temples are ringed with little oil lamps.• 'Wesak cards' are sent to friends and donations given to those in need.• Water is poured over the shoulders of the Buddha in a ritual known as "Bathing the Buddha" as a reminder to purify the mind from greed, hatred and ignorance.
18 May	Ascension Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a Christian holiday that marks the 40th day following Easter when Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven.
25 May - 27 May	Shauvot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a Jewish holiday that combines a grain harvest and the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.
28 June - 2 July	Eid al-Adha	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is the second Eid celebration in the Muslim year. The name means Festival of the Sacrifice and commemorates Ibraham's willingness to sacrifice his son.
26 June - 1 July	The Hajj	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is the name of the annual pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca required for all Muslims at least once.



KEY RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY GUIDANCE 2023

KEY RELIGIOUS DATES

Date	Celebration	Notes
30 August	Rasksha Bandhan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raksha Bandhan, also known as Rakhi Purnima or Rakhi, is a Hindu festival that focuses on the love and duty between brothers and sisters. On this special day, sisters tie a thread for the protection of their brother. Sisters pray for their brother's long life when they tie 'Rakhi' on their brother's wrist as a mark of affection.
15 September - 17 September	Rosh Hashnah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Jewish New Year beginning at sundown that encourages reflection. It is a Jewish New Year festival, held on the first (and sometimes the second) day of Tishri (in September). It is marked by the blowing of the shofar, and begins the ten days of penitence culminating in Yom Kippur.
24 September - 25 September	Yom Kippur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Jewish day of atonement to reflect on sins and seek forgiveness from God.
26 September - 27 September	Mawlid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Islamic holiday celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad.
12 October	Bandi Chhor Divas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sikhs remember the release from prison and return to Amritsar of the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. The name Bandi Chhor Divas means liberation of prisoners day. This day reminds Sikhs of freedom, human rights and justice.
12 November	Diwali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diwali, known as the Festival of Lights is a colourful and happy celebration celebrated by Hindu's. Families prepare their homes and themselves for the special festivities that symbolise the victory of spiritual goodness and the lifting of spiritual darkness. Fireworks displays are set off to drive away evil, oil lamps are lit, flower garlands are made, candles float in bowls of water outside homes and sweets are shared as part of the festivities.
27 November	Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Birthday (Gurpurab)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guru Nanak Dev Ji was the founder of Sikhism and the first Sikh Guru. His birthday is marked as a public holiday in India. He introduced langar (free kitchen) because of his belief in the oneness of humanity. He offered free meals to everyone, regardless of their caste, gender, religion or wealth where everyone gathered and ate together. This free kitchen is still present today in every Gurdwara and many Sikhs serve langar to people outside the gurdwara. On this day, Sikhs visit Gurdwaras to offer prayers and firework displays and many events, such as Nagar Kirtan's are held all over the world.



GORDONS

KEY RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY GUIDANCE 2023

KEY RELIGIOUS DATES

Date	Celebration	Notes
7 December - 15 December	Hannukah	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hannukah is an 8-day Jewish festival with the first day known as Chanukah, Festival of Lights, and Feast of Dedication.Hanukkah reaffirms the principles of Judaism and commemorates in particular the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem by the lighting of candles on each day of the festival.On each of the eight nights of Chanukah, Jewish people light special menorahs (candelabras), adding another flame each night, until on the eighth night eight flames are burning brightly. The lighting takes place at home, in a doorway or near a window, and is performed after brief blessings are recited.
25 December	Christmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Christmas commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, observed on 25 December as a religious and cultural celebration around the world which is marked as a public holiday.The story of Jesus's birth (also known as the nativity) is often retold by children taking part in nativity plays. Christian church services at Christmas include carol singing and Christmas dinners and gifts are also an important part of the celebrations. Families and friends will share food together, eating traditional foods, such as turkey, mince pies and Christmas puddings.

CONTACT OUR EMPLOYMENT LAW EXPERTS



BRYONY GOLDSPINK

T: 0113 227 0307

M: 07789 000 560

bryony.goldspink@gordonsllp.com



MARY WALKER

T: 0113 227 0306

M: 07876 883 464

mary.walker@gordonsllp.com



PHILIP PAGET

T: 0333 987 5571

M: 07787 148 721

philip.paget@gordonsllp.com