

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan, the month of fasting, piety and prayer, is one of the five pillars of the Islam religion. This ritual is a period of spiritual and physical purification. Self-discipline in abstaining from food and drink, from before sunrise to after sunset, provides participants with a sense of identification with the poor and starving of the world. Anyone in good health is required to complete this fast for the entire month. People with health conditions and young children are exempt from this requirement; however, many children do fast along with their families to show that they are aspiring to the adult actions of their faith. There is a feast/festival (Eid Al-Fitr) marking the end of the fasting period to express happiness in having completed the fast.

Issues for School Staff:

- Some students, even younger ones, may request not to participate in activities such as dancing or music.
- Performing strenuous physical education activities may be difficult for fasting students, especially in the afternoon sessions or in warm weather.
- Students may prefer to remain in the classroom or go to the library rather than the cafeteria or lunch tables with other students.
- Parents and students may be unavailable to attend evening meetings, sports events or other programs.
- Some students may have a difficult time knowing how to respond to friends who want to sneak them food or who don't understand what their responsibilities are during Ramadan.
- Some students may be less attentive; some may find it difficult to stay awake in the afternoon. If they are fasting, they have gotten up before dawn to eat and pray, and they probably haven't gone back to sleep.