



# Maine Township High School District 207

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December 19, 2008

TO: Certified Staff Members of the Maine Teacher's Association  
FROM: Dr. Joel Morris and Ms. Emma Visee  
RE: Protocol for requesting Religious Holiday Leave


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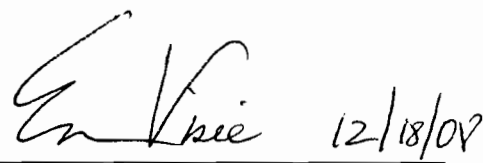
In response to inquires from staff members regarding the process to be followed when requesting paid days off work in order to observe specific religious holidays, the leadership of the Maine Teachers' Association and the administration have agreed to implement a set of procedures and criteria to serve as a guide for building administrators when approving requests for religious holiday absences. This set of guidelines called the Protocol for Approving Religious Holiday Requests is attached for your information.

The protocol references the Interfaith Calendar of World Religions ([www.interfaithcalendar.org](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org)), and specifically, the "primary" holy days noted in boldface print. While all certified staff members are eligible to request personal business days for religious holidays that are not noted as primary holy days, only those days listed as primary holy days are eligible to be taken as non-chargeable religious holidays.

The Request for Pre-Approved Absence forms available in the buildings will be revised to include a check box marked Religious Holiday. Certified staff members are asked to consult the Interfaith Calendar prior to requesting a religious holiday to determine if that specific day qualifies as a non-chargeable religious holiday. All requests for non-qualifying holidays should be made in the same manner as all other personal business day requests. If you should have any questions about the Protocol or the Interfaith Calendar, please make an appointment to meet with your Assistant Principal for Instruction.

On behalf of the MTA and D207 administration, we appreciate the cooperation and patience you've displayed as both parties worked to reach consensus on this new provision of the collective bargaining agreement.

  
Dr. Joel W. Morris

  
Ms. Emma Visee



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### **Protocol for Approving Religious Holiday Requests**

The protocol described below will be used by D207 administrators when considering granting approval for all religious holiday leave requests. All requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the principal or designee with the results of the decision communicated to the staff member via the *Request for Pre-Approved Absence* form.

- 1) The teacher must submit a written request for all religious holidays that are observed on school days and when the teacher intends to be absent from work.
- 2) All requests must be submitted at least five (5) school days prior to the requested day off from work.
- 3) Only those religious holidays listed as primary holy days, as denoted on the Interfaith Calendar, are eligible to be taken as non-chargeable religious holiday leave days. (*Primary holy days are listed in boldface on the Interfaith Calendar at [www.interfaithcalendar.org](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org)*)
- 4) A request for leave on a holiday other than those listed on the Interfaith Calendar as primary holy days will be treated in the same manner as all other personal day requests, with approval being subject to the criteria described in the collective bargaining agreement.
- 5) The first two (2) days of approved religious holiday leave will not be charged to a teacher's personal business leave nor will they be deducted from a teacher's accumulated sick leave.
- 6) Approved requests for additional leave days for religious holidays will be charged to the teacher's personal business leave, which are deducted from a teacher's accumulated sick leave.
- 7) A teacher may withdraw his/her request for a religious holiday leave at any time prior to the indicated date(s) of leave without penalty.
- 8) The Interfaith Calendar to be used in applying this protocol is attached as Exhibit 1. Primary holy days may be added or deleted, and the dates of the primary holy days modified, by agreement between the respective designees of the Superintendent and the MTA President, who shall meet no later than April of each year to review the Calendar for the next school year.

Approved  
12-16-08

 12/16/08  
 12/16/08