

Fasting Policy

Policy created: October 2013

Most recent review: January 2023

Next review due: January 2025

Netherthorpe Primary School celebrates and respects all members of its school community. Whilst we recognise that fasting is not compulsory before the age of puberty in Islam, we understand that children from many practising Muslim homes are enthusiastic and get a great sense of achievement in joining their families in taking part in the spirit of Ramadan and often begin at a younger age. It is recommended in guidance issued by the Muslim Council of Britain (www.mcb.org.uk) for children to practise shorter and partial fasts in order to train them for the full fasting when they become adults. At Netherthorpe Primary School we encourage younger children to practise fasting at the weekend and during school holidays where they can be. In addition, we encourage all children, during Ramadan and throughout the year to carry out acts of kindness and treat everyone with respect inline with our school rules.

At Netherthorpe Primary School we only allow children in Year 6 and/or children who have reached puberty to fast as, in our experience, fasting in year groups below this has a detrimental effect upon a child’s overall performance. We believe that it is easy for children to become dehydrated, which can then become a health and safety concern. We have also found from experience that mood and ability to self-regulate are often affected negatively by fasting and aim to avoid this by limiting fasting to Year 6.

**Aims and Objectives**

* To provide a safe environment for children who wish to fast during the month of Ramadan.
* To ensure the proper care of children is maintained and to keep parents informed if their child is unwell.
* To further develop understanding of the different faiths represented in the school population.
* To work with our family and community to demonstrate the respect we have for all our families.

**Implementation**

* All parents must inform the school in writing if they wish their child to fast for part or all of the month of Ramadan. Parents must also inform the school immediately if there is any change to this request.
* If a child says that they are fasting, but the school has not received a request in writing from their parent, they will be dealt with in a respectful manner; however, the child will not be allowed to miss lunch.
* Children who are fasting should not be expected to exert themselves physically during play and lunchtimes and so are asked to consider whether they feel able to join in with lots of active games during playtimes.
* All children will continue to take part in PE lessons during Ramadan as it is part of the National Curriculum which is statutory. We ask children and parents/carers to consider whether children are able to fast on PE days and encourage them not to as children will be exerting themselves physically.
* As is the tradition of the school, RE lessons and assemblies are held during the school year to create an understanding of other faiths and festivals.
* All children who are fasting will need to bring an emergency snack that also includes water. Parents should encourage their children to make use of these should they feel the need.
* If the school notices signs of dehydration or exhaustion then the child should be asked if they are fasting and advised to terminate the fast immediately by drinking some water. If the child refuses, parents and carers will be contacted and asked to support the school.
* In the circumstances of a child becoming distressed or unwell when he or she is fasting, the school will encourage the child to break their fast by eating their emergency snack and having a drink of water. If the child refuses, parents and carers will be contacted and asked to support the school.
* 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. The school seeks to promote Health and Safety for all children and staff.

**Inclusion**

* There is mutual co-operation between the parents of children who are fasting and the school. While the school appreciates and respects reasons for wanting to fast, parents are asked to support school in understanding that the rigour and activity of the school day makes fasting very difficult.
* All children in the school are encouraged to feel positive about their family, their culture and their faith.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Curriculum Committee and will take into account the changing Islamic calendar and any guidance issued by Imams, Islamic scholars, experts, Muslim chaplains in the education sector.