



# FAITH & FOOTBALL A CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS **2019/20 SEASON**

Created by:



Supported by:



# KEY RELIGIOUS DATES FOR THE 2019/20 SEASON

	2019				2020						
	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
<b>BUDDHISM</b>					25 CHINESE NEW YEAR			30 BUDDHA DAY			
<b>CHRISTIANITY</b>				25 CHRISTMAS DAY		26 LENT BEGINS		10/12/19 GOOD FRIDAY, EASTER SUNDAY AND ORTHODOX EASTER SUNDAY			
<b>HINDUISM</b>	29-8 Oct NAVARATRI	27 DIWALI					* 10/25 HOLI, HINDU NEW YEAR				
<b>JUDAISM</b>	30 ROSH HASHANAH	8/20-21/13-14 YOM KIPPUR/ SHEMINI ATZERET & SIMCHAT TORAH/SUKKOT		22-29 CHANUKAH (HANNUKAH)			9 PURIM	8/9-14/15 PASSOVER*	28-29 SHAVUOT*		
<b>ISLAM</b>	10 ASHURA							24 April - 23 May/24 May RAMADAN/ EID AL-FITR			31 EID UL-ADHA
<b>SIKH FAITH</b>		27 DIWALI/BANDI CHHOR DIVAS	12 BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK		2 BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH			13 VAISAKHI			

Some dates are provisional, based on the lunar calendar and/or sighting of the moon. The FA recognise that in the case of most of the faiths concerned there are various ways of spelling the same word. This is because of the range of languages (and alphabets) of the original terms. Some dates may also vary and the date of local celebrations may differ. We therefore recommend anyone using this calendar to arrange fixtures and events only after consultation with local representatives of the faith communities concerned. In this calendar we have only highlighted the six largest faiths in England by population and recognise there will be other faiths not mentioned.

\*All these festivals are observed for two days. All Jewish Festivals start the night before.



# GUIDANCE TO GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL AROUND FIXTURES AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

## THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

As part of The Football Association's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all to participate in football, Rule B5 was amended at the 2005 AGM in order to include all religions.

## RULE B5 FOOTBALL & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

- (a) A Participant cannot be compelled to play football on bona fide occasions where religious observance precludes such activity, save where the Participant:
- (i) has consented to do so on such occasions;
- or**
- (ii) is registered as a player under written contract, which shall be taken as consent to play on such occasions unless otherwise provided for in the contract.
- (b) Annually, when planning programmes, Competitions shall define and notify agreed dates of such occasions.

## GUIDANCE

In order to support you with your planning this guidance has been written to provide you with the most significant dates for religious observance together with some information on them. It is not intended that you avoid all these dates, and the list is by no means exhaustive, but you are advised to consult with your clubs and communities as to the most relevant dates to consider for your locality as this will vary considerably.

A calendar of these dates will be provided by The FA annually. You should note that some religions work on a lunar calendar (10/11 months) rather than the Gregorian (12 months) which means dates will vary from year to year. In addition some dates can only be confirmed by the sighting of the moon so are sometimes expressed as two or three dates and confirmed nearer the time of the festival. Some dates also have alternative spellings.

## FAITH DATES BY RELIGION

### Buddhism

- Chinese New year
- Buddha Day

### Christianity

- Christmas Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Sunday
- Sundays unless the League is a Sunday League (membership of or participation in Sunday football shall be taken as consent to play on Sundays, except when Christmas Day be on a Sunday)

### Hinduism

- Diwali (or Divali)
- Navaratri – this is nine nights but usually finishes quite late, not ideal when playing matches
- Raksha Bandhan
- Holi – Only for evening fixtures as Holi is celebrated in late afternoon/evenings

### Judaism

- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur
- Passover – the last two days of the festival
- Sukkot – the first two days of the festival
- Friday evening to Saturday evening (Sabbath) unless the League is a Saturday League (membership of, or participation in, Saturday football shall be taken as consent to play on Saturdays)

### Islam

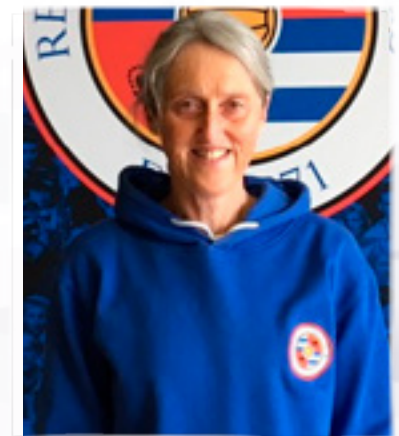
- Eid-al-Fitr (occurs at the end of Ramadan)
- Eid-al-Adha
- Al-Hijra/Muharram

### Sikh Faith

- Diwali (Divali or Bandi Chhor Divas)
- Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)
- Birthday of Guru Nanak

“Faith and pastoral care can be important to both players and staff at any club. It helps them create perspective under the pressure of the professional game.”

**Angy**  
Club Chaplain,  
Reading FC Women &  
Sports Chaplaincy UK



# EXPLANATION OF KEY RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

## Al-Hijra/Muharram

Islamic New Year and the first of the month of Muharram, where Muslims celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina. For Shi'as the first ten days are a period of mourning culminating in Ashura Day, commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn.

## Birthday of Guru Nanak

Birthday of founder of Sikhism. This is one of the holiest of the Sikhs which is celebrated over a three day period.

## Buddha Day

Birthday of the founder of the Sikh faith. This is one of the holiest Sikh festivals which is celebrated over a three day period. 2019 is the 550th birth anniversary.

## Chinese New Year

The most important day in the traditional Chinese calendar and marks the beginning of the first Lunar month.

## Christmas

Celebrates the birth of Jesus who Christians believe to be the Son of God. Christians focus on the incarnation of God becoming a man in this major festival.

## Diwali (or Divali) – (Hindu/Sikh)

Festival of Lights. Celebration of good over evil. Victory of Lord Rama over demon Ravana and end of over 14 years of exile of Lord Rama. Prayers are said for Goddess Laxmi for prosperity at the beginning of financial year. For Sikhs this has a special significance because the sixth Guru was released from prison on Diwali. Sikhs also call this festival 'Bandi Chhor Divas'.

## Easter Sunday

Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

## Eid-al-Adha

This Muslim festival marks Day Three of Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and also commemorates the Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his own son Ishmael.

## Eid-al-Fitr

This day marks the end of the month of fasting for Muslims (Ramadan). The day is marked with prayers and festivity and presents for children.

## Good Friday

This day commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus.

## Hindu New Year

Often thought of as more important than Diwali, many Hindus celebrate this in the spring but some on the day following Diwali.

## Holi

Spring Festival of Colours for Hindus which symbolises the triumph of good over evil. The event celebrates the death of the evil demoness Holika who was consumed by fire while her nephew Prahlad, who was a devotee of Vishnu, survived. These days the event is signified by burning large bonfires, dancing and spraying coloured powder and water on each other.

## Lent

A period of preparation including prayer, fasting and reflection lasting six weeks up to Easter Sunday.

## Navaratri

Nine days of dance (Garba) and celebration when the Goddess Laxmi is worshipped by Hindus.



*'Football is a game where people from all background and faiths are able to come together and represent one team, whilst still being true to themselves.'*

## Ashvir Singh Johal

Academy Coach  
Leicester City FC

## EXPLANATION OF KEY RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

### Passover

A Jewish festival recalling the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and celebrating the barley harvest. Unleavened bread is eaten with a special meal (Seder), with food, prayers, games and song.

### Raksha Bandhan

Sisters tie holy thread onto brothers wrists for protection. Brothers in return give sisters presents and also offer the sisters protection.

### Ramadan

The Islamic month of fasting from before dawn to sunset every day, normally 30 days ending with Eid-Al-Fitr.

### Rosh Hashanah

Two-day religious observance that marks the start of the Jewish New Year. It is traditionally announced by blowing a shofar, a ram's horn trumpet. It is the first of the high holy days, or 'days of awe', and celebrates the creation of the world, the repentance of sins, and the renewal of God's relationship with the Jewish people.

### Sukkot

Jewish harvest festival commemorating the forty years spent in the wilderness on the way to Israel. Sukkot 2019 runs from 13-20 October but the religious restrictions on working, carrying, driving only apply from sunset 13 to sunset 15 October.

### Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)

This date is celebrated as the birth of the religion itself. The founding of the Khalsa (Sikh) order by Guru Gobind Singh who initiated five disciples known as the Five Beloved Ones.

### Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement (Jewish). The last day of 10 days of repentance and the holiest day of the year with fasting and prayer.



"We are fellow Israelis who follow two different faiths but still have so much in common. Above all we are brothers on and off the pitch, the power of football keeps our friendship strong."

### Tomer Hemed & Beram Kayal

Charlton Athletic & Israel

# SUGGESTED FAITH RELATED SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

## ISLAM

### EID-AL-ADHA

Eid Mubarak to all our Muslim followers!

10-14 AUGUST 2019

Image of moon or lantern

### MUHARRAM (ISLAMIC NEW YEAR)

Wishing all Muslims who are commemorating Muharram peace and blessings

SEPT 1, 2019 - SEPT 30, 2019

AUG 20, 2020 - SEPT 20, 2020

Solemn holiday so no appropriate image

### RAMADAN

#RamadanMubarak from everyone at .....to all those preparing to fast during the holy month.

24 APRIL - 23 MAY 2020

Image of a new moon, silver/gold bowl of dates, prayer beads

### EID-AL-FITR

#EidMubarak to all our Muslim followers celebrating around the world!

24 MAY 2020

Image of a new moon

## JUDAISM

### ROSH HASHANAH

Wishing all our Jewish followers a Shana Tova today!

1 SEPTEMBER 2019

Image of apple dipped in honey

### YOM KIPPUR

Wishing all our Jewish followers well over the fast of Yom Kippur

9 SEPTEMBER 2019

Solemn holiday so no appropriate image

### CHANUKAH

Happy Chanukah to all our Jewish friends and followers who begin their celebrations today!

23-30 DECEMBER 2019

Image of Menorah

### PURIM

We would like to wish a #HappyPurim to all those celebrating this evening!

21 MARCH 2020

Image of Hamantaschen, traditional pastry

### PASSOVER

Chag Kasher Vesameach! We would like to send our best wishes to everyone in the Jewish community as #Passover begins this evening.

8-16 APRIL 2020

Image of Matzvah, wine, crackers



## CHRISTIANITY

### CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas to all our followers!

25 DECEMBER 2019

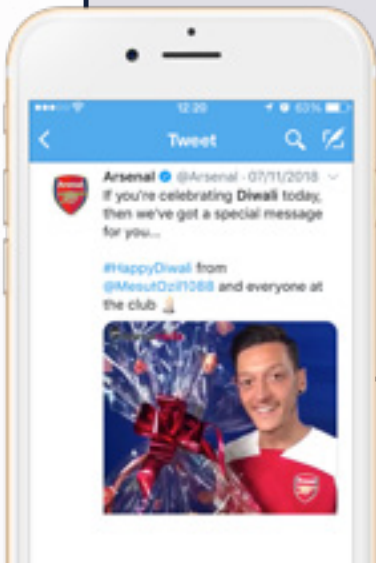
Image of Christmas tree, snow, nativity scene

### EASTER

Happy Easter to everyone celebrating over the extended weekend!

10-12 APRIL 2020

Image of something that represents Christs Resurrection e.g. an empty tomb. A Happy Easter message should go out on Easter Sunday rather than Good Friday



## SUGGESTED FAITH RELATED SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

### SIKH FAITH

#### DIWALI/BANDI CHHOR

Happy Diwali and Bandi Chhor to all our Hindu, Sikh and Jain followers!

27 OCTOBER 2019

Image of people celebrating with light or fireworks.  
If Sikh specific, an image of the Golden Temple with fireworks

#### BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK

Happy Guru Nanak Gurburb to everyone celebrating the birth of the founder of the Sikh faith 550 years ago!

#GuruNanak550

12 NOVEMBER 2019

Image of Ik Onkar, a Sikh symbol

#### BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

Happy Guru Gobind Singh Gurburb to all our Sikh followers – he stood for the universal values of freedom, equality and justice for all!

or

Wishing Sikhs everywhere a very happy Guru Gobind Singh Gurburb. Gurburb di lakh lakh vidaye! (The last part of the message means “Many many good wishes for the gurburb”)

2 JANUARY 2020

Image of Anandpur Sahib (the birthplace of the Khalsa) or the Takht Sri Patna Sahib (Gurdwara where he was born) or A Khanda (Sikh symbol)

#### VAISAKHI

#HappyVaisakhi to everyone from the Sikh community celebrating the birth of the Khalsa over the coming days!

13 APRIL 2020

Image of the triangular flag with the Sikh insignia of the Khanda

### BUDDHISM

#### CHINESE NEW YEAR

Happy #ChineseNewYear to all our followers who this weekend celebrate the start of the Year of the Pig!

25 JANUARY 2020

Image of a pig

#### BUDDHA DAY/VESAK

Happy Buddha Day. Best wishes for Vesak to all those celebrating across the world!

30 APRIL 2020

Image of the Dharma Wheel or a silhouette of the Dharmader

### HINDUISM/JAINISM

#### DIWALI

Happy Diwali to all our followers celebrating today!

27 OCTOBER 2019

Image of people celebrating with light or fireworks

#### HOLI FESTIVAL

We'd like to wish a #HappyHoli to anyone celebrating the festival of colours today!

10 MARCH 2020

Image of people celebrating the festival with lots of colour





“As a manager, I’m responsible for both my players and myself at the club. My faith is a constant source of support and helps me try to be the leader and role model that my team needs.”

**Riteesh Mishra**  
 Manager  
 Charlton Athletic FC Women



The Football Association  
 Telephone: 0844 980 8200  
 Email: Equality@TheFA.com  
 Visit: www.TheFA.com



Kick It Out  
 Telephone: 020 3967 8989  
 Email: info@kickitout.org  
 Visit: www.kickitout.org



The Premier League  
 Visit: www.premierleague.com



EFL,  
 English Football League  
 Tel: 01772 325800  
 Email: enquiries@EFL.com  
 Visit: EFL.com



The Carob Tree Project  
 Email: alex.goldberg@carobtree.org  
 Visit: www.carobtree.org



Muslim Chaplains in Sport  
 Email: info@mcst.org.uk  
 Visit: www.mcst.org.uk



Muslim Chaplains in Sport  
 Email: enquiries@maccabigb.org  
 Visit: www.maccabigb.org



Hindu Forum of Europe  
 Email: info@hinduforum.eu  
 Visit: www.hinduforum.eu



City Sikhs  
 Email: media@citysikhs.org.uk  
 Visit: www.citysikhs.org.uk



Professional Footballers Association  
 Email: info@thepfa.co.uk  
 Visit: www.thepfa.com



Community Security Trust  
 Email: enquiries@cst.org.uk  
 Visit: www.CST.org.uk



Faiths Forum 4 London  
 Email: info@faithsforum4london.org  
 Visit: www.faithsforum.com



Sports Chaplaincy  
 Email: admin@sportschaplaincy.org.uk  
 Visit: www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk