



20 April 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Ramadan 2021

Maiden Erlegh School in Reading is part of a diverse community with students and families from many different faith communities. One of the strengths of our school, identified by parents, staff and students alike, is that we support and nurture a message of tolerance and respect, encouraging our students to learn about and understand different cultures and ways of life. Those themes are woven into our curriculum across many subjects (e.g. English, Drama, Geography, History and Religious Studies) and in our pastoral and assembly programme.

In that spirit, I am writing to outline how we propose to facilitate Muslim fasting during the current month of Ramadan. The fact that Ramadan coincides with the summer term (with warm weather and very long fast days) will put additional pressures on Muslim students observing the fast and I would ask parents of these students to consider and agree the best approach to take so that their work in school is not compromised.

- Many families judge that fasting should not be observed until students are older.
- Some families ask children to complete a partial fast.
- Other students will observe the full fast.

For students observing a full fast, until the end of Ramadan, when not being used for other lessons or activities, we will make the school sports hall available for students to sit quietly whilst other students are eating. The sports hall will be a quiet place of contemplation, reflection, reading or prayer and students will be asked to observe this or lose the opportunity to use the sports hall in this way (in which case they would need to sit with those eating in the dining room during the lunch break). Please note, this facility will not be available every day as sometimes we may have to use the sports hall for other activities.

For students who are fasting, we would ask that they eat well, with a balanced meal when breaking the fast and during the pre-dawn meal and have plenty to drink when fast is broken. Students should avoid over-exertion, especially if the weather is particularly warm and that they should take periods of rest before and after school.

The Muslim Council of Britain has produced a useful guide, supported by the NHS, which can be found here: <https://mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Ramadan-a-guide-to-healthy-fasting-NHS.pdf>

Please note that in the event of a student becoming dehydrated, we will give water to fasting students. Although some Muslims believe that this technically breaks the fast, it can be compensated for later, and the health and wellbeing of students is always our first priority.

Students who observe the fast will be expected to fully participate in the curriculum. This includes music and drama lessons. Fasting students will also be expected to participate in PE

lessons, although the PE team will be mindful of those students fasting and adjust activities accordingly.

Finally, at the conclusion of Ramadan the festival of Eid al-Fitr is celebrated. If parents decide that their son/daughter should not attend school in this day for the purpose of religious observance, then parents are required to **inform the school in writing prior to Eid al-Fitr**. Please also note that a maximum of one day of absence will be authorised and we would not expect student absence for Eid to extend more than one day. Most guidance on the date of Eid al-Fitr this year suggests that it will take place on Thursday 13 May 2021.

Yours sincerely



Mr A Johnson
Headteacher