

Ramadan in Schools

Many students and staff members will spend the next 30 days observing the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, a time of fasting, prayer, and reflection when all Muslims who have reached the age of puberty must abstain from eating and drinking from sunrise to sundown.

Ramadan begins Saturday, April 2nd, 2022 and continues through Sunday, May 1st, 2022 according to the sighting of the new moon. Muslims will celebrate the end of the month with the Eid-ul-Fitr (Festival of Fast Breaking) holiday tentatively on Monday, May 2nd, 2022. Students who miss school to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr will have an excused absence.

Muslim leaders are asking middle school and high school administrators and teachers to be aware of students' physical discomfort and fatigue and to make any reasonable accommodations.

"Students may be tired, hungry, and dehydrated by the end of the school day, especially during the late afternoon," explained Sabina Mohyuddin, executive director of the American Muslim Advisory Council. "Additionally, Muslims engage in a late-night prayer (1 1/2 hours after sunset) and a pre-dawn meal which may also contribute to fatigue."

Here are some important reminders for best supporting students during Ramadan.

- Fasting for Young Children: Children who have not reached puberty are NOT required to fast but may still choose to fast. However, some younger children fast half the day, so they may not eat breakfast but eat lunch.
- Physical activity with students: Students should be allowed to forgo strenuous physical activities in p.e. class. Students may also spend a lot of time outdoors in the sun, especially after testing. Try to let students sit in the shade when outside since students cannot have water while fasting.
- Lunch: Designate a place for students during lunchtime so they don't have to sit next to students who are eating. It can be a teacher's classroom, library, space inside the cafeteria, etc.
- Social-Emotional Wellbeing: Being mindful that students who observe fasting can feel left out, teachers can come up with creative ways to make sure students don't feel excluded from activities or classroom celebrations that tend to take place during this time.
- Snacks during TN Ready Testing: During testing, students are often offered snacks between testing sessions. It is important to be mindful of students who will be fasting during this time period. Teacher should not exclude fasting students when they pass out snacks during testing breaks as students can take non-perishable items home. It makes them feel left out.
- Hijab: It is not uncommon for some female students who normally do not wear a hijab to put it on for the month of Ramadan and remove it when the fasting period is over. It is best practice to avoid questioning them publicly as to why they put it on or remove it since this is how some people show their respect for the month.