Coppice Primary Academy

Fasting Policy

Date policy approved by the Headteacher	5th December 2024
Next scheduled review	Autumn Term 2025

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1. Purpose and Introduction

Fasting is a part of many religious observances and practised by most of the major world faiths. This policy has been written to meet the religious needs of any child wishing to fast during the school day, and to ensure that the needs of the Muslim children are met during Ramadan as this is a significant period of time during which the children have limited intake of water and food.

The policy must also take into account the health & safety aspects of fasting alongside supervision levels within school.

Parents, carers and pupils are expected to adhere to the Fasting Procedure. The policy wording and its procedures have been discussed at Full Governing Body meetings before being approved.

2. Aims

- To provide a safe environment or procedure for children who wish to fast at any time, whether it be for a single day, selected days or a longer period of time such as the month of Ramadan.
- To ensure the religious needs of each child are not compromised, whilst still ensuring they are in the best possible physical and mental state in order to successfully participate in all curriculum activities.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to all pupils at Coppice Primary Academy.

4. The Requirement for Primary Age Children to Fast

As fasting for Muslims is not obligatory for children until they reach the age of puberty, at Coppice Primary Academy we do not consider it an obligation to allow children below this point to fast at school.

At Coppice we recognise that Muslim children who are below the age of 10 and have not yet reached puberty often choose to fast for part of the day or on certain days of the week as training to help them when they reach the age when it becomes compulsory. We support this, in line with the school aims, as part of their preparation for adult life.

We recognise that fasting is not compulsory for children of primary school age in any major world faith. We also recognise that some of our older children have reached puberty and some of our older children feel a strong religious and spiritual desire to fast.

5. Fasting during Ramadan

Ramadan is the main period of the year when Muslim children may choose to fast.

Depending on when Ramadan falls, the length of the fast will vary and may be particularly long. This raises some concerns as to how pupils will cope during the school day. Therefore, we would ask that parents consider this when agreeing with their child how many days they fast for.

Staff and governors recognise that the spiritual and moral dimension of fasting involves God-consciousness, exercising self-control, having empathy towards the poor, having appropriate dealings with others, giving charity and observing additional worship such as reading the entire Qur'an within the month.

Y6 Children

Leaders including governors have agreed that our oldest children should be able to fast and with parental consent can be supported to do this in the school environment.

For Y6 children who do choose to fast during Ramadan, the following arrangements will be put in place at lunchtime:

- Y6 children who are fasting will stay in school with their peers. For those who do not wish to go into the school dining room, they will have the opportunity to use a quiet room for reading or reflection time. They will be trusted to do this under light supervision. All children who are fasting will also spend a portion of the lunch break outside.
- Alternatively, children can choose to go home at lunchtime. If a child chooses to go home each lunchtime, they will need to be collected from the main reception promptly at 12.30pm by an adult and they should not return to school until 1.25pm. This will need to be agreed for the whole month of Ramadan as we cannot accommodate changing circumstances on a day to day basis.

Other Children in Key Stage 2 (Y3, Y4, Y5) and younger children

Due to the age and physical development of the children, the school would ask parents to carefully consider the appropriateness of allowing their children to fast. For those children in Y3-Y5 who wish to fast, the school asks parents to consider supporting them to do this just at the weekends. As a school we have chosen to make special arrangements for Y6 pupils but cannot do this for other year groups. Therefore if parents go against the school's policy, they will need to take responsibility for their child at lunchtime and arrange to take them home for the lunchtime period.

We will ensure that all children are aware of the wider spiritual and moral dimension of Ramadan and fasting as stated above (section 5).

If a child has reached puberty before Y6 and wishes to fast, this can be discussed with the Head of School so that suitable arrangements can be made.

6. Fasting at Other Times of the Year

It is recognised that there are other holy days throughout the year when children of different faiths may choose to fast.

For any children who will be fasting at times other than Ramadan, a fasting notification form (see Appendix A) must be completed and should be sent to the class teacher prior to the day of fasting. This is to ensure school staff can monitor the child's well-being.

7. Health and Safety

- All parents/carers of children wishing to fast, must inform the school, **in writing**, if they wish their child to fast. (Appendix A)
- If a child says that he or she is fasting but the school has not received a fasting notification form from his or her parent/carer, they will be treated in a respectful manner. Parents / carers will be contacted to confirm that their child is fasting or to gain further advice.
- Parents should be contactable, at all times (being particularly conscientious of this when their children are fasting), and available to collect their child if necessary.
- The school recognises that children may perform below their usual level in PE and other physical activities when they are fasting but will still take part.
- RE lessons and assemblies will be used to help all children develop an understanding of the different faiths that use the practice of fasting as part of their religious traditions and particular festivals associated with times of fasting. They will also be taught that fasting is just one element of

Any exceptional circumstances can be discussed with the Head of School.

8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Principal. The outcomes of the review will be shared with the Local Governing Body (LGB), The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2025.

If significant changes are proposed to the policy, there will be full consultation with parents and the LGB.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff, pupils, parents and other relevant stakeholders.

Appendix A

Fasting Notification Form

To be completed by the parent prior to the start of any fast by their child

Name of child: _____ Class: _____

I hereby give notification that my child will be fasting whilst at school on the following days:

From _____ to _____

I understand and consent that in the event of my child becoming unwell, school will encourage my child to drink and eat to ensure their health and well-being. We will contact parents / carers as well.

I understand that if my child is not in Y6 then I will have to pick my child up and take them home for lunchtime.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Date: _____