

Skipton Girls' High School

RAMADAN FASTING POLICY

Statement of intent

Skipton Girls' High School is committed to providing a safe environment for students who wish to fast during part of, or for all of, the month of Ramadan. The school will further develop the understanding of different faiths represented in the school population, and will encourage a greater knowledge of Ramadan amongst all staff members and students.

Legislative framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Equality Act 2010

This policy also has due regard to guidance documents, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ASCL 'Ramadan and Exams, 2016: information for schools and colleges' April 2016
- DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' July 2015

Aims and objectives

- To provide a safe environment for students who wish to fast during part of, or for all of, the month of Ramadan.
- To ensure the proper care of students is maintained and keep parents/carers 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 29–30 day period 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.

Health and safety

Parents/carers will inform the school if their child is going to participate in fasting.

Skipton Girls High School will inform parents/carers immediately if their child, who is fasting, becomes unwell.

Any students who fast will conserve their energy and not join in strenuous games.

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 Administering Medicine Policy.

If there are concerns about any students who are fasting, the school has an overriding safeguarding duty and will apply judgement and common sense on a case by case basis.

If any members of staff notice signs of dehydration or exhaustion in any students who are fasting, then the student will be advised, by a teacher, to terminate the fast immediately by drinking some water, in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy. They will be reassured that in this situation, Islamic rulings allow them to break their fast and make it up later.

Physical Education

Students who are fasting are able to partake in some physical activities, as long as they are not putting themselves at risk or danger.

Students will not do strenuous exercise as they will be at high risk of headaches, tiredness and drowsiness, due to dehydration.

The school will ensure that any students who are fasting are able to decide whether or not they wish to participate in swimming. As the potential for swallowing water is high, some students may not feel comfortable in participating in this sport. Other activities will be scheduled to replace swimming during Ramadan if necessary.

Implementation

During Ramadan, the school will dedicate some gatherings to the Muslim faith and the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, in order to create a more thorough understanding of the religion and fasting throughout the school.

The school will consider the possible impact fasting and late night prayers during Ramadan may have on Muslim students when setting dates for other activities, such as sports days, trips and celebrations.

The school will show sensitivity when arranging official celebrations or the end of exams so they do not offend, or make any students who are fasting feel left out.

The school will ensure that parents' evening and any school functions that occur in the evening are scheduled before or after the month of Ramadan.

The school will provide any students fasting with a supervised, quiet space to rest during their lunch hour.

The school will ensure that any students of the Muslim faith who are not fasting, due to medical or personal reasons, will have a space or area to eat where they feel comfortable.

When Ramadan falls during the winter months, after-school detention for students who are fasting could mean that the pupil is not able to reach home in time to break fast. The school will ensure that students are able to carry out their religious duty, whilst accepting full responsibility for breaching school rules. Alternative sanctions will be provided during school time if necessary.

The school will ensure that sex and relationship education is not scheduled during Ramadan, as fasting Muslims are not permitted to engage in any sexual relations and are expected to avoid any related thoughts and discourse.

Implementation during exams

If Ramadan falls during examination period, the school will offer advice to fasting students who have important exams, to assist them in managing their prayer time efficiently during the night, in order to avoid tiredness.

The school will ensure that any students fasting 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.

The school will discuss with all students during Ramadan if they would prefer revision lessons to be in the morning or in the afternoon.

If any students 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 students who are fasting in order to help avoid any disruptions to other students not involved.

The school will ensure good room management during hot weather, which will benefit all candidates. The examination room in particular will be shaded, and fans will be supplied to ensure students who are fasting do not overheat or become dehydrated.

The school will ensure, where appropriate, that there is a prayer room provided near exam locations.

This policy will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis in line with government legislation and at least on a four yearly basis. All changes will be immediately communicated to staff.

Policy updated June 2016

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Next Review due: June 2019