



Thistly Meadow Primary School

FASTING POLICY

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Thistly Meadow Primary School celebrates and respects all members of its school community.

Whilst we recognise that fasting is not compulsory before the age of puberty in Islam, we understand that children from many practising Muslim homes are enthusiastic and get a great sense of achievement in joining their families in taking part in the spirit of Ramadan and often begin to fast at a younger age.

It is recommended in guidance issued by the Muslim Council of Britain (www.mcb.org.uk)¹ for children to practise shorter and partial fasts in order to train them for the full fasting when they become adults. At Thistly Meadow Primary School we only allow children in Years 5 and 6 to fast as, in our experience, fasting in year groups below this has a detrimental effect upon a child's overall performance.

Children in lower year groups could be supported to fast at home at the weekend if required, allowing parents to supervise their health and well-being very closely.

Aims and Objectives

We aim to:

- To provide a safe environment for children who wish to fast during part or all of the month of Ramadan.
- To ensure the proper care of children is maintained and to keep parents informed if their child is unwell.
- To further develop understanding of the different faiths represented in the school population.

Ramadan – An overview

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

Those who fast during Ramadan are not allowed any food or water between sunrise and sunset. Instead, they are encouraged to think of cleansing the whole self, through prayer and reflection.

Consent

All parents must inform the school in writing/email if they wish their child to fast. This should make clear if the child is to fast for all of Ramadan or part and if the latter, which days they will be. The school will not be responsible for any break in the fast if changes are made without notification to us.

¹ Towards Greater Understanding – Meeting the needs of Muslim pupils in state schools

Implementation

- If a child says that they are fasting, but the school has not received consent from their parent, they will be dealt with in a respectful manner; however, the child will not be allowed to miss lunch.
- Children who are fasting should not be expected to exert themselves physically. For Health and Safety reasons, pupils who are fasting will not do active physical education lessons at the time they are fasting. At this time, they may participate in other ways such as timing running, acting as a linesman or will do some health related learning.
- Children who are fasting will not be allowed to participate in rigorous activities such as running around at lunch time. They will be encouraged to make use of quiet areas on the playground or the school library in order to conserve their energy.
- As is the tradition in the school, RE lessons and an assembly will be held during the school year to create an understanding of the Muslim faith and Ramadan.
- All children that fast will need to bring an emergency snack with them to school daily. This should be something healthy in accordance to our Healthy Eating Policy.
- In the rare circumstances of a child becoming distressed or unwell when he or she is fasting, the school will encourage the child to break their fast by eating their emergency snack and having a drink of water.
- If a child has a medical condition that would be complicated by fasting, e.g. diabetes, the child will not be permitted to fast at school.

Health and Safety

The school will inform parents immediately if their child who is fasting becomes unwell. If the school feels the child is dehydrated or weak they will encourage the child to have a drink of water and eat their emergency snack. The school will support the child in the usual manner with First Aid as required.

Inclusion

There is mutual co-operation between the parents of children who are fasting and the school.

All children in the school are encouraged to feel positive about their family, their culture and their faith. This policy will be reviewed by the governing body and will take into account the changing Islamic calendar and any guidance issued by the local authority, The Muslim Council of Britain and other Islamic scholars, experts and Muslim chaplains in the education sector.

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