

RAMADAN POLICY

RAMADAN – An overview

As informed by the Schools' Anglican foundation and traditions, Dame Allan's values the needs of individuals and recognises the importance of supporting each other within a tolerant, inclusive community. We understand that a number of our Muslim pupils make the decision to fast during Ramadan. This policy therefore outlines the overall aim of the School to be supportive, understanding and accommodating where reasonably possible, with an expectation that pupils will balance their extra spiritual efforts with their usual commitments.

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar, and it consists of a 29–30 day period of fasting, self-control, charity giving and goodwill to others.

The Arabic word *sawm* means 'to abstain', and during Ramadan observant Muslims may choose to abstain completely from both food and liquid—including water— from dawn until sunset. Muslims observing the fast aim to carry on with their daily life and embrace the strictures of fasting, as a way of learning how to cope with the challenges of daily life whilst growing in spirituality.

Rationale of this policy

- To raise staff and pupil awareness of the needs of fasting pupils.
- To maintain an inclusive environment for all pupils, recognising the specific needs of children during religious festivals within the parameters of an Anglican foundation school.
- To make reasonable adjustments for those fasting/praying where appropriate.

Health and Safety

- Parents/guardians will inform the school if their child is going to participate in fasting.
- Dame Allan's will inform parents/guardians immediately if their child, who is fasting, becomes unwell. If there are concerns about any pupils who are fasting, the school has an overriding safeguarding duty and will apply judgement and common sense on a case-by-case basis.
- Muslim scriptures are clear that if you are not able to operate normally (at school or work), then you are not well enough or old enough to be fasting. Fasting pupils should be able to lead a normal life.
- No oral medication can be taken by a person who is fasting; however, in an emergency, the school will administer any medicine that is deemed necessary, in accordance with the school's policy.
- Be aware that it is the accepted view of health professionals that fasting prior to the age of eight years is not advisable, and therefore SACRE advises school leaders to support observance of the fast only for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 and older.
- If there are safeguarding concerns about a pupil, schools have an overriding safeguarding duty and should apply professional judgement and common sense in each case. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in the DfE's

statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education as: "...protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes." So, with its overriding duty in mind, if signs of dehydration or exhaustion are noted in a pupil, the pupil should be asked if they are fasting and, if so, encouraged to drink some water and be reassured that in this situation, Islamic practice allows them to break their fast and make it up later. Muslim scholars usually agree that if there is risk to a pupil's health, pupils can break their fast and, indeed, they should do so immediately.

- The NHS produced a Healthy Ramadan guide to fasting which said "If you produce very little or no urine, feel disoriented or confused or faint due to dehydration, you must stop fasting and have a drink of water or other fluid. Islam doesn't require you to harm yourself in fulfilling the fast".

Prayers during Ramadan

As with many schools, Dame Allan's is short of space and does not have any spaces dedicated to prayer. We will make as much reasonable provision for those pupils who wish to pray in school as we can, and we expect lunch break (12:25 - 13:30) to be used for praying, particularly for mid-afternoon 'Dhuhr' prayers (between 12.00 - 13.00 and between 13.00 - 14:00). We are sympathetic to praying at prescribed times, but do not support the leaving of lessons to pray. Pupils in Year 11 and above, if requested by parents, may leave school at lunchtime to pray in a mosque. Pupils may pray in the following areas - the Chaplain's room and in the meeting room in the Bursar's area of the Jubilee Building. They may have to wait for space to become available in both these areas.

Leaving school to attend ending of the fast

This must be communicated in advance and agreed by Heads of Schools.

Implementation during exams

- If Ramadan falls during the examination period, the school is available to offer advice to fasting pupils who have important exams to assist them in managing their prayer time efficiently during the night in order to avoid tiredness. Formal, public examinations are set by the exam board, and the school has no control over this. Where an examination falls during Ramadan or Eid, pupils are expected to attend school.
- Fasting pupils will be informed of the allowances Islam gives for them to break the fast and make it up later if they feel fasting will in any way jeopardise their performance.
- If any pupils who are fasting show signs that they may be dehydrated, such as a headache or drowsiness, then a member of staff will advise them to terminate the fast immediately by drinking some water.
- All invigilators will keep a close eye on all pupils who are fasting in order to help avoid any disruptions to other pupils not involved.

PE, Games and Co-curricular

- Participation in games and PE is expected for fasting students, with staff monitoring physical activity to ensure pupil safety.
- If staff decide a pupil does not appear comfortable participating at their usual level, they will be encouraged to take on a supportive role, such as umpiring or coaching.
- If a pupil is unable to attend a co-curricular commitment during Ramadan, this should be communicated at the earliest possible opportunity. Please note that commitments involving additional fees may not be refundable.