**Ramadan guidance**

**Ramadan guidance**

Ramadan is the Holy month for Muslims and commemorates their belief that it was in this month that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) received the first revelation of the Holy Qur'an. As such, it is hugely important in the lives of Muslim pupils, families and staff, and schools should, to the best of their ability, consider their arrangements to accommodate the needs of those fasting.

**Eid-ul-Fitr and time off school**

Eid-ul-Fitr is one of the two most important festivals in Islam. It marks the end of a month of fasting and most parents will want to celebrate with their families and communities.

**Background**

In this month Muslims will not eat or drink between the hours of dawn and dusk; the purpose is also to develop spiritual and moral discipline. This means they will rise before dawn to eat breakfast and pray and in addition, in the evening Muslim families will meet together, often in a mosque as a community, to observe special Ramadan prayers, recite long portions of the Qur'an and, after sunset, break the fast.
Timings of fasting and prayers will vary according to the time of year.

**Who performs fasting?**

It is obligatory on all Muslims who have reached puberty to observe the fast. Many younger children are gradually introduced to fasting by performing it for half days or occasional days. Practice will vary across families, though usually this does not happen before the age of 7.

If you have concerns about a young child fasting, speak with the parents about not fasting for children under seven or possibly eight years old during school days.

Those who are ill, travelling, women who are menstruating and in developed stages of pregnancy do not have to fast but will catch up days missed later in the year or provide food for the needy. Families will make their own decision on such issues affecting their children.

**Public Examinations**

If GCSE and A Level examinations fall during the month of Ramadan, secondary schools will need to anticipate and plan in advance in order to offer students and their families support.

KS2 SATs for Year 6 children can also fall during Ramadan. We would advise schools to encourage parents to wait until SATs are over before their children fast. In cases where puberty has been reached we would suggest working with parents to support the child, in consultation with the Imam if possible, ideally to encourage them to wait.

Some parents may want their children to refrain from fasting during the examination period, or on days when they have exams, whilst others may feel they need to follow the requirements of their faith and fast all through Ramadan. We advise that schools discuss this with parents, recognising that this is a personal decision of the student and family and respecting the final outcome.

**How can schools support fasting students during exams?**

Offer guidance on avoiding dehydration, eating nutritious food, taking appropriate rest periods, organising revision sessions etc. during the run-up to Ramadan and exercising flexibility where possible.

Provide a quiet room during break times where students are able to pray, rest or revise between examinations.

Work with parents to offer advice to students on how to use their time sensibly for rest and revision, especially early in the morning and waiting to break the fast at night.

**What can schools do to support their Muslim pupils during Ramadan?**

Parents have a responsibility to tell the school if their child is fasting, not least to ensure that school and home can work together to support the child and keep them safe. There is no need to separate pupils from activities, but usual practice may be adapted. Pupils should still do PE, but schools can ensure that they do not overexert themselves.

Write to parents early, explaining the school's approach to Ramadan and what you will be doing and that you recognise the importance of Ramadan for Muslims, wishing them Ramadan Mubarak! (a blessed Ramadan)