



# High Holy Day Support Guide for JSocs 2023

Hello wonderful JSoc committee members!

I hope you are excited about the new year ahead and all the wonderful opportunities it holds. This document is to help you plan for and think about the High Holy Day period coming up. If you need any more information or advice, or just want to talk through your plans, please get in touch with the [UJS Sabbatical Officer for your campus](#) or [Dora](#), your Sabbatical Officer for Jewish Engagement and Enrichment.

If you are hosting High Holy Day events on your campus, don't forget to create an event listing through the UJS website. This allows us and you to keep track of who is coming to events, it means you are covered by our insurance should anything go wrong, it means you can access funding from UJS to help cover your events, and it means we can keep track of all the brilliant things Jewish students are doing. UJS also covers all admin fees if you charge for tickets, unlike other ticketing platforms, and over the year this will add up to a lot of saved money. If you aren't sure how to create an event through the UJS website, ask your [Sab](#).

Please let us know about all your fabulous and creative events so we can share ideas with other JSocs too!



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# Contents

**Page 3:** When are the High Holy Days this year?

**Page 5:** What can Jewish students do over the High Holy Days?

**Page 7:** Can we access funding from UJS to help cover our events?

**Page 8:** Are Jewish students exempt from classes on the High Holy Days?

**Page 9:** What other opportunities are available to our members?

**Page 10:** How can we be inclusive over the High Holy Days?

**Page 14:** Thank you



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## When are the High Holy Days this year?

Rosh Hashanah – The Jewish New Year:

(Learn more [here](#))

**Begins** in the evening of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September.

**Ends** in the evening of Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September for some Progressive Jews and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September for all others.

Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement (a fast day):

(Learn more [here](#))

**Begins** in the evening of Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September.

**Ends** in the evening of Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September.

Succot – The Festival of Booths:

(Learn more [here](#))

**Yom Tov begins** in the evening of Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September.

**Yom Tov ends** in the evening of Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September for Progressive Jews and Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October for Orthodox and traditional Jews.

**Chol Hamoed Succot continues until Shmini Atzeret.**

Shmini Atzeret – The Eighth Day of Assembly (Progressive Jews celebrate Simchat Torah on this date):

(Learn more [here](#))

**Begins** in the evening of Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October.

**Ends** in the evening of Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October.

Simchat Torah – Rejoicing of the Torah (Progressive Jews do not observe this date):

(Learn more [here](#))

**Begins** in the evening of Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October.

**Ends** in the evening Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October.

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## Holiday Times

Below is a table of holiday timings. You can find more specific timings for your city [here](#).

	Comes <b>in</b> London	Goes <b>out</b> London	Comes <b>in</b> Leeds	Goes <b>out</b> Leeds	Comes <b>in</b> Edinburgh	Goes <b>out</b> Edinburgh
Rosh Hashanah 1	Fri 18:58	Sat 20:03	Fri 19:05	Sat 20:13	Fri 19:13	Sat 20:24
Rosh Hashanah 2	Sat 20:03	Sun 20:01	Sat 20:13	Sun 20:11	Sat 20:24	Sun 20:22
Yom Kippur	Sun 18:37	Mon 19:42	Sun 18:43	Mon 19:50	Sun 18:49	Mon 20:00
Succot 1	Fri 18:25	Sat 19:30	Fri 18:30	Sat 19:38	Fri 18:36	Sat 19:46
Succot 2	Sat 19:30	Sun 19:28	Sat 19:38	Sun 19:35	Sat 19:46	Sun 19:44
Shemini Atzeret	Fri 18:10	Sat 19:15	Fri 18:13	Sat 19:21	Fri 18:18	Sat 19:28
Simchat Torah	Sat 19:15	Sun 19:12	Sat 19:21	Sun 19:19	Sat 19:28	Sun 19:26



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## What can Jewish students do over the High Holy Days?

Many Jewish students will celebrate the holidays with their families, but plenty will choose to remain on campus. Some students may choose to attend their classes, while others will not. Jewish students will benefit from opportunities to gather with their peers to celebrate these days if they are away from their families.

For **Rosh Hashanah**, you could offer a festive dinner or lunch as a chance for students to gather and enjoy the holiday with their peers. **Apples dipped in honey** or **honey cake** traditionally symbolise a sweet new year, while the many seeds of the **pomegranate** symbolise the many **mitzvot** (commandments). **Round challah** (traditional Jewish bread loaf) traditionally symbolises the cyclical nature of the year. A Lunch and learn activity could be fun too!

On **Yom Kippur**, students may benefit from a place to gather while they fast. Board games, card games, organised walks (nothing too strenuous) or study groups are good activities. You can also organise to break the fast together over a communal meal.



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On **Succot**, if your JSoc has an outdoor space of its own, you could build a **succah** (temporary booth). Alternatively, you could find out where your nearest **succah** is. Contact a local synagogue or your University Jewish Chaplains and ask if they can bring the **arba minim** (four species, or lulav and etrog) for students to shake. Eating and displaying fruit is traditional. Festive meals or lunch and learns are some good ideas. Don't forget, Succot is a week long but only the first and last days are Yom Tov, so you have more activity options.

On **Simchat Torah**, you might host festive meals or lunch and learn events. Students may wish to hear the Torah being read in synagogue and participate in celebrations, so you can signpost them to the local synagogue(s).

For more ideas or advice, get in touch with your Sabbatical Officer.



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## Can we access funding from UJS to help cover our events?

Yes, you can! For events celebrating Jewish festivals, JSocs are entitled to £2 per person who attends, **if you meet the following obligations:**

**Branding** – On ALL J-Soc events which receive UJS funding please include on the publicity/marketing material ‘supported/sponsored by UJS’ together with the UJS logo. This includes term planners and flyers. For a high resolution copy of the UJS logo, please contact your Sabbatical Officer.

**Ticket sales** - Events must be hosted through our website – this means you can be refunded quickly and receive 100% of the ticket sales.

**Reputation** - It is the responsibility of the J-Soc to ensure that events they are running fall within the [UJS values](#).

**Inclusivity** - JSoc is for all Jewish students. Please ensure your event is inclusive and accessible to all.

Find the UJS Expenses form [here](#).



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## Are Jewish students exempt from classes on the High Holy Days?

If students do not wish to attend classes over the holidays, they should contact their personal tutor or lecturer in the first instance. An informal conversation or email should be enough to excuse a Jewish student from their classes during the holidays, and you may have to fill in an absence form. Students will likely be asked to catch up on any missed work. If students encounter any problems being excused from classes, they can contact their [UJS Sabbatical Officer](#) or their [University Jewish Chaplain](#) for further advice and support.



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## What other opportunities are available to our members?

Some students return to their parents' homes over the High Holy Days, but this isn't the case for everyone. Students might benefit from being signposted to Jewish community organisations which can provide holiday services and host meals.

**Liberal Judaism and The Movement for Reform Judaism** have an annual High Holy Day ticket scheme which enables students and young adults to attend services for free at any Liberal or Reform Synagogue of their choice. Complete the form by 9am on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September.

[https://www.ujs.org.uk/high\\_holy\\_days\\_ticket\\_scheme](https://www.ujs.org.uk/high_holy_days_ticket_scheme)

**University Jewish Chaplaincy's** chaplains work with students to support Jewish life on campus. They usually live on or very near university campuses. They are also on hand to offer support during challenging times as students adapt to life at university. Find your Chaplain here:

<https://www.mychaplaincy.co.uk/about-us/rabbinic-chaplaincy-couples/>

**Chabad on Campus** can provide festive meals, study groups and prayer services, as well as advice and support. Find your local Chabad on Campus Shluchim here to find out what events they're offering.

<http://chabadoncampusuk.org/centres>



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## How can we be inclusive during the holidays?

### Students who don't fast

Not every Jewish student will be fasting on Yom Kippur for a variety of reasons, some of which are highly personal. If you notice somebody eating, it's best not to say anything. If that person wishes to talk about it, then they will. It might be a good idea to provide a quiet, discreet space for students to eat if they need to. To learn more about this topic, check out [A Mitzvah to Eat](#), or read their letter to Jewish Communal Leaders [here](#).

### Orthodox and Traditionally Observant Students

Orthodox and other traditionally observant students will typically refrain from using technology, for example their mobile phones, during the holidays. Therefore, you should arrange and publicise activities well in advance so that these students can plan their day beforehand. Avoid taking photos or showing people things on screens.

These students will also refrain from carrying items outside of their homes and using transport on the holidays. As such, please allow students to leave their belongings in the JSoc space if possible. Try to make sure that students don't need to use electronic fobs or key cards to access events.

If they are away from their families, students who aren't using their phones might feel isolated, so try to make sure that there is plenty of opportunity to socialise.



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## Progressive Students

'Progressive' usually refers to students who align with Liberal or Reform denominations, and can refer to people aligned with Masorti Judaism. Progressive Jews pray in mixed gender services, and women play an equal religious role. They also affirm the identity of patrilineal Jews. Where a JSoc is majority traditional or Orthodox, Progressive students may not feel their religious needs are catered to. Be aware that not everyone practises Judaism in the same way and ask Progressive students what they might want or need during the holidays. Ensure that there are plenty of options and a variety of types of events are on offer.

## Student Loneliness

The High Holy Days can be a difficult time to be away from family, especially if it is the first time for them. Some students may have difficult family relationships, which could be especially challenging at this time of year. Again, try to make sure there are plenty of opportunities to meet with peers, so students feel connected and at home.

If a student feels overwhelmed with loneliness during this period, you can signpost them to the UJS [mental health page](#).

In general, try to be kind, inclusive and supportive of all members – you never know how they're feeling.



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## LGBTQ+ Students

LGBTQ+ students are not a monolith, so it's best not to assume that these students need or want the same things. However, here are some things to be mindful of:

As a result of stigma, homophobia and transphobia, LGBTQ+ students are more likely to experience difficult family relationships, mental health difficulties and loneliness. Be sensitive to the fact that this time of year may feel particularly challenging for some LGBTQ+ Jewish students.

LGBTQ+ students who are new on campus might feel unsure or anxious about whether they will be welcome and accepted at your JSoc, so it is important to show them that they are valued and welcome exactly as they are.

While there are LGBTQ+ people in every part of our community, some LGBTQ+ students may not feel comfortable in Orthodox spaces, so try to offer lots of events that can cater to all denominations. Do not assume that everyone will feel comfortable at events hosted by external organisations. Efforts should be made to ensure that students' sexual orientation or gender identity does not prevent them from attending the services that align with their Jewish beliefs and practice.



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### 'First timers'

For some Jewish students, being part of a JSoc will be their first time participating in a Jewish community. It can be easy to use Jewish slang and shorthand words, but this can feel exclusionary to those who aren't 'in the know', so try to explain what you mean when using words in Hebrew or Yiddish. Don't assume that everyone knows the religious rituals and traditions associated with the festivals. If somebody asks a question, try to answer clearly and kindly, even if the answer seems obvious to you. Make sure first timers are warmly and explicitly invited to all events.

### Disabled and Neurodivergent Students

Disability should never be a barrier for Jewish students to access their JSoc. Be considerate of access needs, for example by hosting events in wheelchair accessible spaces. Please ensure you have filled out the [UJS Event Accessibility Checklist](#), so that students can check if their access needs will be met. Also use it for ideas about how to make your JSoc more accessible. Remember that disabilities are not always visible, and can include physical disability, developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, chronic illnesses and others.



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## Thank you...

Thank you to all of the wonderful committee members who keep Jewish life on campus vibrant, welcoming and inclusive. If you need any help or advice, please do not hesitate to reach out to [your Sabbatical Officer](#), or [Dora](#), the Sabbatical Officer for Jewish Engagement and Enrichment.

Chag sameach!



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