



Supporting Muslim staff and pupils during Ramadan

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Owner: Inclusion Leader

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Reviewed by: SLT

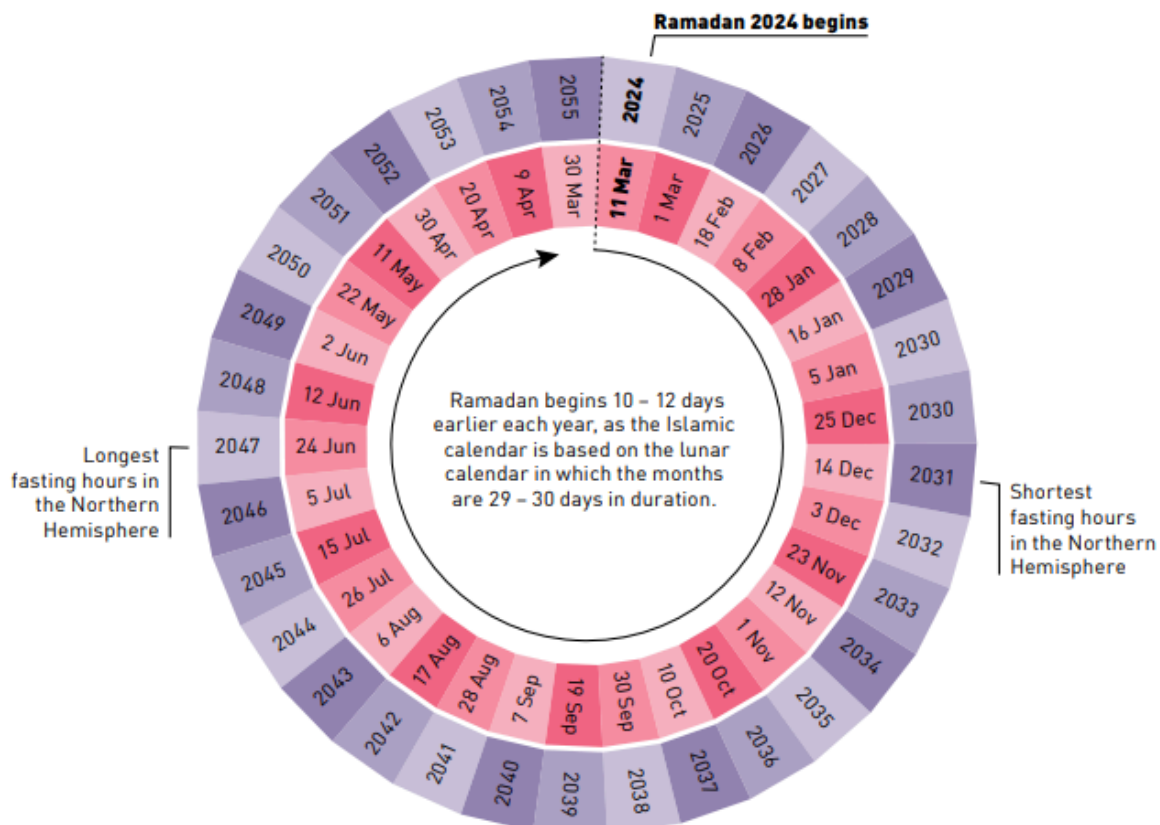
This policy is informed by [Ramadan: A Simple Guide for Schools](#) published by the Islamic Society of Britain

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic (lunar) calendar; Muslims believe this was the month during which the Qur'an was first revealed.
- 1.2. Owing to the lunar calendar, Ramadan falls approximately 11 days earlier each year, and will therefore occur at different times and during different seasons.
- 1.3. Ramadan commences when a small sliver of the moon, known in astronomical terms as the 'waxing crescent,' emerges and becomes visible. 'Ramadan Mubarak' is how to wish someone a 'Happy Ramadan' when it begins.
- 1.4. The end of Ramadan is marked with the festival **Eid ul Fitr**. Muslims cannot be specific in advance regarding the date of Eid ul Fitr as it is dependent on the visual sighting of a new moon. 'Eid Mubarak!' is how to wish someone a 'Happy Eid!'

The 33-year Ramadan Cycle beginning 2024

It takes 33 years—or the lunar month of Raman—to circle through the solar year.



2. School attendance during Ramadan

- 2.1. Staff and pupils are expected to attend school as usual during Ramadan.
- 2.2. Muslim staff and pupils are permitted a day of authorised absence for religious observance for Eid ul Fitr. Parents should inform the school office of the absence by telephone or email as soon as they are aware of the date.
- 2.3. If pupils are unable to attend their usual before or after school activities during Ramadan, the place will be held for them.
- 2.4. If staff are unable to fulfil any after school responsibilities during Ramadan, they should discuss this with the headteacher in advance so that alternative arrangements can be made.

3. Fasting during Ramadan

- 3.1. Muslims are required to fast during Ramadan once they reach the age of puberty. There are some exemptions from fasting which include:
 - 3.1.1. menstruating girls & women;
 - 3.1.2. those for whom fasting has a detrimental effect on their overall well-being;
 - 3.1.3. those who depend on medication or nourishment for survival;
 - 3.1.4. a traveller facing serious hardship due to fasting.
- 3.2. It is a common practice for Muslim children to begin fasting before they attain puberty, to become progressively accustomed to the act.
 - 3.2.1. Whether a pupil decides to fast or not is a matter to be decided between the parent and the child.
 - 3.2.2. For younger children, whose stamina and concentration levels are most affected, the school encourages half-day fasting (until break or lunch time) or to avoid fasting during school days.
 - 3.2.3. Parents / carers should speak to the school if their child is practising any form of fasting, so that we can discuss how best to support the child in school.
- 3.3. **The physical element of fasting** involves completely abstaining from drinking, eating, smoking and sexual activity, from dawn to sunset, for the whole month. In addition:
 - 3.3.1. No oral medication can be taken by a person who is fasting, however the **Islamic Society of Britain** advises that *during emergencies, where a child's wellbeing is at risk, medicine should be administered.*
 - 3.3.2. Some families may object to swimming in case of the accidental swallowing of water.
- 3.4. **The spiritual and moral element of fasting** involves God-consciousness, exercising self-control, having empathy towards the poor, having appropriate dealings with others, giving charity and observing additional worship.
- 3.5. 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.
 - 3.5.1. We will make every effort to contact parents and discuss any concerns before taking action.
 - 3.5.2. We will support and encourage children who are fasting, however we will not withhold food or water if a child asks for it.

- 3.5.3. Any missed fasting days can be atoned by fasting at a later date, or feeding the poor if one is unable to fast. Children can be reassured of this if it is necessary to break their fast before the correct time.
- 3.6. Staff must be made aware of children who are fasting, so that their welfare can be monitored closely. Staff should be aware of the effects of fasting - especially in hot summer months - which could include:
 - 3.6.1. Loss of concentration;
 - 3.6.2. Increased irritability, especially towards the end of the day;
 - 3.6.3. Tiredness (children may be staying up later to pray or waking to eat / drink in the night);
 - 3.6.4. Dehydration and headaches.
- 3.7. Staff are asked and expected to be considerate of colleagues who are fasting.
- 3.8. During Ramadan, staff should give consideration to the activities children are asked to do and make adjustments if appropriate, for example:
 - 3.8.1. Reducing expectations for physical exertion in PE or otherwise;
 - 3.8.2. Avoiding prolonged periods in hot sun which may increase the risk of dehydration;
 - 3.8.3. Ensuring key learning or challenging content is taught at the start of the day;
 - 3.8.4. Encouraging children to rest during break and lunchtimes.
- 3.9. Sex education will not be scheduled during Ramadan and will be rearranged if necessary.

4. Prayer during Ramadan

- 4.1. Muslims are required to pray 5 times a day:
 - 4.1.1. After first light and before sunrise. (Fajr)
 - 4.1.2. *Between the sun reaching its zenith and mid-afternoon (Dhuhr)*
 - 4.1.3. Between mid-afternoon and sunset (Asr)
 - 4.1.4. After the full setting of the sun (Maghrib)
 - 4.1.5. In the dark of the night (Isha)
- 4.2. **Dhuhr prayers** will need to take place during the school day:
 - 4.2.1. Parents are welcome to take children home during the school lunch break to pray, or come into school to pray with them if they would like to do so;
 - 4.2.2. The music room is available for prayer during the school lunch break. A prayer mat and washing facilities will be provided if requested.
 - 4.2.3. These facilities are available all year round for Muslim staff or pupils who wish to offer prayer during the school day. For children, parents should speak to the school to arrange.
- 4.3. Muslims families may be staying up late to pray and read the Qur'an during Ramadan. The school encourages parents to consider the impact on children's concentration and academic performance when planning their prayer activities.

5. Physical Activity

- 5.1. Physical Activity guidelines for children and young people (5 – 18 years) advise participation in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day, with 30 minutes being accumulated at school.
- 5.2. In addition, children have 2 hours' Physical Education (PE) per week.
- 5.3. Some children will attend before or after school sports clubs. Club providers should be made aware of any children who are fasting, and provided with appropriate guidance.
- 5.4. Students and staff are encouraged to engage in PE, physical activity and school sport throughout Ramadan. However, the new timings of meals before dawn and after sunset and adjustment to new sleeping and eating patterns may increase fatigue levels.
- 5.5. Whilst planning activity types within PE and the wider school extra-curricular programme, staff should consider the impact of reduced energy levels and increased risk of dehydration on performance. When possible, staff may wish to reschedule physical activities to earlier periods in the day, when students have increased energy levels.
- 5.6. It is advised that staff consider teaching more accommodating activities: i.e. reduced-endurance activities, or activities which are high-intensity or involve greater levels of energy expenditure. Levels of physical demand within sessions should be adjusted to accommodate individual needs.
- 5.7. If possible (with enough notice) school will avoid scheduling swimming for Muslim pupils during Ramadan.
 - 5.7.1. If this is unavoidable, the following strategies may be used to include a fasting student in swimming lessons:
 - 5.7.1.1. Increase water-based teaching.
 - 5.7.1.2. Reduce poolside teaching.
 - 5.7.1.3. Avoid submerging the face in the water.
 - 5.7.1.4. Encourage students to work on strokes/skills which do not include face submersion (e.g. back stroke, leg specific taught activities).
 - 5.7.1.5. Inform lifeguards when a group includes students/staff who are fasting.
 - 5.7.1.6. Liaise with lifeguards to increase staff and student shadowing
 - 5.7.2. Swimming teachers and lifeguards must be informed if a pupil is fasting.
 - 5.7.3. Pupils may be excused from swimming during Ramadan and an alternative activity provided, if parents request it.
- 5.8. Further guidance can be found here: [Ramadan Guidance for Schools and Educational Settings: Physical Education and Physical Activity](#)

6. Supporting Families

- 6.1. Parents / carers should inform the school about any children who will be fasting, so that the school can understand their individual needs and wishes, and discuss arrangements to support the child.
- 6.2. Where possible, the school will avoid scheduling evening events such as parent evenings during Ramadan, or will offer alternative appointments to Muslim parents which fall outside of this time.
- 6.3. If the school has any concerns about a pupil who is fasting during Ramadan, they will first seek to liaise with parents about the best way to care for their child.