

# HSACRE



## HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Date:** Tuesday 29 March 2022

### Members

**Time:** 6.00 pm

**Venue:** Committee Room 6, Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

**Meeting:** Members of the Public and Press  
are welcome to attend this  
meeting

Carole Jones (Chairman)  
Ninette Fernandes-Viana  
Dorothy Sadlick  
Balmukund Prasad Joshi  
Alice Vahdat  
Alavari Jeevathol  
Angela Lount  
Amir Ahmed (Syed Amir Ahmed)  
Jasvir Singh Rayat  
Pauline Byles  
Joan Beavington  
Melanie Dring MA BA(Hons) PGCE  
Keith Lunn  
Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana  
Councillor John Hensley  
Councillor Carol Melvin BSc (Hons)  
Councillor June Nelson  
Councillor Jagjit Singh

Published: Monday, 21 March 2022

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Civic Centre  
High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW  
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## Agenda

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- |   |  |               |
|---|--|---------------|
| 1 | Minutes of Previous Meeting            | 1 - 4         |
| 2 | Election of Vice-Chair                 | 5 - 6         |
| 3 | 2020/21 Draft SACRE Annual Report      | 7 - 16        |
| 4 | Review of HSACRE representative groups | Verbal Report |
| 5 | RE Leaders/Teachers Survey             |               |
| 6 | Ramadan 2022 - HSACRE Guidance         | 17 - 26       |
| 7 | AOB                                    |               |
| 8 | Date of Next Meeting                   |               |

On 24 February 2022, Full Council ratified the Programme of Meetings for the municipal year 2022/23.

The following meeting dates were agreed for HSACRE:

- Wednesday 15 June 2022
- Thursday 03 November 2022
- Tuesday 28 March 2023

## Minutes

### HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

4 November 2021

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge



	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Father Desmond Banister Dr Ninette Fernandes Viana Alice Vahdat Angela Lount Pauline Byles Keith Lunn Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana Councillor John Hensley Councillor Jagjit Singh</p> <p><b>Also Present:</b> Jack Roberts (Democratic Services Apprentice) Steve Clarke (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
11.	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.</p>
12.	<p><b>HSACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report, noting that the report covered the activities of HSACRE over the period 2019-2020, not 2020-2021. This was because HSACRE had been put on hold for most of the duration of the pandemic, and as such, neither the 2019-2020 report nor the 2020-2021 report had been brought to the committee. It was confirmed that the 2020 – 2021 annual report would be brought to the committee for the meeting scheduled 29 March 2022. It was also confirmed that once the reports were endorsed by the committee, they would be submitted to the Department for Education and NASACRE.</p> <p>The committee noted the number of vacant spaces on the committee shown in Appendix A of the report. Officers confirmed that efforts had been made to fill the vacant spaces, which had included sending out letters to the relevant centres for the religious groups, but they had received a limited response with only two vacancies being filled. Given the number of vacant places, it was suggested that the committee could review the membership of group A of the committee. The committee agreed that a review would be useful and asked that a report be compiled and brought to the next meeting on 29 March 2022.</p>

**RESOLVED: That the Committee:**

1. **Endorsed the 2019/20 HSACRE Annual Report for submission to the Department for Education and the NASACRE; and**
2. **Requested that officers compile a report reviewing the membership of the committee, particularly membership of Group A, and schedule it as an item for the committee meeting on 29 March 2022.**

13. **DRAFT QUESTIONS FOR HILLINGDON RE TEACHER SURVEY** (*Agenda Item 3*)

This item was deferred to the meeting on 29 March 2022 because the lead officer was not in attendance. It was requested that the item not be a verbal report, but a written report circulated in the agenda ahead of the next meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee:**

1. **Deferred the item Draft Questions for Hillingdon RE Teacher Survey 2020 to the meeting scheduled for 29 March 2022; and**
2. **Requested that the item be submitted as a written report ahead of the meeting and that it be circulated with the agenda.**

14. **HILLINGDON SCHOOL WORKFORCE DATA 2020 (NATRE)** (*Agenda Item 4*)

Officers introduced the item, explaining that the data in the report had come from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) by way of the Department for Education (DfE) 2020 School Workforce Census. The data showed the hours taught of RE or philosophy for years 7 to 11 of a sample of 20 secondary schools in Hillingdon. It was suggested that the data could act as useful gauge for assessing the current practice of RE teaching in Hillingdon's non-maintained schools.

It was noted that the data suggested that some non-maintained schools in Hillingdon did not meet their statutory duties to teach RE to students in the years 7-11. In the case of Academies, it was suggested that this could be in breach of their funding agreements. Whilst it was acknowledged that some of the data could have been explained by schools delivering the required content but not formally referring to it as RE, it was emphasised that clarity needed to be sought on the matter. It was requested that officers investigate whether the schools listed as not teaching any RE in the DfE data were breaking the law or breaching their funding agreement by doing so.

It was suggested that the DfE had a role to play in ensuring that OFSTED checked that schools were meeting their statutory duties with respect to the teaching of RE. However, concerns were raised about waiting for OFSTED visits in order to solve the problem. It was agreed that the problem required a more urgent response.

It was noted that staffing issues may be raised by schools as the reason for their failing to meet the requirements. It was felt that such a response may have been indicative of RE being the 'left behind' subject; one that governing bodies gave less priority to than other subjects. However, it was also acknowledged that the problem may have been to do with the recruitment of RE teachers.

It was suggested that it would be useful to find out if the problem was a national or a regional one, as geographical differences may have impacted the reporting of data. It

	<p>was emphasised that religious literacy was of particular importance in all schools, particularly for a London Borough. Further data from other parts of the country was requested to gain clarity on whether RE provision differed regionally.</p> <p>It was noted that further teacher engagement on this topic was important. Concerns were raised about the lack of RE teacher representation on the committee, and it was requested that officers consider ways to increase the number of teacher representatives in Membership Group C. It was suggested that the National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE) may have had a regional branch, and that they could assist in recruiting teachers to sit on HSACRE.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Hillingdon School Workforce Data 2020.</b></p>
15.	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>No other business raised.</p>
16.	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>It was noted that the next meeting of HSACRE was scheduled for Tuesday 29 March 2022. Further meetings would be scheduled for June and November 2022, with the exact dates to be agreed in the Council's 2022/23 programme of meetings which was due to be ratified at the Full Council meeting in February 2022.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 6.33 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Jack Roberts on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

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## ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

**Contact:** Steve Clarke  
Clerk to HSACRE

### REASON FOR REPORT

Following the resignation from HSCARE of the previous Vice-Chair, Father Desmond Banister, HSACRE are required to elect a new Vice-Chair for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year i.e., until May 2022.

### RECOMMENDATION

**To formally confirm the appointment of a Vice Chair of HSACRE for the remainder of the 2021-22 municipal calendar year.**

### BACKGROUND

1. Father Desmond Banister has recently resigned from SACRE following his resignation from the London Diocesan Board for Schools.
2. HSACRE are required to elect a new Vice-Chair for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.
3. Both the Vice-Chair and Chair will be elected again at the following HSACRE meeting on Wednesday 15 June 2022 for the 2022/23 municipal year.

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## HSACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

<b>Committee name</b>	Hillingdon SACRE
<b>Contact</b>	Steve Clarke, Democratic Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A – HSACRE Annual Report 2020/21

### HEADLINES

Each SACRE must submit a copy of its Annual Report to the Department for Education and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE). HSACRE was predominantly inactive during the 2020/21 academic year due to its activities being hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic; this has led to a brief annual report.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the Committee endorse the 2020/21 HSACRE Annual Report for submission to the Department for Education and the NASACRE.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. HSACRE must produce and submit a copy of its Annual Report to the Department for Education and NASACRE.
2. The Committee is asked to comment on and endorse the 2020/21 Annual Report.
3. HSACRE Annual Reports align with the academic year, not the municipal year.

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# HSACRE

**HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021**

The current HSACRE was inaugurated on 22 February 1989 and this is its 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Report, in accordance with its constitution and statutory obligations.

# CONTENTS

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1. Foreword by the Cabinet Member for Families, Education and Wellbeing – 2020/21
2. Membership
3. Activity report
4. Meetings in the academic year 2020 - 2021
5. Financial statement
6. Advice given to the Authority by SACRE
7. Publications and events
8. Monitoring and review

**1. FOREWORD BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FAMILIES, EDUCATION AND WELLBEING 2020/21  
COUNCILLOR SUSAN O'BRIEN**



*I am delighted to offer my introduction to the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of Hillingdon's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (HSACRE). Unfortunately, it comes during a year in which HSACRE was pushed to remain largely dormant as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. HSACRE's work in 2020/21 was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple lockdowns and restrictions hindered the ability of HSACRE to conduct its work effectively. Although the majority of this year was defined by the pandemic, Religious Education continues to make a huge contribution to the Council's commitment to developing community cohesion, and I am pleased to see that meetings managed to resume in the 2021 Summer Term.*

*Despite the pandemic, HSACRE still managed to put the wheels in motion to undertake an interim review of Hillingdon's agreed RE syllabus; HSACRE also played its part in offering sound advice regarding pupils' adherence to certain religious festivities to maintained schools in the Borough throughout the academic year.*

*I would like to thank the membership of Hillingdon's SACRE for their continued work in supporting Religious Education within the Borough and I extend my thanks to all those who support HSACRE as they start to reconvene and continue the important work that HSACRE does. I look forward to seeing the activities undertaken by HSACRE in 2021/22.*

## **2. MEMBERSHIP**

HSACRE members are from four distinct groups and the Committee is only quorate when representatives from every group are present:

**GROUP A** – Representatives of all faith groups in Hillingdon, including representatives from the Christian community, but not members of the Church of England. HSACRE works to ensure that along with representatives from all the major world faiths, it works with all communities within the Borough and welcomes their representation so long as they recognise the emphasis placed on inclusion by HSACRE.

**GROUP B** - Representatives from the Christian Church of England.

**GROUP C** - Representatives from each of the teachers' professional associations.

**GROUP D** - London Borough of Hillingdon Councillors.

A list of members of each group is included as Appendix A.

**Chairman** - Carole Jones, Headteacher, Yeading Junior School

**Advisor** - Elenor Paul

**Clerk** - Luke Taylor and Steve Clarke (Democratic Services at the London Borough of Hillingdon) served as clerks during 2020 – 21.

## **3. ACTIVITY REPORT**

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 effectively paused the HSACRE's activities and a planned teacher training conference was unfortunately cancelled. The HSACRE's scheduled meetings were effectively cancelled from March 2020 through to June 2021. On 17 June 2021, HSACRE reconvened for their only meeting of the 2020/21 academic year. Many of HSACRE's activities were put on hold during the pandemic but advice and support was still given to RE coordinators and teachers where possible on matters relating to Religious Education, including guidance to maintained schools on pupils' celebration of Ramadan and Diwali.

Praise should be given to all of the members of the Hillingdon SACRE for their patience throughout the 2020/21 academic year.

## **4. MEETINGS OF HSACRE IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20**

Full meetings of HSACRE were held on:

- 17 June 2021 - Civic Centre, Uxbridge

The following meetings were scheduled but were unfortunately cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 10 November 2020 - Cancelled
- 30 March 2021 - Cancelled

## **5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

HSACRE had a budget available of £4,900 for the 2020/21 financial year.

## **6. ADVICE GIVEN TO THE AUTHORITY BY SACRE**

Advice is given annually to the authority on Religious Education and Worship paragraphs in its information booklets for families entering a particular phase of education.

## **7. PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS**

- Issued Ramadan Guidance to schools in the Borough April 2021.

## **8. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Comments on this report are welcomed. These should be sent to:

Democratic Services, Phase II, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1UW, or by emailing [democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk)

# APPENDIX A – Members of HSACRE throughout the 2020/21 Academic Year

## GROUP A

Bahai	Alice Vahdat
Baptist	Vacant
British Humanist Association	Alavari Jeevathol
Buddhist	Vacant
Hillingdon Area Salvation Army	Vacant
Hindu	Balmukund Prasad Joshi
Jewish	Ruth Freedman
Methodist	Angela Lount
Muslim	Amir Ahmed
Quaker	Vacant
Roman Catholic	Vacant
Sikh	Jasvir Singh Rayat
United Reform Church	Vacant

## GROUP B

Church of England	Father Desmond Banister (Vice-Chair)
	Joan Beavington
	Pauline Byles
	Melanie Dring
	Keith Lunn

## GROUP C

Association of Secondary School and College Leaders	Vacant
National Association of Headteachers	Carole Jones (Chair)
National Association of School Masters/Union of Women Teachers	Vacant
National Union of Teachers	Simon Wallace

## GROUP D

Local Authority	Councillor Shehryar Ahmed-Wallana
	Councillor John Hensley



	Councillor Carol Melvin
	Councillor June Nelson
	Councillor Jagjit Singh

**OFFICER SUPPORT**

London Borough of Hillingdon Committee Services	Luke Taylor / Steve Clarke Democratic Services, Phase II, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1UW
Consultant for Hillingdon SACRE	Elenor Paul

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# Hillingdon SACRE

## Advice for Schools – Ramadan 2022

### Introduction

This advice has been revised and updated. We hope that schools will find it helpful. For further support, please contact the Clerk to HSACRE, Steve Clarke, at [democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk)

In responding to demographic changes and significant numbers of Muslim adherents, schools continue to celebrate the diversity of Hillingdon’s population. This can bring opportunities to learn from each other in many ways. In wanting to engage with local places of worship, it is worth taking into account that Hillingdon presently has six separate Islamic faith communities, along with a number of smaller groupings. Similarly to other faiths, Muslim families may have their own interpretation to that provided by their mosque or meeting place. For help in engaging with local faith leaders, schools may find it helpful to contact the SACRE. All of the Muslim leaders in the Borough were previously consulted in this advice.

### Contents

Introduction	1	Health & Safety	5
Contents	1	Safeguarding	5
Pre-Ramadan	1	Equal Opportunities	6
Attendance	2	National Curriculum	6
Ramadan	2	Parents’ Evening	6
Dates of Ramadan & Eid	3	Checklist	7
Prayer	4	Ideas for Schools	8
Good Practice	5	Model Letter	10

### Pre-Ramadan

In 2022, Ramadan starts on the evening of 02 April and ends on the evening of 01 May.

- Alert kitchen staff and breakfast clubs to the drop in numbers;
- Alert teaching and all support staff to be aware of students who may be tired from attending prayers; and,
- Review, as part of the risk assessment, activities like Sports Days and organized visits requiring long walks or energy.

## Attendance

Parents may request to withdraw pupils from school for a required religious observance and such absences are regarded as authorised. Although Islamic law clearly states that it is not necessary for a pupil, or adult, to be absent themselves from their normal place of work (or education), it would be wrong for a non-observer to call an observer to adhere to this, and there has to be an element of normal agreed practice.

The special celebrations of Eed-ul-Futr and Eed-ul-Adha may lead to 1-2 days authorised absence. Schools should be aware of pupils who are attending prayers in the mosque (during Ramadan and / or on Eed Day) before attending school, and also that pupils may be attending additional night prayers during Ramadan. This could impact on energy levels and homework.

There are no reasons for anybody to leave school to attend Friday mid-day prayers, particularly if there are facilities for praying at the school – parents may be invited to lead lunchtime and Friday prayers.

It is suggested that it would be helpful if Infant and Junior Schools adjacent to each other were to have agreement on advice given to parents.

Parents need to understand that a one-day absence counts as two absences in schools' records.

## Ramadan

*“...So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month [Ramadan] should spend it in fasting. But if anyone is ill, or is on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful.”*

Al-Qur'an, 2:185

*“Let there be no compulsion in religion...”*

Al-Qur'an, 2:256

In many faiths and cultures, fasting is an important part of religious, spiritual or personal discipline in the calendar year.

Fasting, for Muslims, enshrines a very high spiritual uplift, generating unparalleled enthusiasm; it is commitment from individuals that brings together whole communities in social and spiritual activities – individual acts of worship with whole-community participation. Children from the age of articulation crave and demand participation with gleeful encouragement from parents.

Fasting during Ramadan – one of the five pillars of Islam - becomes obligatory from the age of puberty for all who are healthy in mind and body; this excludes infants, pre-pubertal youngsters, the frail and the elderly and people on long journeys. However,

## **Ramadan Advice for Hillingdon Schools**

there are prescribed parameters for adherence to, or non-compliance with, the command to fast. No food or drink may be taken during the daily fast - from pre-dawn till sunset; certain essential injections may be permissible according to circumstances. Staff in schools may need to be aware that the administration of medications, fainting, vomiting, or menstruation during fasting invalidates the daily fast. In these instances it would be advisable to discuss the issue with parents.

The daily fast is incomplete without the daily ritual salaah prayers/worship – however, if unavoidable, the salaah may need to be offered when opportune. People studying or at work, for example in professional, domestic or academic spheres, whether indoors or outdoors, are required not to seek particular concessions concerning their work – all activities should continue as normal. However, some adjustments to working hours, or place, or practice may prove to be helpful.

During Ramadan, the fast consists of not taking any nourishment or stimulants (gaseous, fluid or solid, including gum, toothpaste, mouthwash, tobacco etc.) at all during daylight hours, in addition to being more worshipful and considerate.

## **Dates**

### **Ramadan**

The Islamic calendar is based on cycles of the moon, and, for this reason, dates change from year to year. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, which commences from sunset with the sighting, or confirmation, of the first crescent moon – usually 18-20 hours of more after the astronomical New Moon – on the 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> day of Sh'abaan, the eighth month. The Islamic day cycle commences from sunset and ends with the next day's sunset. For those parts of the world where this means that there will be very little, or no sunset during the month, there is dispensation where the celebrant will follow "Makkah sunset and sunrise times", or follow timings adhered to by the nearest Muslim country, in consultation with the Imaams of the local mosque.

In 2022, Ramadan is due to start on, or near, Saturday 02 April, and end with the festival of Eed-ul-Fitr, celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Shawwaal (10<sup>th</sup> month), on or near Monday 02 May. More precise dates will be announced by mosques nearer the time. It should be noted for ease of future timetabling, that the Islamic Lunar Calendar is 10-12 days shorter than the Gregorian Calendar.

### **Eid-al-Fitr**

The date for Eid-al-Fitr, the first day of the month that follows Ramadan, is determined based upon the sighting of the new moon, which can vary in different parts of the world. In some Muslim countries, religious councils determine the moon sighting. Some Muslims wait as the end of the month nears to hear when the Eid date will be.

## Prayer

There are five times each day when prayers are said:

- Fajr – before dawn
- Zuhr – just past noon
- Asr – mid-afternoon
- Maghrib – after sunset
- Isha – during darkness

In a mosque, there will be a leader (Imaam) who will take responsibility for leading prayers at set congregational times; at other times, and other places, individuals may pray alone or create and / or join a congregation. Meeting together as a congregation is recommended and is preferred to praying individually.

If it is not possible to pray at the appointed times, prayers can be offered as soon as possible afterwards. There should be no need for special timetable arrangements in school.

During the lunch break, prayers should not take the whole time. It is not usual for boys and girls to pray together – in the mosque, or at places with organised prayers, there may be a curtain separating them or girls may pray behind the boys. Although this would be an ideal, there are alternatives, such as praying in separate rooms or groups, or praying at separate times.

The requirement is for a room, with a sink, or with one close by (there are simple requirements to wash hands, feet and face before praying), for use each day. The room should be quiet, preferably not overseen with external distractions. Prayer is undertaken by facing towards Makkah and involves standing, kneeling or prostrating the body. Thus, a prayer mat is helpful, but not essential. In facing Makkah, the individual should not be expected to face any image which may be distracting. A little care from the school should assist, and will be appreciated.

In the High School, it should be possible to expect older students to supervise the prayers. In the junior years, the school could consider inviting a parent or other members of the Muslim community to supervise if they have the appropriate DBS checks, or an additional member of staff to supervise if they do not. Muslim staff may well offer to take responsibility. It is recommended that such in-school sessions are also open to non-Muslims for observation and to raise awareness and understanding through discussion in class.

During Ramadan, the school should ensure that:

- All staff are aware of the importance for making a room available for prayer;
- That there is reasonable access to toilets / washing facilities within easy reach of the prayer room;
- Staff involved in mid-day supervision are fully briefed and know what is expected (their rights as adults to be able to intervene if they deem it important); and,
- Parents are informed, and also, preferably, the mosque attended by the pupils.

## Some Ideas for Good Practice in Schools

Engage students, Muslim and non-Muslim in discussing how to set aside a prayer space and how it can be managed.

*“At Ramadan, my school did not have any special arrangements for us so we went to the deputy headteacher and asked for somewhere to pray. We were given a classroom to use at lunchtimes and a teacher made sure that we could pray without being interrupted by other students.”*

*“My class teacher also asked me to read some verses from the Qur’an in school assembly – this was so successful that I was asked to go to other year assemblies to read the Qur’an to them. We were all proud to be Muslim students at our school.”*

SACRE would be interested in hearing what your school did to help students.

## Health & Safety Issues

As with any community, it is important to recognise that, whatever religious or community leaders may advise, it is the family that will decide on what actions are proper for family members. This will mean that the observance of the fast by children may not follow any guidance from any one mosque. Although the guidance in Islamic law is that a child should begin observing Ramadan from the age of maturity, some children will want to join at an earlier age, often with their parents’ blessing. Families may well be proud of this, even if their Imaam urges caution. For this reason, it is important that everyone in school is aware of children who are fasting.

It would be good practice to ensure that all staff are aware of the health and safety issues for pupils who are fasting. Lunchtime supervisors, in particular, may find this information useful.

Whilst recognising the importance of the fast, the faith teaching is clear: health is paramount. All staff have a duty of care at all times, and may, if considered necessary in their opinion, decide that health supersedes religious observance. **Parents should / must be advised at such times.**

Schools may wish to send a message to their local Muslim community faith leaders and parents saying that they are following the advice of the SACRE.

## Safeguarding

Staff should be aware of the potential for peer pressure amongst students to fast or not fast. There may also be additional bullying or harassment issues.

## Equal Opportunities

It is good equal opportunities practice for schools to make provision for the religious needs of their Muslim children and to ensure that children wanting to observe Ramadan are supported and enable to carry out religious observance. Similarly, it is good practice to mark Muslim religious celebrations in the same way as many schools celebrate other religious festivals.

## National Curriculum

### Physical Education

Parents should not expect, nor ask for their children to be totally excused physical activity during fasting; however, parents may ask that their child be excused from vigorous activity due to lower energy levels during the fast.

### Assessments and Examinations

Since the fast is based on the lunar calendar, and the timings of Ramadan change each year, a school will not always be able to arrange for examinations to take place outside Ramadan. However, it would be helpful for schools to bear in mind the likely period of fasting when setting up the timetable for internal examinations and other major assessments. Please see **Dates for Ramadan** section for setting future timetables.

## Parents' Evening

The school calendar should ideally ensure that parents' evenings and other important evening meetings are kept to a minimum during this period. The specific times for the Maghrib (after sunset prayer) may clash with parents' evenings and should be accommodated wherever possible.



## Checklist

Some ideas to make Ramadan go smoothly:

### Annually

- Check the calendar for the likely dates for Ramadan and Eed-ul-Fitr
- Discuss with subject departments or class teachers how Ramadan can be incorporated into the curriculum
- Check for dates which will be more difficult for exams, extracurricular activities or evening meetings
- Involve the school council in discussing positive ways of marking Ramadan in the school
- Summarise the arrangements in the report to the governing body

### The Term before Ramadan

- Make sure the assemblies are organized to reflect Ramadan and Eed-ul-Fitr (along with important dates for other faiths)
- Check for the availability of a room for prayer and the layout and aspect of the room
- Contact the local Mosque to arrange additional support / advice / visits / prayer times

### A Month before Ramadan

- Prepare a list of pupils who may be fasting
- Write to parents asking their intentions (Template / model letter attached)
- Make sure all staff are aware of what Ramadan means to the pupils / students

### Two Weeks before Ramadan

- Arrange a roster of older students, staff or helpers to look after the prayer room
- Alert support staff to individuals who may have health concerns

### Keeping the Governing Body Informed

The Headteacher might consider including the steps the school has taken to ensure a happy Ramadan for the whole school community in their report to the Governing Body. This might include:

- The number of Muslim staff and pupils offered a prayer facility
- The arrangements offered
- Copies of the communications with parents and Imaams
- Special arrangements in the school calendar
- How the school celebrates or marks Eed

## Ideas for Schools

### Ramadan Ideas for Nursery & Primary Schools

Some things the school could consider:

- Writing a letter to Muslim parents (see model letter) at least two weeks in advance of Ramadan. (The dates will be different each year and will depend on the sighting of the first crescent moon. The festival of Eed-ul-Fitr can even differ by a few days, depending on which mosque the family attend).
- Preparing a list of Muslim pupils who are known to be fasting, and the level of their fast, for the class teacher and assistants, as well as the first aider.
- Making special arrangements during break and lunch for pupils to have access to a supervised, quiet room. The wall or corner of the room, which faces the south-east, should preferably be bare, or covered in plain cloth.
- Making contact with Muslim parents prior to the fast to discuss lunchtime arrangements and share any other concerns. It should be possible to invite parents to assist with some supervision and / or leading prayers / seminars.
- Involving pupils, and parents, in an act of collective worship, to allow the rest of the school to appreciate the importance of this festival.
- Invite a parents, or other member of the Muslim community, to visit the school and talk to classes about their faith.
- Arrange for a class visit to a local mosque.
- Drawing up a policy statement to discuss with the school governing body the issues and priorities shared by the school community. This may have a different focus for church schools.
- For very young children, discussion about the fact that older siblings are fasting in a positive manner.

HSACRE and HIFN will be happy to assist schools in this task and good ideas from Hillingdon schools are particularly welcome in this section of the guidelines.

### Ramadan Ideas for High Schools

- Arrange for the acts of collective worship to include Ramadan, making sure that Ramadan is represented in a positive way, giving Muslim students the chance for input.
- Provide prayer facilities for Muslim pupils to use, which are suitable for the purpose. The room needs to be a quiet area that others cannot disrupt, with no distracting images or pictures. It is particularly helpful the orientation towards Makkah (Mecca) in the south-east is clearly marked – the school may wish to purchase a prayer mat, which has a compass inset for this purpose.
- Alter lunchtime arrangements to accommodate students who will not want to use the canteen or sit with others who are eating and drinking.
- Raise awareness in all departments. The curriculum should reflect, if possible, the importance of Ramadan, which encourages celebrants to embark on a period of contemplation, prayer and self-denial.

### **Ramadan Advice for Hillingdon Schools**

- Allow students to take part in physical activity, but at reduced levels of energy expenditure from those normally expected. If active students show evident signs of tiring beyond that which is reasonable, they should be allowed to sit out and recover. This is consistent with any student who is feeling 'below par' before, or during, a physical lesson.
- If evening meetings during Ramadan are unavoidable, it would be helpful to provide a place for Muslim children to eat and drink at the end of the daily fast (avail / see Ramadan timetables).
- Remember that the end of Ramadan is marked by one of the most important celebrations in the Muslim calendar: Eed-ul-Fitr.

## Model Letter / Template

You may wish to adapt this letter to send to all Muslim parents before the start of Ramadan. We are committed to this being a joint-venture, and it would be helpful if a copy also be sent to the mosque attended by the pupil, for information.

### Ramadan Model Letter (Schools have given mixed reviews, some preferring not to send a letter)

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Dear Parents / Carer,

#### Ramadan 2022

We are aware that, as a family, you may be preparing for fasting during the forthcoming month of Ramadan.

At school, so that we are fully informed, we would like to be clear on how best to support your children if they are taking part in this. So that we can be sensitive to their needs, please complete, for each of your children who will be taking part, the following information and return it to the school.

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

If she / he is intending to fast? Yes / No (Please delete as applicable)

If Yes, will she / he be fasting for:  The Whole Month  
 Some Days Only

So that we can contact you immediately if we have any concerns or queries, please let us know who to contact during school hours below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship (if not parent): \_\_\_\_\_

If there is anything else related to Ramadan which the school should know, please add to the back of this form.

We wish you and your family a peaceful and blessed month and a happy Eed-ul-Fitr.

Yours Sincerely,

Headteacher