

Greetings Northshore Staff,

The Northshore School District recognizes the diverse religious backgrounds and values represented in the school community and the importance of being sensitive to the needs of all students and personnel. Making sure that every child feels supported requires deliberate attention, and the Northshore School District sees this as an ongoing focus of its work. As we continue to see our demographic change we must intentionally look at how we serve and partner with all families in our community. As many of you may already know, Ramadan is a Muslim religious observation month that includes fasting (including no water) from dawn until dusk.

This month can be challenging for students who have to go through a normal school day without eating or drinking. This year, Ramadan will begin on May 5 (+/- one day) and lasts 29 to 30 days, during which some of our Muslim students and staff may abstain from food and drink from dawn until sunset. It is important for schools to support the well-being of their students while providing a safe environment where they are able to continue the practice of their religion.

Here are several ways to support your students during the month of Ramadan:

**Space:** Lunchtime is probably one of the most difficult periods to endure while fasting. It might help for a comfortable space to be available for fasting students to go to instead of the designated lunchroom. The room can have books, magazines and other things to keep students busy. Of course, it's then up to the student whether they choose to go there or not. Some of your students may request a quiet space for midday prayers, which usually takes no longer than five minutes. If so, plan ahead to avoid unnecessary disruption and attention when they leave and so they do not miss crucial instruction.

**Physical Education:** Based on past experience, we anticipate that many of our students and athletes will be participating in this observation. Some students will bring notes from parents asking that they be excused from vigorous activity or advising staff that they will be fasting and not drinking fluids, and PE teachers and coaches need to accommodate these students. In no way, should this impact their grade or opportunity for participation in after school athletics.

The following recommendations have been made to accommodate for these students:

Fitness and cardio assessments could be done prior to the beginning of Ramadan. Students who are abstaining from fluids should avoid playing tough sports and intense exercise during the day, especially in hot weather. Hot weather will cause the body to lose fluids, which may lead to dehydration.

Alternate activities should be available during PE and practices for students who are fasting and not drinking. These could include:

- Minimizing movement activities to simple walking or calisthenics.
- Allowing them to provide a support role for coach/teacher while being responsible for content learning
- Avoid excessive movement while participating outside in warmer weather
- Privately offer information about nutritional adaptations (protein, complex carbs) that may be imperative during non-fasting times.
- Athletes and students should still be attendance to practices/classroom requirements
- Level of game/practice/classroom participation should be based on the communication between the parent, coach, and student/athlete.

To the extent they do participate in sports, these students should be monitored as they may experience a lack of hydration and/or nutritional support. Be aware that students who observe Ramadan may also show more fatigue due to late nights, in addition to the lack of typical nutrition.

**The resources below will provide more information on Ramadan**

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/ramadan-new-brunswick-high-school-1.4669551>
- <https://www.brighthubeducation.com/middle-school-social-studies-lessons/126797-ramadan-lunar-calendar-and-muslim-tradition-lesson/>
- <https://nurturestore.co.uk/what-is-ramadan-lesson-plan>