

Suggestions for supporting students during Ramadan

Muslim students fasting during Ramadan do not eat or drink during the hours of light- this is around 18 hours in the UK. Ramadan lasts for 30 days. Traditionally, a small meal is taken after the evening prayer, followed by a larger meal and then a third, **suhur** (predawn meal), is eaten in the early morning before the fast begins. Pupils usually wake up before sunrise, eat, drink and pray before travelling to school where they take part in lessons (possibly through a new language) including PE and are surrounded by peers who are not fasting. They then go home to do their homework and wait until 9/10pm to eat and drink again. This unusual pattern of meals and sleep can have an effect on pupils' ability to complete homework and on their concentration during the school day.

- Muslim students should only fast when they are physically and emotionally mature (they usually wouldn't start until past puberty)
- Younger children might fast for part of the day to help them to practise although primary pupils are not expected to fast, it is up to the parents to make this decision. It is not for a school to decide on whether or not a child should fast, (unless, according to DFE guidance, it is *having a significant damaging effect on the child*) However, do talk to parents about which days their child will be fasting and what you should do if the child seems unhappy, tired or unwell.
- Students should continue with their education; if they have an exam, they may be able to miss the fast and make up for it at another date.
- Suggest that parents and carers encourage weekend prayers to avoid children staying up too late.
- Schools could consider making alternative arrangements for children who are fasting during lunch and break times, for example: providing another room where they can go while their peers are eating would be a useful option for them.
- Schools should provide a space for pupils to pray if they require one.
- Teachers could provide information to all students about Ramadan- [BBC Newsround](#) has published videos about Ramadan and there are plenty of assembly packs and lesson plans available online for example: [KS2 Assembly Pack](#) and [links to resources for schools on Ramadan](#)
- Think ahead to school events such as sports day/trips and plan them around Ramadan
- Make sure rooms are at the right temperature and shaded, especially exam halls.
- For PE it might help to provide an alternative option for fasting students -leave it up to the student so that they can choose.
- Students may break their fast during illness or menstruation so be considerate when asking why a student is not fasting as this may be embarrassing for them.
- If possible try to avoid parent evening meeting with fasting families during Ramadan.
- Don't try to convince a student not to fast, or challenge their motivation- this is one of the 5 pillars of Islam.
- You can wish students *Ramadan Mubarak* during Ramadan, *Ramadan Kareem* at the end of Ramadan and *Eid Mubarak* when Eid starts.

- It is recommended that pupils celebrating Eid are granted 1-2 days of authorised absence for religious observation.