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Ramadan Guide for Schools



1445
2024



Lewisham
Islamic Centre



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Introduction

This simple guide for schools during the month of Ramadan has been produced by Lewisham Islamic Centre in collaboration with Lewisham SACRE in order for schools to recognise and build upon the essence of Ramadan without compromising the normality of everyday school life. Lewisham SACRE plays a pivotal role in promoting the understanding of different faiths in schools by monitoring the content of Religious Education and its delivery. This guide has already been circulated in schools to enable teachers to utilise this opportunity in teaching pupils about Ramadan and inviting guest speakers to shed light on the subject, in a bid to foster diversity and inclusion.

This year, Ramadan is scheduled to run between March 10th to April 9th. There is a term break during Ramadan to aid students with the days of fasting. Ramadan will continue to move towards the winter periods which will ease the potential strains of fasting during the summer.

Muslims cannot be specific in advance regarding the date of Eid ul Fitr – the Islamic holiday that marks the end of Ramadan – as it is dependent on a visual moon sighting. It is advised that schools follow their own policies on holidays for religious and cultural needs, and at the same time consider those parents/carers who request further days. Lewisham Islamic Centre provides an update on www.lewishamislamiccentre.com as soon as confirmation has been received.



The Month of Ramadan

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا
كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"OH, YOU WHO BELIEVE! FASTING WAS PRESCRIBED FOR YOU AS IT WAS PRESCRIBED FOR THOSE BEFORE YOU, THAT YOU MAY BECOME RIGHTEOUS."

QURAN 2:183

Fasting in the month of Ramadan, the month of revelation of the Holy Qur'an, is an obligation for all Muslims past the age of puberty. There are exemptions from these requirements for some people, such as the sick, those engaging in a long journey, menstruating women, or those who are frail in old age. Exemptions have to be made up later or compensated for, e.g. by fasting on another day or by feeding the poor. Fasting at other times is also encouraged but is non-obligatory.

Fasting is undertaken by Muslims for the sake of Allah, the Creator, the Merciful, the Loving (to mention just three of His names or attributes) and is an important pillar in Islam. It cultivates virtues such as piety, love of God, unity, vigilance, devotion, patience, unselfishness, moderation, thriftiness and satisfaction with what one has, discipline, social belonging, self-control, and compassion for fellow human beings who might suffer hunger and deprivation unwillingly.

Fasting in Islam is not only about denial of food and drink. Muslims believe they should also try to restrain their other senses, such as the eye, ears, and particularly the tongue, avoiding backbiting, scandal-mongering, obscenity, confrontation and other such matters.

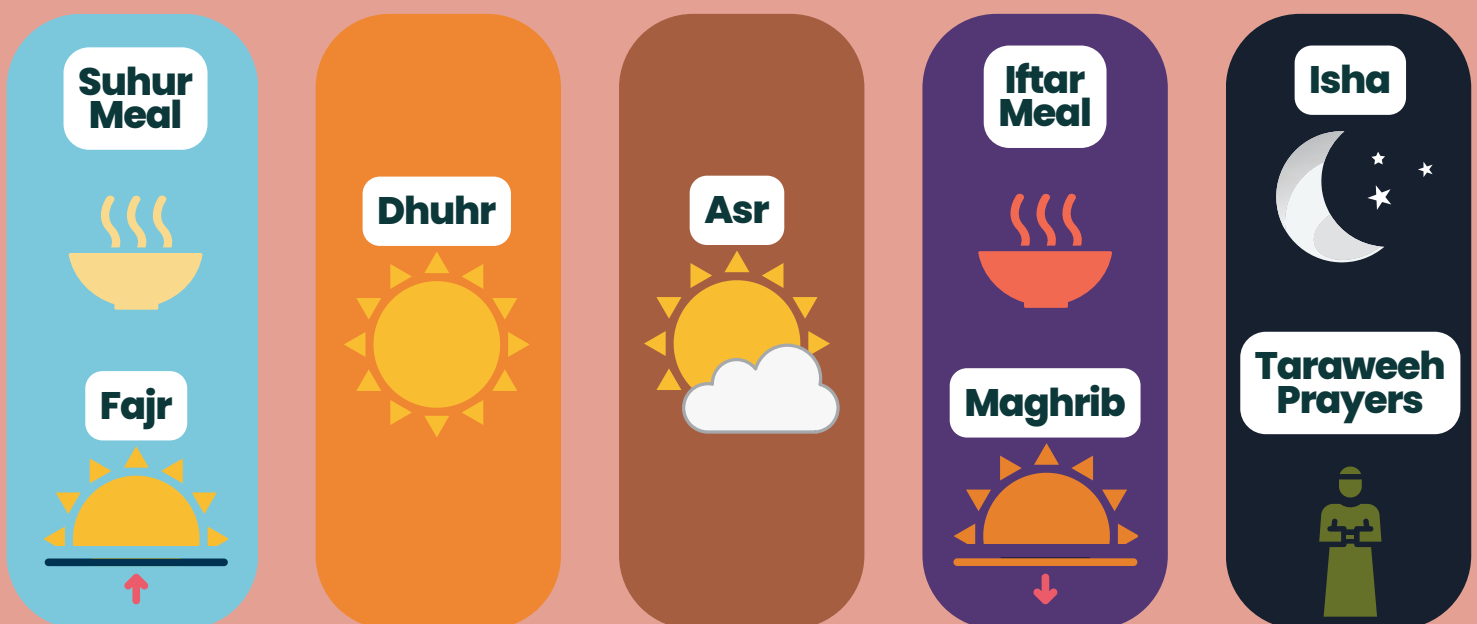


The Month of Ramadan

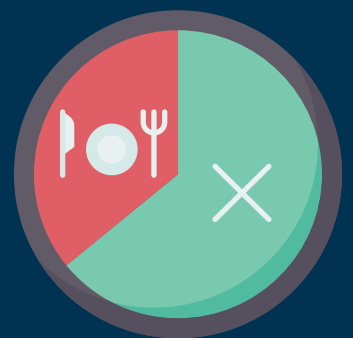
Fasting during Ramadan is one of the main requirements of the Islamic faith. Muslims are required to abstain from all food, drink (and sexual activity where appropriate), from dawn to nightfall through the 30 or 29 days between one new moon and the next. The daily fast begins before the time of the Fajr (dawn) prayer and finishes at the time of Maghrib (sunset) prayer.

It is very important for many Muslim families that their children should begin participating in the practice of fasting at an early age. Most children of secondary school age, as they are considered to be adult members of their communities, will be expected to fast. Many primary school children will be fasting as well with younger pupils fasting possibly for part of Ramadan, or only on certain days of each week.

Teachers therefore will appreciate that the routine of Muslim families is entirely different during Ramadan. Depending on the time of year, the whole household will be awake much earlier in the morning and will stay up later at night. Young children may well become more tired or excitable during school time even if they are not fasting themselves. Those students who are fasting may become very tired and thirsty during the school day.



Primary School Pupils



Fasting in the month of Ramadan, the month of revelation of the Holy Qur'an, is an obligation for all Muslims past the age of puberty. There are exemptions from these requirements for some people, such as the sick, those engaging in a long journey, menstruating women, or those who are frail in old age. Exemptions have to be made up later or compensated for, e.g. by fasting on another day or by feeding the poor. Fasting at other times is also encouraged but is non-obligatory.

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Primary School Pupils

Schools should not encourage these children to break their fast early unless it is for health and safety reasons. Breaking the fast before the correct time may be regarded as being worse than not fasting at all by some young pupils and their parents. The overriding consideration should be that the children do not feel disadvantaged in school activities because of their religious observance.

On the other hand, if a fasting child exhibits health concerns, the school has an overriding safeguarding duty of taking action to enable the child to have the best outcome, as governed by DfES's statutory guidance. Schools are encouraged to have a closer and more direct link with parents so that they can express their concerns as they arise and share responsibility of choices. New and supply staff may need to be made aware of the importance of Ramadan and the school's responsibilities.



Secondary School Pupils

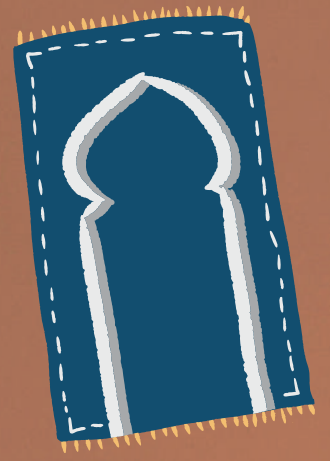
As this year's GCSE/A Level examinations falls during the month of Ramadhan, secondary schools may need to anticipate in advance in order to prepare the pupils in achieving their best. Fasting is obligatory for Muslim pupils in secondary school and the only dispensation are those who are ill or girls who may be menstruating. Families will normally make their own decision on such issues affecting their children. Schools would normally acknowledge the moral and spiritual values associated with fasting and the positive benefits that this has on their students. However, having to take examinations on top of long hours of fasting over the summer period will be a challenge for students.

A sensitive approach may be required while asking Secondary school pupils whether they are fasting or not as it may be embarrassing especially for female pupils on their periods. Schools may however need to know which pupils are fasting or not through liaising with parents and carers in order to offer guidance on the best way to avoid dehydration, eating nutritious food, getting appropriate rest periods, organising revision sessions etc.

Since fasting pupils have plenty of spare time during lunch break, schools can support Muslim students by providing a quiet room during break times where they can pray, rest or revise between examinations. In addition, fasting pupils can also utilise the long gap between when school terminates and Iftar (breaking of the fast), by having a good rest and balancing it with revision periods.



Prayers in Ramadan



Ramadan is a time when Muslims try to spend more time in prayer and religious contemplation. Muslims offer extra prayers every night called Taraweeh. Many Muslims, including children, will stay up very late saying prayers and reading the Qur'an; schools liaising with parents to reduce the impact on their children's academic performance in the day would be encouraged.

Schools are also requested to set aside a place acceptable for prayer, for mid-afternoon "Dhuhr" prayers (during lunch break). This prayer changes its time to reflect different seasons. In winter time this is likely to be between 12.00pm – 1.00pm, whilst in summer it is likely to be between 1.00 pm – 2.00 pm. Where possible, washing facilities should be available for pupils getting ready for their prayers. Preparation for prayer – ablution – includes washing the visible parts of the body like the face, hands and feet.

Schools should be sympathetic to pupils' desire to offer prayers at prescribed times. This opportunity for offering prayers during school time should be available throughout the year. As it is also customary for more pupils to offer their prayers in school during Ramadan, Schools might also consider the provision of a larger room for prayers or contacting their local Mosque to arrange for an Imam to lead Friday prayers.

ESSENTIAL TIMES OF PRAYER

1 – Fajr

After first light and before sunrise.

2 – Dhuhr

Between the sun reaching its zenith and mid-afternoon

3 – Asr

Between mid-afternoon and sunset

4 – Maghrib

After the full setting of the sun

5 – Isha

In the dark of the night



Ramadan Timetable

DATE	Fajr		SUN RISE	Dhuhr		Asr		Maghrib		Isha	
	START SUHUR	JAMAT		START JAMAT	JAMAT	START JAMAT	JAMAT	START IFTAR	JAMAT	START JAMAT	JAMAT
Sun 10th Mar	4:45	5:00	6:22	12:16	12:45	3:16	3:45	6:00	6:15	7:22	8:00
Mon 11th Mar	4:43	5:00	6:20	12:15	12:45	3:17	3:45	6:02	6:17	7:24	8:00
Tue 12th Mar	4:40	5:00	6:17	12:15	12:45	3:18	3:45	6:04	6:19	7:26	8:00
Wed 13th Mar	4:38	5:00	6:15	12:15	12:45	3:19	3:45	6:05	6:20	7:26	8:00
Thu 14th Mar	4:36	5:00	6:13	12:15	12:45	3:20	3:45	6:07	6:22	7:28	8:00
Fri 15th Mar	4:34	5:00	6:11	12:14	12:45	3:21	3:45	6:09	6:24	7:30	8:00
Sat 16th Mar	4:31	5:00	6:08	12:14	12:45	3:22	3:45	6:11	6:26	7:32	8:00
Sun 17th Mar	4:29	4:45	6:06	12:14	12:45	3:23	4:00	6:12	6:27	7:32	8:00
Mon 18th Mar	4:27	4:45	6:04	12:13	12:45	3:24	4:00	6:14	6:29	7:34	8:00
Tue 19th Mar	4:25	4:45	6:02	12:13	12:45	3:25	4:00	6:16	6:31	7:36	8:00
Wed 20th Mar	4:23	4:45	5:59	12:13	12:45	3:26	4:00	6:17	6:32	7:37	8:00
Thu 21st Mar	4:21	4:45	5:57	12:13	12:45	3:27	4:00	6:19	6:34	7:38	8:00
Fri 22nd Mar	4:20	4:45	5:55	12:12	12:45	3:29	4:00	6:21	6:36	7:40	8:00
Sat 23rd Mar	4:17	4:45	5:52	12:12	12:45	3:29	4:00	6:22	6:37	7:41	8:00
Sun 24th Mar	4:15	4:30	5:50	12:12	12:45	3:30	4:00	6:24	6:39	7:43	8:00
Mon 25th Mar	4:13	4:30	5:48	12:11	12:45	3:31	4:00	6:26	6:41	7:44	8:00
Tue 26th Mar	4:12	4:30	5:46	12:11	12:45	3:32	4:00	6:27	6:42	7:45	8:00
Wed 27th Mar	4:09	4:30	5:43	12:11	12:45	3:33	4:00	6:29	6:44	7:47	8:00
Thu 28th Mar	4:08	4:30	5:41	12:10	12:45	3:34	4:00	6:31	6:46	7:49	8:00
Fri 29th Mar	4:06	4:30	5:39	12:10	12:45	3:35	4:00	6:33	6:48	7:50	8:00
Sat 30th Mar	4:04	4:30	5:37	12:10	12:45	3:36	4:00	6:34	6:49	7:51	8:00
Sun 31st Mar	5:02	5:10	6:34	1:10	1:30	4:37	5:00	7:36	7:51	8:53	9:15
Mon 1st Apr	5:00	5:10	6:32	1:09	1:30	4:38	5:00	7:38	7:53	8:55	9:15
Tue 2nd Apr	4:58	5:10	6:30	1:09	1:30	4:39	5:00	7:39	7:54	8:56	9:15
Wed 3rd Apr	4:55	5:10	6:27	1:09	1:30	4:40	5:00	7:41	7:59	8:57	9:15
Thu 4th Apr	4:53	5:10	6:25	1:08	1:30	4:41	5:00	7:43	7:58	8:59	9:15
Fri 5th Apr	4:51	5:10	6:23	1:08	1:30	4:41	5:00	7:44	7:59	9:00	9:15
Sat 6th Apr	4:49	5:10	6:21	1:08	1:30	4:42	5:00	7:46	8:01	9:02	9:15
Sun 7th Apr	4:47	5:00	6:19	1:08	1:30	4:43	5:15	7:48	8:03	9:04	9:30
Mon 8th Apr	4:44	5:00	6:16	1:07	1:30	4:44	5:15	7:49	8:04	9:05	9:30
Tue 9th Apr	4:42	5:00	6:14	1:07	1:30	4:45	5:15	7:51	8:06	9:06	9:30

EASTER BREAK STARTS

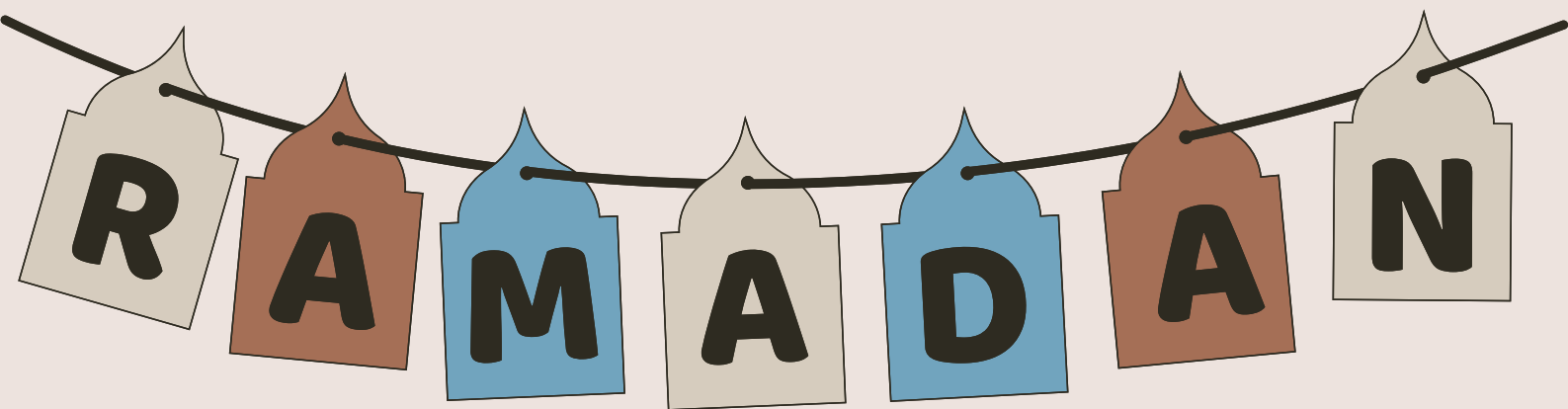
CLOCKS GO 1 HOUR FORWARD



Celebrating Ramadan

Muslims approach Ramadan with enthusiasm and it is customary for Muslims to congratulate one another on its arrival. Schools can value and build on this spirit by having themes based on Ramadan at collective worship or assemblies, and by organising communal 'Iftar' when pupils, parents, community members and teachers – both Muslims and non-Muslims – join in ending of the fast and eating together. As communal iftar in summer is not possible due to the long hours of fasting, schools may instead enter the charitable spirit of Ramadan by raising funds for the poor and the needy.

Because fasting is an Islamic obligation, teachers can take this opportunity to be more inclusive by teaching the pupils about Ramadan and inviting guest speakers from the Muslim community to explain the subject – Lewisham Islamic Centre would be happy to be a liaison. This will help in promoting diversity as well as enable Muslim pupils to feel more comfortable within the school environment. Schools may consider incorporating Ramadan into the Religious Education Programme, encouraging teachers to utilise opportunities across the curriculum to develop knowledge and understanding of the basic tenets of Islam.



Physical Education

Because breaking the fast before the correct time may be regarded as being worse than not fasting at all by some young pupils and their parents. Schools should not encourage these children to break their fast early unless it is for health and safety reasons. The overriding consideration should be that the children do not feel disadvantaged in school activities because of their religious observance.

On the other hand, if a fasting child exhibits health concerns, the school has an overriding safeguarding duty of taking action to enable the child to have the best outcome, as governed by DfES's statutory guidance. Schools are encouraged to have a closer and more direct link with parents so that they can express their concerns as they arise and share responsibility of choices. New and supply staff may need to be made aware of the importance of Ramadan and the school's responsibilities.

Schools with a significant number of Muslim pupils should try to avoid scheduling swimming lessons during Ramadan to remove unnecessary barriers to full participation. Pupils who are fasting are usually physically able to take part in most activities during Ramadan without putting themselves at risk. Although participation in swimming is an acceptable activity whilst fasting, the potential for swallowing water may be an issue. Some pupils or parents consider the risk too great and may wish to avoid swimming whilst fasting. Schools should not ask fasting pupils to do anything which might be construed by them or their parents as breaking the fast.



Medication

No oral medication can be taken by a person who is fasting. Anyone needing regular medication (e.g. insulin) during fasting hours is normally exempt from fasting, in any case. Medication can be taken once the fast has ended. Medical injections can be taken by a person who is fasting and their fast will still be valid. However, injections that influence the body's nutrition will nulify a person's fasting. Guidance should be sought from local Muslim organisations on specific issues if necessary.

During emergencies, where a child's wellbeing is at risk, medicine should be administered. Routine vaccinations should be scheduled, if possible, for other times of the year.



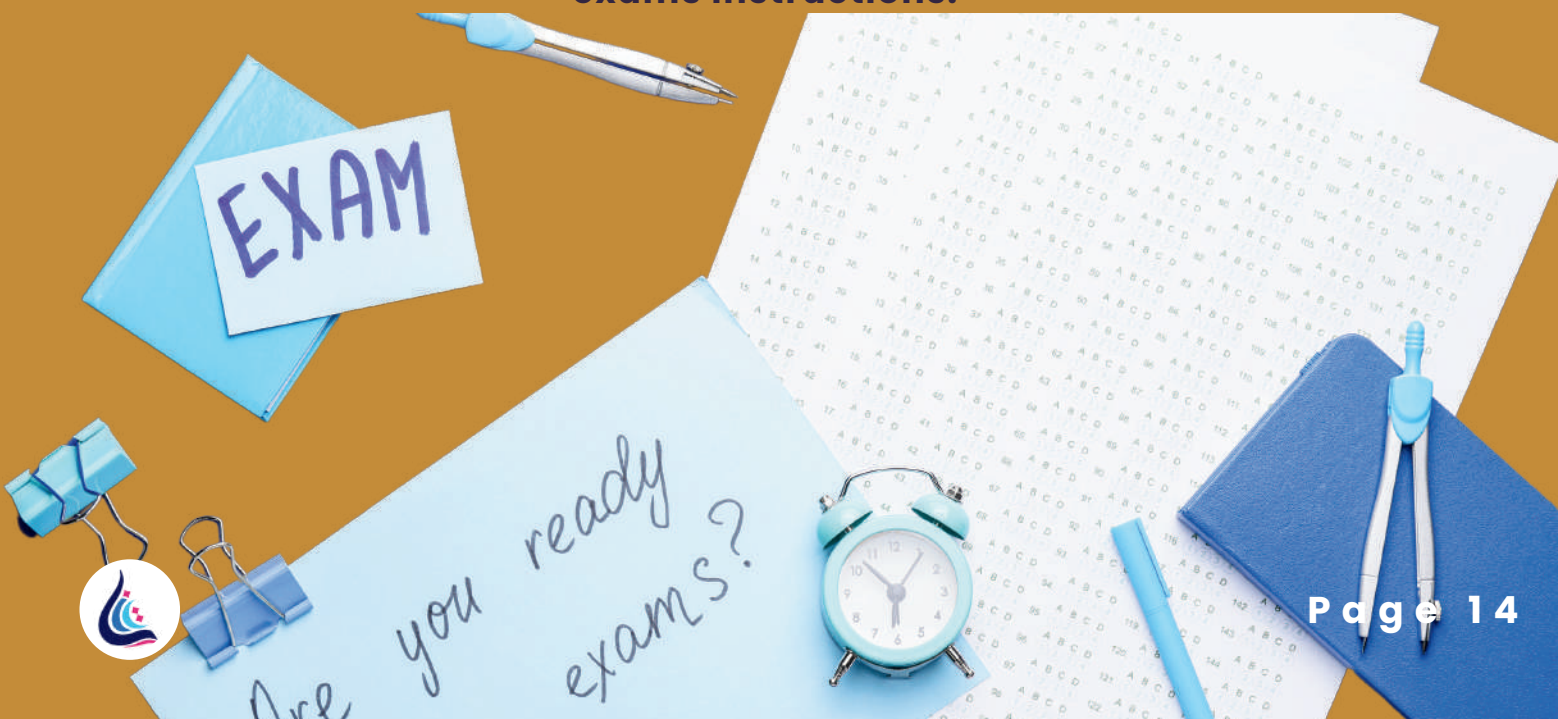
Exams in Ramadan



It is inevitable that certain statutory and internal examinations may occur during Ramadan. Considering that Ramadan is set by Lunar calendar, its date changes by 11 days every year over the solar Gregorian calendar. This year, Ramadan will occur somewhere roughly between the 10th of March and the 9th of April. It is suggested that schools take into account these future dates of Ramadan when preparing their annual Diary of Events.

Schools should give appropriate consideration when scheduling internal exams because the combination of preparing exams and fasting may prove challenging for some pupils. Good examination room management during hot weather will enable the exam invigilators to be vigilant of all students and not only those who are fasting.

In the event that the school notices any indications of dehydration or fatigue in a child during statutory exams, the child should be asked if they are fasting and advised to drink water immediately. The child should be reassured that in their current situation, they are allowed to break their fast and make it up later. Schools may need to notify the pupils of this allowance during exams briefing or incorporate it into their exams instructions.



Parents' Evening



In general, Muslims are encouraged not to use Ramadan as an opportunity to avoid aspects of normal life but rather to cope with normal life under a different set of guidelines and conditions. However, during Ramadan, the evenings can be a very busy period for Muslim families, particularly if Iftar occurs in the early hours of the evening.

All schools should work to ensure effective communication with parents and understand and respect the needs of the communities they serve. Furthermore, some parents may spend their time observing the special evening prayers called Taraweeh at the mosque or at home. This may make it difficult for them to attend meetings or other functions in the evening during the month of Ramadan.

Schools can enhance their understanding of Ramadan by engaging in active dialogue with the local Muslim community and Mosques, by sharing information and seeking to ensure that school practices are consistent with parental wishes and religious beliefs. If they organise parents' meetings to talk through the issues and share ideas, schools will be more likely to have the support of all parents for their particular policies in this area. The scheduling of parent evenings before or after the month of Ramadan would be appreciated by parents and is likely to ensure better attendance.



Detentions & After School Activities

When Ramadan falls during the winter months, after-school detention or activities for a pupil who is fasting could mean that the pupil is not able to reach home in time to break their fast. Whilst accepting full responsibility for breaching school rules, schools should be aware that pupils should be able to carry out their religious duty of breaking the fast on time.

Although a drink or anything to eat provided by the school is sufficient, some parents may request that their children break the fast at home with their family. The need for pupils to be at home before sunset might also have implications for the school's behaviour management practice, e.g. after-school detentions. Schools may wish to consider alternative sanctions during this period, including the use of lunchtime detentions.

Schools need to know Muslim pupils may be unable to participate in extra-curricular activities during Ramadan because parents will want them home in time to break their Fast. Thus, it may be possible, for example, for sports practice sessions to be held before school starts or at lunchtimes.



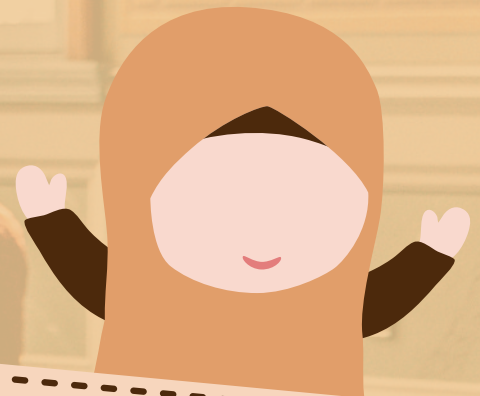
Religious Holidays



The month of Ramadan culminates with the festival of Eid ul-Fitr, which takes place either 9th or 10th April after the beginning of the Islamic month. Muslims cannot be specific with the date beforehand as it is dependent on a visual moon sighting. Lewisham Islamic Centre customarily provides an update on www.lewishamislamiccentre.com as soon as confirmation has been received. It is advised that schools follow their own policies on holidays for religious and cultural needs, and at the same time consider those parents/carers who request further days.



**When is
Eid-ul Fitr?**



***I don't
know, but
I can't wait!***



Good Practice Guidelines



A written policy in place on the requirements and implications of Ramadan for Muslim pupils



Staff awareness and availability of training regarding factors affecting pupils during Ramadan



Acknowledgment, Celebration and educate the students about the values of Ramadan through assembly themes and communal breaking of the fast



The provision of prayer facilities during the month of Ramadan and beyond



Adequate supervision of fasting children, during the lunch hour and strong cohesion between the school and parents



Good Practice Guidelines



The school tries to avoid scheduling Sex and Relationship Education and activities such as swimming during Ramadan



The school ensures fasting children do not engage in strenuous exercises to prevent dehydration



If possible, the school avoids holding parents' meetings in the evening during the month of Ramadan



Schools follow their guidance on holidays for religious and cultural needs



The school takes into consideration the month of Ramadan and hence avoid scheduling internal examinations during this month





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Website

lewishamislamiccentre.com



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UK Charity Number - 1187279



Visit

363 - 365 Lewisham High Street,
London, SE13 6NZ

