

December



Chiefs Believe! Chiefs Achieve!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 MSCS Tutoring for selected students T & W 2:30-4 PM	2	3	4	5 Basketball vs Snowden @ Snowden Girls 5:30 Pm Boys 6:45 PM	6	7
8 Band T, W, TH 2:30 – 4 PM see Mr. Batts for additional info Orchestra – Mr. White will inform Cheer M, TH 2:30 – 4:15 PM see Coach Gilbert for additional info	9 School Wide Assessments EVERY DAY this week	10 PTO Meeting @ CMS Library 5:00 PM. Please email Ms. Tutton – PTO Liaison – glentuttonad@sck12.org if you have any questions.	11	12 Basketball vs White Station @ Home Girls 5:30 PM boys 6:45 PM	13	14
15 Color Guard W, TH 2:30 – 5 PM see Mrs. Davis- Harris for additional info Girls' Basketball M – TH 2:30-4 PM see Coach Brown for additional info	16 Holiday Glow Up - wear something bright or shiny	17 Music Department Concert 6 PM Holiday Character (ex. Elf, Grinch, Santa) No MSCS tutoring	18 Ugly sweater / shirt No MSCS tutoring	19 Tree Topper – wear a hat or headband	20 <i>Last Day of Quarter 2</i> Pajama Day	21
22 Boys' Basketball M - TH Study Hall 2:30 – 4:15 PM Practice 4:15 -6 PM see Coach Perry for additional info	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1 	2	3	4
5 Check PowerSchool to keep up with your scholars' grades. Call 416-7780 if you need assistance.	6 Scholars return Monday, January 6, 2025					



Cultural Winter Celebrations from Around the World

All throughout history, humans have created festivals and holidays to mark historic events, to gather, and to celebrate their culture or faith. Holidays give us belonging, create frameworks for connection and rich tradition, and help us to come together with shared purpose. You're sure to know about Christmas, but perhaps there are a few on this list of celebrations from around the world that are new to you. Learn and enjoy!

Diwali

Diwali is a five-day religious festival to celebrate the triumph of good over evil, and light over darkness. It's often called the Festival of Lights and is observed primarily in India, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka by those practicing Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism. During the festival, people hang colorful lanterns in their homes and in the streets, exchange gifts, and eat traditional foods.

St. Lucia Day

Also called St. Lucy Day, this Christian feast day is most widely celebrated in Scandinavia and Italy. It commemorates Lucia of Syracuse, an early-4th-century virgin martyr. According to legend, St. Lucy brought food and aid to Christians hiding in the Roman catacombs, wearing a candlelit wreath on her head which lit her way and kept her hands free to carry as much food as possible.

Throughout Europe, many families celebrate with a procession of children dressed in white, carrying candles. Girls usually wear a white dress with a red sash around the waist and a crown of candles. It is traditional to serve a round coffee cake with seven candles placed in a circle called St. Lucia Crown Cake. Adults traditionally drink *glögg*, a type of mulled wine, and everyone enjoys *lussekatts*, breakfast buns flavored with saffron and raisins.

Hanukkah

Hannukkah (or Chanukkah) is a Jewish festival commemorating how against all odds, a small group reclaimed the Holy Temple. As the story goes, when they went to light the Temple's Menorah, they found only a single batch of oil that had escaped contamination. They lit the menorah and the one-day supply of oil miraculously lasted eight days. To commemorate these miracles, this wintertime "festival of lights" lasts eight days and is celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayers, and fried foods including latke (potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (jelly-filled donuts).

Winter Solstice

The Winter solstice marks the official start to winter. It is the moment when the Sun reaches the Tropic of Capricorn and produces our shortest day and longest night (based on hours of sunlight) in the Northern Hemisphere. The Winter Solstice has played an important role in cultures worldwide since ancient times and is traditionally celebrated as a symbol of the changing seasons and the Earth's rebirth.

Christmas

Christmas is celebrated in various countries across the world every year on December 25th and commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, the central figure in the Christian faith. The most popular secular tradition associated with Christmas is Santa Claus, a mythical jolly man who brings gifts on Christmas Eve for children who've been well behaved all year.

At Christmas, people give gifts, decorate Christmas trees, light candles on an Advent wreath, sing Christmas songs and feast with loved ones.

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a seven-day African-American festival, introduced by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966, that celebrates community, family, and culture from December 26th to January 1st. There are seven values and ideals recognized during

Kwanzaa: Unity (*Umoja*), Self-determination (*Kujichagulia*), Collective work and responsibility (*Ujima*), Cooperative economics (*Ujamaa*), Purpose (*Nia*), Creativity (*Kuumba*), Faith (*Imani*)

During Kwanzaa, families light a candle each night. Their special candle holder is called a *kinara* that holds seven candles, three red ones on the left, three green ones on the right, and a black one in the center.

New Year's Day

Most people begin celebrating the new year on New Year's Eve (December 31) and continue the festivities into the early hours of January 1st, the first day of the new year for all who follow the Gregorian calendar. When the clock strikes midnight in each time zone, the New Year is welcomed with fireworks and happy greetings over a period of 24 hours.

Many families gather with their loved ones, host large feasts and fun parties, watch fireworks, and promise to make new resolutions for the upcoming year.

Boxing Day

Typically celebrated on December 26th, Boxing Day became an official holiday in 1871 and is celebrated in the United Kingdom and former British colonies. There are several theories about how it came to be known as Boxing Day, but the most common is that servants frequently had to work on Christmas Day and were given the next day off. Employers would often "box up" gifts and leftover food from their holiday meals for the servants to take home and share with their own families. Another popular belief is that Boxing Day arose from the tradition of people making charitable donations during the Christmas season. Today, it's primarily a time to shop post-holiday sales and watch soccer.

Lunar New Year

Lunar New Year is a celebration observed by a variety of Asian cultures including Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean families. To welcome the New Year, families clean their houses, perform religious rituals to honor household deities, and prepare delicious feasts. Many eat dumplings and long noodles that represent a long life. There is dancing and fireworks, and older and younger family members receive red envelopes with money.

The festivities culminate with the Lantern Festival, on the 15th day of the first month of the lunar calendar. It is also the day when families honor their deceased loved ones and ancestors.

While the list above are more popular, common holidays celebrated by billions of people around the world, here is a short list of lesser-known sacred winter celebrations taken from Dwellworks blog:

- Soyal, celebrated by the Hopi Indians in the Southwest United States, falls on the shortest day of the year. The Hopi people perform a purifying ritual to help the sun return from its winter slumber.
- Dong Zhi is the Chinese Winter Festival that falls around December 22. From sundial observations, the Chinese discovered the winter solstice and knew that after the longest night, the days gradually became longer and lighter. It has been celebrated since the Han Dynasty, which lasted from 202 BC to 220 AD.
- Saturnalia was a pagan public holiday celebrated during ancient Rome's winter harvest. This was a time of "role reversal," where slaves were temporarily freed, and the rich gave to the poor. Some historians think that this holiday was the precursor to the date of modern-day Christmas, which falls on December 25.
- Inti Raymi in Peru occurs around June 21-24, which is the winter solstice in Cusco. It honors the sun god, which is the most important god for the Incas. The festivities include a mass, flag raising, thanks for blessings, rituals, sacrifices, and a procession. This festival is also celebrated in Ecuador and other parts of the Andes.
- Yalda night in Iran (as well as Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan) gathers families together to spend the longest and darkest night of the year together. Poems are read all night and a table of pomegranates, watermelon, nuts, and other treats is reminiscent of the red sunrise that is to come.
- Midwinter in Antarctica is a party for researchers who have reached the midpoint of a season of isolation.

<https://www.nhaschools.com/en/blog/parent-room/g-cultural-winter-celebrations>



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