



Children fasting in Ramadhan

Guidelines for parents, teachers and pupils

Part 1

With the month of Ramadhan fast approaching, we would like to draw the attention of our parents, teachers and pupils to the following guidelines:

1. We want this month to progress smoothly and "safely" for all concerned, this includes pupils, parents and teachers (both in Madrasah and respective schools/colleges).
2. If your child has not reached the prescribed age of fasting (maturity), then such children must not fast during weekdays. Such children can be motivated to fast for a "few hours" after school, and at weekends. This is to ensure maximum productivity and to avoid issues such as illness etc.
3. Despite fasting not being obligatory for such children, there will always be some children who insist on fasting, and such children are usually remarkably resilient and also appreciate what fasting will entail. The wishes of such children must be respected and allowed to fast. Parents and especially teachers need to be supportive of such pupils. For example, at break / lunch time allowing them to stay indoors to pray, meditate and rest.
4. In the long summer months, fasting children must also be excused from sporting activities. However, they should be allowed to spectate, have fresh air etc, and not simply be confined to a classroom. Fasting pupils must not feel "punished" or discriminated.

The following section relates to "older" children who will most probably be fasting on school days.

Part 2 - A robust daily routine for fasting pupils

1. We do not want our fasting to be a "hindrance" or a "cause for concern". Thus, one of the most essential pieces of advice to all concerned is the importance of having a precise routine where there is enough rest and thus productivity in **both** school and Madrasah.
2. The importance of a strict daily routine (with sufficient rest) is further magnified by the fact that some GCSE exams fall in Ramadhan this year.
3. Parents must ensure pupils have a "power nap" immediately after school or Madrasah. With a late sunset, this will ensure the day is "broken up".
4. The time between Asr & Maghrib prayers must be utilised effectively. Examples are:
 - Finish off school and Madrasah work.
 - Reciting the Qur'an, making Dua etc.

Important: Do not allow your child to go to the Mosque "unsupervised" for long periods, as this sometimes results in wasting time (by messing about, roaming the streets etc). Your child must be with you when you are in the Mosque.

5. Pupils must utilise the weekends for "larger" pieces of school work, exam revision etc. Due to a lack of a routine, weekends can be a bit "disorganised" resulting in loss of valuable time.
6. Concluding, pupils **must not make fasting** an "excuse" to miss school and Madrasah or slack in their responsibilities. A good routine will Insha-Allah (God willing) help avoid this.
7. Parents and teachers must discuss and agree in advance the importance of having a good routine, time management and being organised. Experience clearly shows that this pro-active approach will really bear fruits and help avoid problems.

Part 3 - A healthy diet

There is ample information in the public domain with regards to "healthy and nutritious" eating in Ramadhan. It is important pupils follow such guidance and avoid unhealthy / junk foods.

A good diet will ensure productivity throughout the day. Consuming the right amounts of water between sunset and dawn is also very important.

Part 4 - Taraweeh prayers

These "extra" (supererogatory) prayers are an important part of Ramadhan. However, if pupils are experiencing "long" days with both school and Madrasah, then the emphasis must first be on the five obligatory prayers.

Pupils can perform Taraweeh prayers at home, allowing enough rest etc.

It has been observed many a time that teenagers attending the Mosque for Taraweeh prayers tend to neglect the prayer and indulge in other activities. Parents need to be aware of this and manage their child accordingly.

Part 5 - Gadget free Ramadhan

Something that really consumes valuable time (that could be spent in resting and worship) is Social Media in all its forms and electronic games. Ideally, this must always be limited (Ramadhan and outside Ramadhan), as otherwise this addiction affects the well-being of our children. In the month of Ramadhan "spare time" is valuable, and ideally our children must utilise it for resting, homework etc.

Part 6 – Conclusion

For the next few years the sunset time (when we break the fast) is going to be late, thus these brief guidelines have been written to help foster better understanding, respect, tolerance and appreciation of some of the issues children face in Ramadhan.

Working together and helping our children will not only be a positive step forward, it will also reinforce the values of respect, tolerance, inclusion etc.

If school teachers have any concerns, then having a quick word / telephone call with parents usually resolves most issues. Parents thus need to be understanding and appreciative over any concerns / queries raised.

These guidelines were written for the parents and pupils of Al-Ansaar Welfare & Education (Preston, Lancashire). Feel free to share them with other parents and school teachers, and discuss the points raised in here with your children.

These guidelines have been written by Mohammed Farook Kazi (Director and Faith Leader at Al-Ansaar Welfare & Education, Preston, Lancashire). They are written in a personal capacity.

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