

Bedales Schools’ Provision for Pupils with Particular Religious, Dietary, Language or Cultural Needs Policy

INCLUDING EYFS

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Tick relevant box(es) ✓ how this Policy should appear:

Inspector Folder		✓
Website	Upload	✓
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Internal only		
Parent Portal		
For Pupils/Students		

Provision for Pupils with Particular Religious, Dietary, Language or Cultural Needs Policy

The School is a 2.5-18yrs day and boarding school for boys and girls. The School is non-denominational and welcomes staff and children from many different ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. Human rights and freedoms are respected.

We comply with all legislation prohibiting discrimination, notably the Equality Act 2010. In particular, we do not discriminate against the protected characteristics of the Act or cultural or linguistic background, special educational need, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, academic and sporting ability. There is no bar to admission, provided that we can make reasonable adjustments that enable us to deliver a Bedales education and that enable the pupil to benefit fully from that education. We are committed to widening access to as broad a range of pupils as may comply with the Schools' admissions requirements.

The admissions process ensures that the particular needs of every pupil joining the Bedales Schools are identified and this information is passed on to the school the pupil will be joining.

Dietary needs are met and we ensure that a wide range of choice is offered to ensure interest and options are available for all pupils. Bedales Schools is a 'no nut' school. The Boarding Team are fully informed to ensure that snacks and informal boarding activities which may include food cater for all. Dunannie has a separate Food and Drink Policy.

The language needs of non-native English speakers are assessed by the English as an Additional Language Department and support is available in all schools.

There is no formal worship at Bedales Schools but places of quiet for personal reflection are available. We respect the special religious festivals of all faiths and support families when absence is requested in order for pupils to observe these. See Appendix I for arrangements for Ramadan.

Pupils are invited to share their faith through assemblies, JAW and through our open discursive approach in lessons, in houses and generally throughout the school. The curriculum is broad and inclusive to enable faith to be explored in its widest context, encouraging the sharing of ideas, acceptance and celebration of all faiths or none.

NB: All School Policies are available to staff and can be found here:

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Appendix I: Arrangements for Ramadan

The Muslim Council of Britain advises that Muslims are encouraged to continue with their normal life during Ramadan, coping with normal life under a different set of guidelines.

Pupils who are fasting get up before dawn to have their breakfast. This interrupts their sleep pattern. Similarly, they may need to stay up later than usual to break their fast in darkness. The school ethos encourages respect for others, kindness, forgiveness, avoidance of bad language and poor behaviour. There are numerous opportunities to help the poor in the local community, including donating or working at food banks.

Boarders are welcome to invite their peers to share food when they are breaking their fast. In addition, should Muslim Day pupils wish to invite boarding peers to their home to do the same, they should speak with housestaff to see if arrangements can be made.

Staff encourage pupils to avoid excessive exertion in physical education to prevent dehydration.

Examinations during Ramadan

Pupils taking internal exams may request that they be taken before or after the formal exam period or later in the day if they find preparing for exams and fasting impacts their ability to revise or take exams.

Parents Evenings and School Functions

During Ramadan, the evenings can be a very busy period for Muslim families; particularly if the opening of the fast (Iftar) falls in the early evening. In addition, some adults will spend their time observing additional religious activities, e.g. special evening prayers at the mosque. If a parent is unable to attend a parents' meeting or function during Ramadan, they are encouraged to contact their son/daughter's tutor.

Exemption from fasting

There are certain circumstances and conditions in which Muslims are exempt from fasting. These include menstruation, those for whom fasting is likely to have a detrimental effect on health and physical wellbeing and those who cannot survive without taking medication or nourishment e.g. diabetics. Those travelling on long and difficult journeys may not fast if it is likely to cause undue hardship. If fasting days are not completed, then they would have to be made up at a later date or in some circumstances compensated for as prescribed by Islam e.g. feeding the poor.

Medication

No oral medication can be taken by a person who is fasting, but anyone needing regular medication during fasting hours is normally exempt from fasting in any case. Medication can be taken once the fast has been broken. Medical injections can be had by a person who is fasting, although not those injections that influence body nutrition – guidance should be sought on specific issues if necessary. During emergencies, where a child's life is at risk or severe illness is diagnosed, then medicine should be administered. Routine vaccinations should be scheduled for other times of the year.

Sex education

Whilst fasting, Muslims are not permitted to engage in any sexual relations and are expected to avoid sexual thoughts and discourse. A parent who wishes their child to avoid sex education lessons during Ramadan, should contact the houseparent so that this can be arranged.

Young children

Although fasting for the entire month becomes obligatory at the age of puberty, it is common practice for Muslim children to begin to fast before this age to become progressively accustomed by the age of puberty. Most children aged 10 and 11 (years 5 & 6) are expected to fast all 30 days. Children 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. The younger the age, the more progressively difficult it becomes for children to fast without their physical stamina and concentration levels being effected. This can be problematic for very young children and we would advise that schools liaise with parents to encourage very young children to fast half days or to avoid fasting during school days as this can have a significant effect on their concentration levels and degree of alertness whilst at school. It is important to be aware that young children are more likely to fast when Ramadan falls in the winter months, when the days are shorter than the much longer and hotter summer days. Whether a pupil decides to fast or not is a matter to be decided between the parent and child. Schools need to be aware that breaking the fast before the correct time may be regarded as being worse than not fasting at all. Schools should not encourage children to break their fast early unless it is for serious health and safety reasons. The overriding consideration should be that the children do not feel disadvantaged in school activities because of their religious observances.