

# DIWALI



## ED&I FACT SHEET: 07

Diwali is one of the most cherished and widely celebrated festivals in India, observed by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhists, each with their own interpretations and historical significance.

**The word Diwali means 'rows of lighted lamps' and is commonly known as the 'festival of lights' because houses, shops and public places are decorated with small oil lamps called 'diyas'.**



### When is Diwali?

Diwali always falls some time between October and November, but the exact date varies each year as the Hindu calendar is based on the Moon. **In 2025, Diwali falls on Monday 20th October.**

### What is the message of Diwali?

Despite varied traditions, Diwali holds a unifying message: light conquers darkness, truth overcomes lies, and good always prevails over evil. It is both a spiritual and social celebration, bringing families and communities together to honour these values.

Homes and temples are illuminated, prayers are offered, and people take time to reflect. At its heart, Diwali is a time to invite peace, prosperity, and positive energy into our lives, making it one of the most meaningful and uplifting times of the year.



### What happens during Diwali?

Because it's marked by a diverse range of people with their own faith traditions and cultural backgrounds, people celebrate the holiday in their own individual ways. In general, it's a time for family, performing acts of dana (charitable giving) and seva (selfless service), deep cleaning and decorating the home, performing religious ceremonies, stringing up lights and reflecting on core values.

# DIWALI

## ED&I FACT SHEET: 07



The festivities can span five days, each holding its own significance:

1

### Dhanteras

A day dedicated to the goddess Lakshmi, often marked by cleaning, decorating, and shopping for gold and silver, utensils, and festive items.

2

### Chhoti Diwali

The second day, also known as 'small Diwali' is a celebration of Krishna's victory over evil. It is often spent preparing for the largest celebration, which takes place on the third day. Prayers are offered for the souls of departed ancestors and the lighting of clay lamps called diyas.

3

### Diwali (Lakshmi Puja)

The third and most recognised of the five days of Diwali involves dressing in new clothes, visiting a temple to perform pujas, or worship service, lighting diyas and other lights around the house and enjoying fireworks displays. It's a time for gathering with loved ones, feasting and playing games of chance, especially card games. **The start of the day is dedicated to the God Ganesha;** the god of wisdom, new beginnings and removing obstacles, followed by the day's main worship of the Goddess Lakshmi; the goddess of wealth and prosperity. It is understood that Ganesha clears the way for success and blessings, and Lakshmi brings wealth, prosperity and blessings into the home.

4

### Govardhan Puja

The fourth day of Diwali marks the first day of the New Year for many parts of India, so it's also a time to feel thankful for the past year, look ahead to the next and exchange small gifts with loved ones. Some people perform pujas for a prosperous new year. This day can also be dedicated to the relationship between married partners, to recognize the love between Rama and Sita.

5

### Bhai Dooj

The fifth and final day of Diwali celebrates the bond between siblings, so family members will often visit one another on this day and share a meal together.

## How do I learn more?

We have a list of frequently asked questions and wider resources available for staff to learn more about Diwali, other religious festivals and EDI topics on the Equality Diversity & Inclusion page of SASP's Intranet.