



Fasting Policy

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Background

Fasting is part of many religious observances and practised by most of the major world faiths. This policy has been written to meet the religious needs of any child wishing to fast during the school day, and in particular, to ensure that the needs of the Muslim children are met during Ramadan, as this is a significant period of time during which the children have limited intake of water and food.

Aims

- To provide a safe environment for children who wish to fast at any time, whether it be for a single day, selected days or a longer period of time, such as the month of Ramadan.
- To ensure the religious needs of each child are not compromised, whilst still ensuring they are in the best possible physical and mental state, in order to successfully participate in all curriculum activities.

Implementation

- As fasting for Muslims is not obligatory for children until they reach the age of puberty, along with the other acts of worship (stated by the final messenger in Islam – Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him – P.b.u.h – in an authentic narration – hadith – by Abu Dawood) at Old Park Primary School, we do not consider it an obligation to allow children below this point to fast at school.
- The policy at Old Park Primary School supports the opinion of Islamic scholars who have said that the age 10 and above is most appropriate because the Prophet (P.b.u.h) stated that children should pray at this age (prayer and fasting are both compulsory pillars in Islam, however fasting is more challenging so due care is given when the child is of fasting age).
- At Old Park Primary School we recognise that Muslim children who are below the age of 10 and have not yet reached puberty often choose to fast for part of the day/ on certain days of the week as training to help them when they reach the age when it becomes compulsory. We support this, in line with the School Aims, as part of their preparation for adult life.
- At Old Park Primary School, children who are fasting on any given day will bring a note from a parent/ guardian into school on the day they will abstain from food and/ or water.
- At Old Park Primary School, we recognise that fasting is not compulsory for children of primary school age in any major world faith.

Health and Safety

- All parents/ guardians of children wishing to fast, must inform the school, **in writing**, if they wish their child to fast. This can be done on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, to allow the children to make decisions on their ability to maintain the fast as time passes.
- If a child says that he or she is fasting, but the school has not received a note from his or her parent/ guardian, they will be dealt with in a respectful manner; however, the child will not be allowed to miss lunch.
- Parents/ guardians should be contactable, as at all times (being particularly conscientious of this when their children are fasting), and available to collect their child if necessary.
- For Health and Safety reasons, pupils who are fasting do not do active physical education lessons at the time they are fasting. At this time they will do some health related learning.
- Fasting should not be a burden. In rare circumstances of a child becoming distressed when he or she is fasting, should we not be able to contact a parent/ guardian, the school will provide the child with something to eat and drink.
- RE lessons and assemblies will be used to help all children develop an understanding of the different faiths who use the practice of fasting as part of their religious traditions and particular festivals associated with times of fasting.
- Any exceptional circumstances (e.g. early puberty) can be discussed with the Head Teacher.
- If a child has a medical condition that would be complicated by fasting, e.g. diabetes, the child will not be permitted to fast at school.

Inclusion

- There is a mutual cooperation between the parents of any child who is fasting and the school.
- All children at Old Park Primary School are encouraged to feel positive about their family, culture and their faith.