

Eid ul Fitr: This marks the end of Ramadan and is celebrated following the last day of fasting. On this day Muslim students may not come to school as they are taking part in this important celebration. In Islamic countries, *Eid* holiday lasts 2-3 days and some families may still want to observe those holidays in New Zealand and may not send their children to school. The most important part of *Eid* is the prayer, which is held at the mosque or at a large venue, usually a park or hall.



Eid ul Adha: This is not related to Ramadan but it is another significant day in the Muslim calendar. It is about two months and 10 days from the month of Ramadan, and is celebrated on the 10th day of the last Islamic month of *Dhu al-hajjah*. The *Eid* celebration starts after the *Hajj*, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (Saudi Arabia) by Muslim worldwide. This *Eid* has the same basic observance in terms of prayer and celebration as *Eid ul Fitr*.

IV. Physical Education participation

Islam encourages one to be fit and healthy (equally important for both men and women) such as maintaining a healthy body, mind and diet. Islam encourages all physical activities in particular, swimming. Muslim men and women are encouraged to learn swimming in case of emergencies.



Dress code:

The Islamic requirements for modesty and privacy require Muslim men and women to dress modestly. According to the Islamic guidelines, after reaching puberty, girls must cover all of their body except for the face and hands. Hence girls are encouraged to wear long skirts and head scarves. Also, girls and boys are not allowed to be in physical contact with the opposite gender.

Impact on School:

Generally the dress code for Muslim girls should not be an issue during PE activities, especially in girls-only schools. Muslim girls can even adjust their clothing according to the physical activity they are participating in. During swimming lessons, some girls might not feel comfortable wearing the swim gear; but there is no constraint in swimming with long pants and shirt instead. Muslim girls are discouraged to change publically or in open changing rooms. After reaching puberty, in co-educational schools, girls can participate in PE activities as long as mixing with the opposite gender is avoided.



V. Art/Drawing

From an Islamic perspective, the drawing of animate objects such as people, animals and birds are forbidden. However, there is no prohibition if this is required for learning purposes. There is also no restriction on drawing objects such as mountains, trees, planes, cars and the like.

VI. Halal food

In Arabic, the word *halal* means permitted or lawful. Halal foods are foods that are allowed under Islamic dietary rules. This includes all sea food. Muslims are only allowed to consume meat which is slaughtered in a special way. They do not eat pork and do not consume food which has alcohol in it.



Impact on School:

The school is advised to cater for the needs of Muslim students, as they would for other students with special dietary needs or in similar situations, by providing vegetarian alternatives in the canteen or during school trips. Halal meats can be easily obtained in major New-Zealand cities.



*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent,
the Merciful*

Islamic practices
observed by Muslim
students at schools



Guidelines for New Zealand
schools

*Endorsed by the Federation of Islamic
Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ)*

Islamic Observations

The following information is to help New Zealand schools with Muslim students, in their understanding of some of the Islamic practices their students may observe during school time.

I. Prayer

Prayer is the most important pillar of Islam. It is the first pillar that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned after mentioning the testimony of faith, by which one becomes a Muslim. It involves standing *Qiyam*, bowing (*Rukoo*) and prostration (*Sujood*). Performing Prayer becomes compulsory for a Muslim person after reaching puberty (usually between 12-15 years of age). However, most Muslim parents would like to encourage their children to perform prayers at an earlier age. Prayer is offered 5 times a day. They are (1) dawn prayer, *Fajr* (2) midday prayer , *Dhuhur* (from 12.30 pm or 1.30 pm during daylight saving times), (3) afternoon prayer, *Aser* (4) evening prayer, *Maghrab* and (5) late evening prayer, *Isha*. Friday is the Muslim's congregational prayer which is called *Salat-al-Jummah*. It takes place at *Dhuhur* time but lasts longer (about an hour due to the sermon before the prayer). All Muslim males are required to attend the masjid (mosque) for this special prayer. This prayer can not be performed at school, as the sermon is part of the prayer. Students who are unable to attend the mosque may pray the regular prayer at school instead.



Special requirements

One's body, clothes and the praying area must be clean from certain dirt and filth when performing a prayer. Hence, one of the requirements of prayer is the ablution/*wudu* i.e. washing certain parts of the body before the prayers such as hands, face, arms, feet and rubbing the head. *Wudu* is not required for each prayer as long as the person has not invalidated their last *wudu* by going to the toilet or passing wind.

Impact on School:

Generally, prayer should not interfere with normal schooling and class attendance. However, because prayers are performed at specific times, the midday prayer (*Dhuhur*) is the only prayer Muslim students may perform in the school. As mentioned, during the winter, the *Dhuhur* prayer time starts at 12:30 pm and can be prayed anytime between 12:30 pm and 3:00pm (or just before the time for the next prayer). During the daylight savings, the *Dhuhur* prayer time starts at 1:30 and can be prayed between 1:30pm and 4:00pm. It usually takes about 10 minutes to perform a prayer. In many cases, the midday prayer can be performed during lunch hour without having to walk out of a class. Although, prayer can be performed on any clean area including the school grounds, it is better if a special room is designated for the Muslim students so that they will not be disturbed while they are praying. It is also advisable that a special washing area be designated for them because of the need for them to do *wudu*. Keep in mind that since women are exempt from performing the formal worship during menstruation., Muslim women and teenage girls who typically pray at school may be reluctant to explain the sudden change in behaviour. You can assume that this is the reason if the change is temporary.

II. Ramadan

Ramadan is the third most important pillar of Islam. It is the fasting month for Muslims. Basically, fasting involves abstaining from food and drink from sunrise to sunset. Ramadan is based on the lunar calendar which means the starting date is different from year to year. The start and finish dates of Ramadan depend on the sighting of the new moon. The fasting usually lasts for 29-30 days. Apart from being a religious duty, fasting teaches self-control. It makes one humble and teaches one to feel for others who are in need. Like prayer, fasting becomes compulsory after reaching puberty . However, younger children may choose to fast or are encouraged by their families to do so in order to get accustomed to the habit of fasting. During Ramadan, the sick and those who are travelling do not have to fast. Girls do not fast during their menstruation.



Impact on School:

Generally fasting should not interfere with normal schooling. Students who are fasting may lose their energy as the day goes by, so, before engaging the student in physical activities, ask if they are fasting or not. If they are fasting, avoid asking them to do a lot of energy-consuming activities such as playing soccer or running if they do not feel like it. People's energy levels are different and so is the impact of these activities on them. So, teachers have to take some precautionary measures. During swimming though, there is the possibility of swallowing water, but there is no restriction on it while fasting. Same care by the teachers need to be followed.

III. Islamic festivals

There are two Islamic festivals during a year. They are as follows: