

Ramadan in Schools

Many Muslim students and staff members will be observing the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, a time of fasting, prayer, and reflection when Muslims who have reached the age of puberty abstain from eating and drinking from sunrise to sundown. It is a Muslim's first amendment right to fast during Ramadan and be provided reasonable accommodations while at school or at work.

Ramadan is expected to begin the evening of March 10th, 2024 and will continue through Tuesday, April 9th, 2024 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 Wednesday, April 10th, 2024. Students who miss school to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr will have an excused absence. Eid is typically celebrated over 3 days.

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

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

- **Fatigue While Fasting:** Students may be tired, hungry, and dehydrated by the end of the school day. Additionally, Muslims engage in a late-night prayer (1 ½ hours after sunset) and a pre-dawn meal which may also contribute to fatigue. The last 10 days of Ramadan are especially sacred as many Muslims stay up all or most of the night in prayer.
- **Physical activity with students:** Students should be allowed to forgo strenuous physical activities in p.e. class. Since students may also spend a lot of time outdoors in the sun, allow fasting students sit in the shade when outside since they cannot have water while fasting.
- **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 or vice versa.
- **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. Some students who are fasting will opt to sit with friends during lunch.
- **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. Share books or activities about Ramadan in the classroom.
- **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.
- **Not All Muslim Students Fast:** Don't assume all Muslim students are fasting. Muslims are exempt from fasting if sick, travelling, or during menstrual cycle and others may choose not to fast.

Learn more about Ramadan

- For those who want to learn more about Islam and Ramadan, the Islamic Center of Nashville will be hosting four one-hour crash courses that starts at 6:00 p.m. and is followed by dinner at sunset. The courses will be at ICN 12South (2515 12th Ave S) on March 14th and March 24th and at ICN Bellevue Mosque (7337 Charlotte Pike) on March 20th and April 2nd. You can RSVP by emailing rfakhruddin@gmail.com.
- For recommended literature on Muslims, visit <https://www.amactn.org/schools>
- [Additional information on Ramadan by ING](#)