

# **CARDIFF COUNCIL POLICY ON RELIGIOUS AND NON RELIGIOUS BELIEF IN THE WORKPLACE**

## **PURPOSE**

1. The Council is committed to creating an inclusive community in which every person is treated with dignity and respect and appropriately to their individual circumstances, irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, language, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity. This includes respect for a person's religious or non-religious beliefs.
2. Cardiff is a multi-cultural City with a richness of diversity. The Council celebrates and values this diversity brought to its workforce through individuals and aims to create an environment where the religious and non-religious beliefs of all its employees and prospective employees are respected.
3. Where employees are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect, there is an enriching effect on the quality of life for all concerned that cannot be over emphasised. As well as the personal benefits to individuals, the Council's reputation as a desirable place to work is enhanced. This can lead to higher levels of staff morale and retention.

## **SCOPE**

4. This policy is focussed around the employees of Cardiff Council, rather than around our customers and service users. The Council is developing a Single Equality Scheme in 2011, which will incorporate equality on the basis of religion and belief in relation to accessing Council services and facilities.
5. This policy will apply to all employees of the Council with the exception of School based employees. A separate version of this Policy has been adapted for use in Schools and is commended to School Governing Bodies.
6. The Council's religion and belief policy applies to all the above employees, whether they have a religious belief, other belief or lack of belief.

## **LEGAL CONTEXT**

7. There have been significant changes to UK law to protect people of all religions and beliefs from being discriminated against in their employment. The Equality Act 2010 replaces all previous anti-discriminatory laws with a single piece of legislation. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to

discriminate against a person on the grounds of their actual or perceived religion, belief or non-belief in any aspect of employment, including: recruitment and selection, terms and conditions, promotions and transfers, pay, training, dismissals and employment references. It protects people with a religion, belief or non-belief against direct and indirect discrimination and discrimination because someone perceives them to have a particular religion or belief, even if they do not. It also protects people from being discriminated against because of the religion or belief of someone they associate with. It provides legal protection from harassment, harassment by a third party and victimisation.

8. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief:

- in the provision of goods, facilities and services
- in the disposal and management of premises
- in education
- in the exercise of public functions

9. Under the 'Occupational Requirement' provision in the Equality Act 2010, there is scope to recruit someone on the basis of their religion, belief or non-belief if this can be proven to be an essential requirement of the role.

10. The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 amends the Public Order Act 1986 and provides a new criminal offence of stirring up racial hatred against a person on racial or religious grounds. The offence applies to words or behaviour which are threatening and intended to stir up religious hatred.

11. The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). These rights include the right to respect for private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and freedom of association. Under the Act there is also the responsibility to respect the rights of other people and not to exercise your rights in a way which is likely to prevent others from being able to exercise theirs.

12. The Council welcomes these statutory requirements, and aims to go beyond these requirements in positively promoting equality and diversity in both employment and service delivery. An individual's religion or belief will therefore be irrelevant to their gaining a job or promotion.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

13. Since December 2006, the Council has provided access to a Prayer and Reflection Room at County Hall for employees of belief or non-belief to use to help express their spiritual needs.

14. The Council has access to an Employee Counseling Service, which provides a non-religious support service based on the principles of person-centred counseling.

15. Cardiff Council provides training for employees to raise awareness of the different religions and beliefs of staff members. Religion and belief is included in the County's Equality Awareness Courses and employees are also encouraged to participate in the Faith and Cultural Diversity Tour.

16. The Council is required to complete equality impact assessments for all policies including its Religion and Belief Policy. These will assess policies, practices or decisions to ensure that they do not impact upon people less favourably because of their religion, belief or non-belief.

17. Cardiff Council asks for details of the religion or belief of its employees to assess the needs of the workforce. However, employees do not have to give this information. The Council undertakes and publishes an annual equality monitoring report using research data from its Employee Survey and its employee database to identify and correct any potential patterns of exclusion or under-representation. Religion and belief is one of the fields that are monitored.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

18. For the purpose of this Policy, religion or other belief is defined as any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief that has a clear belief system or profound belief that affects the way of life or view of the world of the believer. Religion or belief will not include any philosophical or political belief unless the belief is similar to a religious belief. Accordingly strictly political or ideological beliefs (such as for example being an environmentalist or a member of a particular political party) will not fall under the definition.

19. This Policy aims to ensure that when managers and employees deal with other individuals of different religions and beliefs, they respect their freedom within the law to express their beliefs, learn to understand what they actually believe and value, respect religious observance commitments of colleagues, avoid imposing their own views on other people and let them express this in their own terms. However, employees cannot express religious beliefs about individuals if these beliefs are considered a breach of any of the Council's other policies. For example, it would not be acceptable for an employee to express their religious views about LGBT employees if these views are considered to be discriminatory and/or harassment and therefore a violation of the Council's Sexual Orientation Policy.

20. Through its Harassment Policy the Council is committed to providing a caring and supportive working environment, which is free from all forms of harassment, discrimination, bullying and intimidation. Therefore harassment or bullying on the grounds of someone's religion or belief or perceived religion or belief could lead to serious disciplinary action and will be dealt with under the Council's [Harassment Policy and Procedure \(1.CM.109\)](#). Discrimination

by association is also unlawful (e.g. discrimination against an individual on the basis of the religion or belief of a person or persons with whom the individual associates).

21. Employees of the Council may request to take annual paid leave from their leave entitlement or other leave (flexi, time in lieu, unpaid) to participate in their religious celebrations, festivals or ceremonies. The normal procedure for requesting leave should be followed. Unpaid leave may be granted where an employee has already used up their leave entitlement. Such requests will normally be granted unless there is a genuine operational requirement and agreeing to grant annual leave would be a real detriment to other members of staff or to the department or service. Where an employee has good grounds to feel that leave has been refused unreasonably, he or she may raise the matter under the [Grievance Procedure \(1.CM.040\)](#).

22. Employees of the Council may also wish to observe the traditions of their religion and pray at certain times of the day. The Council and individual Service Areas will make reasonable effort to accommodate requests for facilities, such as a quiet room etc, subject to space and other constraints. With prior permission from the line manager, employees will be allowed flexibility during prayer days to pray. e.g. from an hours lunch period, 30 minutes of that lunch period can be divided into three 10 minute slots and taken during the day, or where appropriate, staff may key In and Out of the Flexitime Scheme. Employees should provide appropriate written notice to their respective line managers to request arrangements for prayer time, facilities etc.

23. If employees request extended leave at a particular time for the purposes of going on pilgrimage, the Chief Officer should sympathetically consider such a request and agree the request where it is reasonable and practical for the employee to be away from work and that they have sufficient annual leave in hand. If the extended leave exceeds the annual leave entitlement, the excess days may be approved as unpaid leave, subject to the request being reasonable and practicable.

24. A calendar of religious festivals will be made available to each Chief Officer and HR People Services and will be updated annually. Alternatively a Calendar of Religious Festivals can be accessed via the following website:- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/>

25. Although the Council does not operate a formal dress code it expects its employees to dress appropriately for the work they are doing. However, it is important for employees to wear clothing consistent with their religion or belief. The only limitations to this are that Health and Safety requirements may mean that for certain tasks specific items of clothing need to be worn, or where there is a photographic ID policy. If such clothing produces a conflict with an individual's religion or belief, the issue will be sympathetically considered by the line manager, with the aim of finding a satisfactory compromise.

26. Some religions or beliefs have specific dietary requirements. The Council will endeavour to meet the most common religious dietary requirements in response to the needs of employees, and as a minimum will provide a vegetarian alternative. In providing food for conferences/events etc, again a vegetarian option should be made available. These should be clearly labelled as such and be separate from other food items that contain meat and/or fish. Dependent on the type of event, it may also be appropriate to provide other options and give due respect to those present who may be fasting. There should always be water and soft drinks available for all catered events. Managers will ensure they are aware of these issues when booking venues and catering other than at Council venues.

27. Appendix A gives guidance on some of the most commonly practised religions and beliefs in Britain. They are listed in alphabetical order for ease of reference only. However, there are many more and this list should not be considered to be exhaustive. It should not be assumed that every member of a religious group practices their religion in the same way.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

28. Further advice and support for Managers and employees who require additional information on this policy can be obtained from:

- i. Employees within HR People Services;
- ii. Managers within the Service Area, or the Chief Officer;
- iii. The employee's Service Area or specialist trade union representative;
- iv. By referral to the appropriate external agencies for example:

The Interfaith Network  
5-7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN  
Tel: (020) 7388 0008  
[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
3 Callaghan Square  
Cardiff  
CF10 5BT  
Tel: (029) 2044 7710  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com/wales](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/wales)

Race Equality First  
The Friary Centre  
The Friary  
Cardiff  
CF10 3FA  
Tel: (029) 2022 4097

29. This Policy will be monitored and reviewed in the light of 3 years operational experience, or sooner if the need arises.

## **RELATED POLICIES**

Strategic Equal Opportunities Policy Statement - [1.CM.042-E](#)

Sexual Orientation Policy – [1.CM.127](#)

Harassment Policy & Procedure – [1.CM.109](#)

Grievance Policy & Procedure – [1.CM.040](#)

Discipline Policy & Procedure – [1.CM.035](#)

Equality & Diversity Employee Handbook – [5.C.168](#)

**PHILIP LENZ**

**CORPORATE CHIEF OFFICER (SHARED SERVICES)**

## Appendix A

### INFORMATION ON THE MORE WIDELY FOLLOWED RELIGIOUS AND NON-RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

This information is developed from guidance provided to employers by ACAS in their publication "Putting the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 into Practice".

From information found in the 2001 Census, the major religious beliefs followed in Cardiff are: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Sikhism.

### Agnosticism

It is difficult to find useful statements on Agnosticism because agnostics do not tend to organise themselves into specific groups. William Crawly in his blog on the BBC comments:

"Confidently non-religious people describe themselves as "atheists"; the more tentative prefer the term "agnostic". Still others may describe themselves as "freethinkers". And with each of these terms of identification comes a different type of personality.

"Profiles of the Godless", a new study, has examined both the preferred labels and the personality types that tend to be connected with those labels. The study raises doubts about the "overly simplistic" claim that greater religiosity tends to produce greater personal happiness, and suggests that younger non-religious people are becoming more confident in their secular beliefs.

### Atheism

Atheism is the absence of belief in any Gods or spiritual beings. The word Atheism comes from *a*, meaning without, and *theism* meaning belief in god or gods.

- Atheists don't use God to **explain** the existence of the universe.
- Atheists say that human beings can devise suitable moral codes to live by without the aid of Gods or scriptures.

People are atheist for many **reasons**, among them:

- They find **insufficient evidence** to support any religion.
- They think that religion is **nonsensical**.
- They once had a religion and have lost faith in it.

- They live in a non-religious culture.
- Religion doesn't interest them.
- Religion doesn't seem relevant to their lives.
- Religions seem to have done a lot of **harm** in the world.
- The world is such a bad place that there can't be a God.

Atheists are as moral (or immoral) as religious people.

In practical terms atheists often follow the same moral code as religious people, but they arrive at the decision of what is good or bad without any help from the idea of God.

Atheists find their own answers to the question of what it means to be human. This discussion looks at the question from both theological and ethical viewpoints.

## Baha'i

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 south-easterly 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 regular 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, travelling 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 3 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 principal 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

**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 Krathong 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 eg not wearing leather clothing and leather shoes.

# Christianity

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

## **Festivals:**

Christmas Day December 25th

Ash Wednesday Feb/March (date set by lunar calendar)

This is a day of fasting/abstinence for many Christians.

Maundy Thursday March/April (date set by lunar calendar)

Good Friday March/April (date set by lunar calendar)

Easter Sunday March/April (date set by lunar calendar)

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

## **Festivals:**

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

Makar Sakranti January 14th

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.

## Humanism

Humanism is an approach to life based on reason and our common humanity, recognising that moral values are properly founded on human nature and experience alone. *Robert Ashby*

While atheism is merely the absence of belief, humanism is a positive attitude to the world, centred on human experience, thought, and hopes.

The British Humanist Association and The International Humanist and Ethical Union use similar emblems showing a stylised human figure reaching out to achieve its full potential.

Humanists believe that human experience and rational thinking provide the only source of both knowledge and a moral code to live by.

They reject the idea of knowledge 'revealed' to human beings by gods, or in special books.

Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives.

It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality.

*International Humanist and Ethical Union*

## Humanist Ideas

Most humanists would agree with the ideas below:

- There are no supernatural beings.
- The material universe is the only thing that exists.
- Science provides the only reliable source of knowledge about this universe.
- We only live this life - there is no after-life, and no such thing as reincarnation.
- Human beings can live ethical and fulfilling lives without religious beliefs.
- Human beings derive their moral code from the lessons of history, personal experience, and thought.

## Islam (Muslims)

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 undertake a ritual act of purification. This involves the use of running water to wash hands, face, mouth, nose, arms up to the elbows and feet up to the ankles, although often the washing of the feet will be performed symbolically.

### **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 9th 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 – 3 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 2 months and 10 days after Eid Al-Fitr and is a 3 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 cover their bodies as a symbol of decency but for many this is a matter of individual choice rather than a requirement. Some men may therefore be unwilling to wear shorts. Some women may wish to cover their face and whole body, except their 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, sometimes 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 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 – 8 days semi-fasting twice a year when some take one bland, tasteless meal during day time.

Mahavira Jayanti April – birth anniversary of Lord Mahavira  
Paryusan August/September – during this sacred period of fasting and forgiveness for 8 days Jains fast, observe spiritual rituals, meditate and live a pious life taking only boiled water during day time.  
Samvatsari September – the last day of Paryushan when Jains ask for forgiveness and forgive one another.  
Diwali October/November – death anniversary of Lord Mahavira, includes a 2 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 3-5 days). There is no specified mourning period and normal compassionate leave arrangements will suffice.

## Judaism (Jews)

Observant Jews are required to refrain from work on the Sabbath and Festivals, except where life is at risk. This includes travelling (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.

**Festival Days:**

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). Jews do not eat any product derived from pigs or shellfish. For Orthodox Jews, meat and dairy products cannot be eaten at the same meal or served on the same plate, and kosher and non-kosher foods cannot come into contact with the same plates.

**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 7 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.

**Some examples of Festivals:**

Candlemas 2 February

Spring Equinox \* 21/22 March

Beltane 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 Zoroastrianism)****Rastafarianism****Festivals:**

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Birthday of Haile Selassie 1 July 23rd  
Ethiopian New Year Sept 11th  
Anniversary of the Crowning of Haile Selassie 1 Nov 2nd  
Christmas Dec 25th

**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 Equality Act 2010.

**Bereavement:**

No specific requirements beyond that of normal compassionate leave.

## Sikhism

**Festival Days:**

Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh 5 January  
Vaisakhi 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:**

Practicing 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 are required to pray 5 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  
Fravardigan - Remembrance of departed souls.  
Tiragan – Water Festival  
Mehergan – Harvest Festival  
Ave roj nu Parab – Water Festival  
Adar roj nu Parab – Fire Festival  
Jashn-e-Sadeh – Mid Winter Festival  
Zardosht no Disco – Death of the Prophet  
Maktad - Festival of All Souls  
NoRuz – New Year

In addition there are 6 seasonal festivals

Maidyoizaremaya Mid Spring  
Maidyoishema Mid Summer  
Paitishahya Early Autumn  
Ayathrima Mid Autumn  
Maidhyairya Mid Winter  
Hamaspahmaedaya Pre-Spring

### **Clothes:**

Zoroastrians, both male and female, wear two pieces of sacred clothing. The Sudreh (shirt) and the Kusti (cord) which is a string which passes loosely around the waist three times and is tied in a double knot at the back. It is the Kusti which is ritualistically retied each time the hands are washed.

### **Bereavement:**

Following the death of a close family member there is a mourning period of 10 days followed by a ceremony to mark the 1st month, the 6th month and the 12<sup>th</sup> month of bereavement.

## Appendix B

### DEFINITIONS

- **Religion** In the Equality Act 2010, 'religion' includes any religion or lack of religion, which has a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief.
- **Belief** In the Equality Act 2010, 'belief' means any religious or philosophical belief or lack of belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Humanism is a protected philosophical belief but political beliefs would not be protected.
- **Direct discrimination** Employer treats employees less favourably because of an employee's religion or belief or perceived religion or belief.
- **Associative discrimination** Direct discrimination against someone because of the religion or belief of a person they associate with.
- **Perceptive discrimination** Direct discrimination against an individual because others think they have a particular religion or belief, even if the person is not actually that religion or belief.
- **Indirect discrimination** When there is a condition, rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people because of their actual or perceived religion or belief. Indirect discrimination can only be justified if the employer can show that they acted reasonably and that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Harassment** Unwanted conduct at work or in a work related setting that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Employees are protected from harassment due to their actual or perceived religion or belief or harassment because they associate with someone who is, or is perceived to have, a particular religion or belief. Employees are also protected from harassment if they find behaviour offensive even if it is not directed at them.
- **Third Party Harassment** Employees are protected from third party harassment (for example customers or clients) if harassment occurs on at least two occasions. Employers must take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.
- **Victimisation** When an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act about religious or belief discrimination; or because they are suspected of doing so.