



Heathcote School & Science College

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MAS/SNN



3rd May 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,



I write with regards to the start of Ramadan next week. Whilst we fully understand that your son/daughter will need to fast, our concern is for their well-being and future life chances if they do not achieve as well as they might otherwise do in their final exams. The combination of long days, potentially hot weather, and the usual pre-exam stress will put extra pressure on our Muslim pupils.



For this reason we ask that you find a balance between your child's religious obligations and their studies. Therefore, we have consulted with a number of sources and below is some information and guidance that we would like you to discuss with your child:



1. **Late night Taraweeh prayers** – While there is an emphasis on Muslims attending the Taraweeh prayers, it is not compulsory in the same way as the other prayers are. In order for your son/daughter to find the time to revise and obtain a restful night's sleep, you may decide that your son/daughter only attends them at the weekend or during the upcoming half-term break.



2. **Lunchtime** – Encourage your son/daughter to rest during this time. During Ramadan, we will make arrangements for rooms to be available to those pupils fasting. Room H104 will be made available for the girls and room H103 made available for the boys. Additionally, the afternoon (Zuhr) and Friday (Jumma) prayers will continue to run during Ramadan as they normally do during term time. However, pupils with exams at this time should attend the exam and **can pray after school**.



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3. **Resting after returning home from school** – Because of the long period of time from when your child returns home from school and time for breaking the fast (Iftar), a wise use of this time would be to rest or catch up on sleep for the first few hours, and then to spend an hour or two revising before Iftar.



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4. **Eating and drinking well** – During the non-fasting hours, ensure that your son/daughter is eating well, and most importantly keeping well hydrated. The NHS advise:

- To eat a balanced diet at Suhoor and Iftar
- To eat wholesome, slow-digesting foods



- c. Avoid deep-fried, high-sugar, high-fat foods

Further advice can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/fasting-and-your-health/>

- 5. **Feeling unwell** – If at any point during the day your child feels unwell or they are thirsty to the degree that they may suffer physical harm, then it is permissible for them to break their fast by eating or drinking. The missed fast(s) can then be made up later outside of Ramadan.

Some parents/carers have asked us about music in the curriculum during the period of Ramadan. We have been advised that learning musical skills is not in contradiction with the spirit of Ramadan. The music curriculum at Heathcote School is part of the curriculum, develops higher cognitive skills and fine motor skills and pupils should participate in every lesson. Therefore, we would expect your child to participate as normal.

Finally, the PE Department have made provision for pupils who are fasting:

1. All pupils are expected to bring their PE Kit and change into this.
2. They will be encouraged to perform light activities, however this will not be compulsory and they will have the option to opt out of they choose to.
3. Pupils opting out will be given other roles in the lesson, such as officials or coaches. These roles will not require physical exertion.

In order for us to keep track of those pupils who are fasting, it would be helpful if you either send a note with your child or email the main school office. However, this is only for the purposes of ensuring your child's well-being in school and is not compulsory.

The school is very keen to engage in communication with pupils and families to discuss these issues but respect the right of individuals to make their own decisions. Exams, both GCSEs and in-school assessments, are likely to coincide with Ramadan until 2021 and the school is therefore keen to consider all the issues and formulate a long term approach.

Please feel free to contact the school to discuss any issues or concerns you may have. May I wish all those observing Ramadan a peaceful and happy time.

Yours Sincerely,



Miss Miriam Argyrakis
Assistant Head teacher – Raising Standards/Outcomes