

CHADWELL HEATH ACADEMY



15th May, 2018

Dear Parent,

We wish all students well with their preparation towards their GCSE and A Level examinations. There is not long to go now so keep up the hard work.

With students having worked hard towards their forthcoming GCSEs and A-Level exams, it is timely for our Muslim students to consider the decision about when to fast at Ramadan. We do respect the decision to fast during examinations however we urge you to consider the matter carefully given students have spent many years of hard work building up to these examinations. Thirst and hunger seem to be key issues, especially for afternoon examinations.

We have been provided with lengthy advice from a paper produced by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) who have worked with imams, Islamic scholars, experts, Muslim chaplains in the education sector and education leaders to produce information for school and colleges to help advise Muslim students on how best they can fulfil their Islamic obligations during Ramadan, including the obligation to perform well in their exams and tests. The following advice is derived from that paper (list of endorsers of the paper is overleaf):

Do students taking GCSEs and A levels, fall into the category of 'hardship' where there are exemptions to fasting?

'Some Muslim jurists allow students who are experiencing hardship to break their fast during Ramadan (and make up the days later), if it affects their ability to revise and study for important exams and tests. The imams, Islamic scholars, experts, chaplains and leaders we consulted thought that sitting important examinations can be an exemption from fasting if a student fears that fasting will affect his or her performance adversely.'

'Young Muslims and families, particularly those sitting exams and tests this summer, will need to balance their obligations as Muslims with their studies and the importance of exams and tests for their future, noting that the pursuit of education is also a religious and moral duty for Muslims of both genders.'

'Children and families should be informed of the flexibility Islamic Law offers to delay or exempt themselves from fasting and late night prayers if they believe their performance in exams and tests could be affected.'

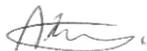
'Islam encourages critical reasoning and while individuals may seek advice from religious leaders, they have the right to make their own decision. It is intended that the information in this paper will be used as a positive opportunity for engagement with students to make these important decisions for themselves.' *Source: Ramadan: Exams and Tests, 2018 Information for schools and colleges (ASCL, 2018)*

Universities look closely at GCSE performance as they are a helpful guide to likely success at A Level and Btec Nationals. Students still use their A Level grades beyond degree level to gain entry

to top careers. Muslim students are therefore competing with all students nationally so better GCSE grades and A Level grades are key. We urge students and families to consider most carefully whether fasting during GCSEs is considered as hardship and therefore fasting is legitimately made up after the examinations have ended around mid-June.

We urge you to consider the matter carefully given students have spent many years of hard work building up to these examinations. We will, of course, respect whatever decisions you and your sons and daughters make, and wish you all the very best for the examination period.

Yours faithfully



Mr S Bull

Headteacher

LIST OF ENDORSEMENTS

Dr Shaykh Salah al-Ansari, Heythrop College

Imam Mohammad Asad, Association of Muslim Supplementary Schools

Kalsoom Bashir, Muslim Chaplain at Bristol University

Dr Hashim Bata, Research Fellow and Member of Al Mahdi Institute Education and Research Board

Abdul Chohan, Founder The Olive Tree School, UK

Ashfaque Chowdhury, Chair, The Association of Muslim Schools

Imam Irfan Chishti, MBE, Manchester Central Mosque, Co-founder Me & You Education

Maurice Irfan Coles, CEO, The CoED Foundation, former director of Islam and Citizenship Education Project

Sajid Gulzar, Executive Headteacher and CEO, Prince Albert Community Trust (PACT)

Rabiha Hannan, Co-Founder of New Horizons in British Islam

Kamal Hanif OBE, Executive Principal, Waverley School, Birmingham

Andrew Harland, Chief Executive and Founder Member of the International Examinations Officers' Association (iEOA)

Khola Hasan, Scholar Islamic Sharia Council and Imams Online

Sheikh Dr Usama Hasan, Imam and Astronomer, Quilliam Foundation www.ascl.org.uk (Imam Sheikh)

Mohammad Ismail, The Muslim Chaplain and Member of SIIBS, The University of Sheffield and Lead Imam of Birmingham Central Mosque and Senior Member of Board of British Muslim Scholars

Tehmina Kazi, Policy and Advocacy Officer, Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance

Shabnam Khan, Executive Director, Education and Support Services VIP Minds

Imam Muhammad Sarfraz Madni, Assistant Headteacher and Director of Islamic Ethos, Al-Hijrah School Birmingham

Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, imam, University of Leicester World Faiths Advisory Group member, Assistant Secretary General of The Muslim Council of Britain

Dr Farid Panjwani, Director of the Institute of Education Centre for Research & Evaluation in Muslim Education

Asgar Halim Rajput, Association of Muslim Chaplains in Education (AMCed)

Dr Mohammad Shahid Raza OBE, Chair, Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) Head Imam, Leicester Central Mosque, Leicester

Nasreen Rehman, Chair, British Muslims for Secular Democracy

Mawlana Sayyid Ali Raza Rizvi, Head of Ahlul Bayt Islamic Centre, London

Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Al-Risalah Education Trust, former Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain

Mohammad Imran Sulaman Al-Azhari, Leicester

Dr Matthew L N Wilkinson, Senior Research Fellow in Contemporary Islam, SOAS, University of London; Principal Investigator, 'Understanding Conversion to Islam in Prison'

Rukhsana Yaqoob, President, of the Muslim Teachers' Association on behalf of the Muslim Teachers Association

Anna Cole, chair and author, ASCL Parliamentary and Inclusion Specialist