



St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls

11-19 Church of England Academy Founded 1699

Service Compassion Justice Perseverance

Friday 11 May 2018

Dear Families

Ramadan and Examinations

We are entering a period of time of examinations which we know is highly pressured, particularly this year as students will be sitting longer examinations than they have previously done, some up to 3 hours in duration. We are doing all that we can to prepare and support them, not just academically, but in caring for their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. We have been giving information to students on how to best cope with the pressures they will undoubtedly be faced with, this included revision strategies, advice on healthy eating and getting the balance between study and relaxation. For some members of our community who are Muslims, there is additional pressure of managing the month of Ramadan which falls during the exam period. This is because part of Ramadan is fasting, the third of the Five Pillars (fundamental religious duties) of Islam.

The holy month of Ramadan is due to commence from around Tuesday 15 May 2018 until Eid al-Fitr, around Thursday 14 June 2018.

Over the last couple of years, concerns have been raised across the educational and religious communities about fasting during Ramadan and examination performance and the potential impact on young people in terms of their futures. For Muslim students and parents this may well lead to difficult decisions as they come to terms with balancing their obligations of pursuing education as a religious and moral duty, with fasting. We are aware within our own local community of the wide range and diversity of opinions on how to observe Ramadan and this range and diversity is reflected nationally. Some of the consequences of fasting, further impacted by hot weather, may be tiredness, low energy, dehydration, reduced focus, memory and concentration issues.

We are following the advice from the Association of School and College Leaders in their published paper that has been in conjunction with a number of Imams, Islamic scholars, experts, chaplains and leaders working with the educational sector who have published an information paper which is attached to this letter and can be found on our website.

St Martin's has an overriding safeguarding duty which applies to all students as does the promotion of the welfare of students, these are defined in the DfE's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education. Therefore, 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. They can be reassured that in this situation, Islamic rulings allow them to break their fast and make it up later. Additionally, the parents of the students will be contacted and advised of the schools' actions.

The following are suggestions to ensuring your child is well prepared, ready and understands the likely effects on their bodies during fasting and can manage this by:

- Eating well, with a balanced meal (plenty of slow release energy food) when break the fast and during the pre-dawn meal. Consider the potential impact of family gatherings for evening meals on nights prior to examination.
- Managing sleep effectively
- Getting plenty of rest between examinations
- Avoiding overexertion during the day, especially if the weather is particularly warm

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WITH LOVE AND LEARNING

- Planning ahead, in terms of organising their equipment and time to avoid rushing around

St Martin's is an inclusive school, embracing all aspects of the diversity of the community it serves. Staff are available to support students during the period of Ramadan and we will provide a quiet place for students to rest and for prayers.

Our news page on the website has detailed information that can be of further support during the period of Ramadan. There is also a very useful website page on Ramadan and health FAQs. This can be found on our website but for ease, I have also included the link in this letter.

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Healthynamadan/Pages/faqs.aspx>

I hope this letter helps to answer any questions you may have or ease any concerns regarding fasting during Ramadan.

We wish our students, families and staff who take part, a happy Ramadan.

Yours sincerely



Beverley Stanislaus
Headteacher