

St Mary's Church of England Primary School



Learn. Grow. Achieve. Flourish.

Fasting Policy

POLICY: Fasting Policy
APPROVED BY: Headteacher
APPROVED DATE: March 2026
REVIEW DATE: March 2029
This policy is reviewed in 3 years (Triennial)

THIS IS A NON-STATUTORY POLICY

Our School Vision

St Mary's school vision is to embrace a Christian like way of living, learning and teaching.

As a Church of England primary school, we value and are ambitious for all children and are committed to providing a positive, happy, safe and stimulating environment for them to enjoy and excel in their learning; grow in confidence, resilience and independence; achieve their full potential and flourish as individuals.

St Mary's C.E. Primary School

Fasting Policy

Introduction

This policy was developed in consultation with a range of members of the school community including representatives from the Islamic faith. Whilst we recognise that fasting is not compulsory before the age of puberty in Islam, we understand that children are often encouraged to fast or indeed wish to fast to prepare themselves for adulthood.

Under the Children Act 1989, teachers have a duty of care towards their pupils, traditionally referred to as 'in loco parentis'. Legally, while not bound by parental responsibility, teachers must behave as any reasonable parent would do in promoting the welfare and safety of children in their care. The staff and governors of St Mary's Church of England Primary School seek to promote the wellbeing, health, education and welfare of all children regardless of background, culture, personal needs or religious beliefs.

Aims of the policy

- To provide a safe and supportive environment for children who wish to fast during part or all of the holy 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.

School Position

At St Mary's Church of England Primary School, we support KS2 children who wish to fast and aim to provide a supportive and safe environment in which they can 'practice' fasting.

- Any parent of a child wishing to fast will be required to complete a 'fasting information form'
- The class teacher will pass on all forms to the office and in return the class teacher will receive a confirmation list of all the children in the class who have parental consent.
- The office will inform lunchtime supervisor team, kitchen staff, office staff and PPA cover staff, where necessary, of the children who are fasting.
- The office staff will provide a list of all children in the class of who has permission to fast.
- If a parent wishes to make any major changes to any of the arrangements, they must speak to the class teacher.
- When Ramadan falls during Statutory Assessment (SATs) weeks, the school recommends that a child in year 6 does not fast.
- We understand that some children may fast one day and not another. With support from the school staff, the child may make this decision day-by-day, hour-to-hour basis. The parent and child must understand that children may change their minds about how they are going to fast throughout the day.
- To help the children celebrate Ramadan where possible we will provide a prayer room during the KS2 lunchbreak for prayer.

Curriculum

The school operations and daily timetable should not be affected because children are fasting. Children who are fasting will take part in elements of PE lessons, school clubs and sporting events as part of their normal routine.

The children will not be excluded from PE or clubs, however they will also not be expected to exert themselves physically. Judgements on how much physical activity a child can take part in will be made on an individual basis. Class teachers may ask children to take short breaks during PE lessons or clubs, or the child may be able to take a slightly different role in a PE lesson where necessary (ie keeping scores etc).

Safeguarding & Health and Safety

If there are concerns about a child who is fasting, the school has an overriding safeguarding duty of care. If there are any signs of dehydration or exhaustion, the child will be advised to break the fast immediately by drinking some water and / or eating some food. Religious rulings allow the child to break their fast and make it up later.

Parents will be informed if the school has any concerns about the child's welfare or if the child was encouraged to break their fast.

St Mary's Church of England Primary School staff will not 'enforce' fasting arrangements with children. The fasting arrangements will be 'child led'.

In the rare circumstances of a child becoming ill or distressed when he or she is fasting, the school will provide the child with something to eat and drink. The children will need to understand that this is ok prior to fasting beginning.

If a child has a medical condition that would be complicated by fasting, e.g diabetes, then the parents should consider if it is appropriate for the child to fast in school. The school may seek further medical advice before agreeing to allow the child to fast in school time.

A child will need to understand that at certain times, for example in the event of extreme hot weather, they may be asked to sit in the shade and to consider drinking small amounts of water. This scenario will be discussed with the class teacher, parents and child in the meeting prior to the month of Ramadan.

Inclusion

- There is mutual co-operation between the parents of children who are fasting and the school.
- All children in the school are encouraged to feel positive about their family, their culture, and their faith.
- This policy will be reviewed triennially by the Headteacher and will consider the changing faith calendar and any guidance issued by religious leaders in the community and education sector.

Implementation

- All parents must inform the school **in writing** if they wish their child or agree in principle that their child wishes to fast. 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 contact the parent to confirm and ask them to complete the form for written agreement. If a parent cannot be contacted the child will be invited to lunch.
- Children who are fasting will continue to take part in PE lessons.
- 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.
- In the rare 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.

Legislative framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2022

Appendix A:

School Fasting Guidelines

- All parents must inform the school **in writing** if they wish their child to fast. 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 will continue to take part in PE lessons.
- 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.
- In the rare 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 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.

Fasting Permission Slip

Dear Parents,

Please can you provide a written request for your child to fast by completing the permission slip below and return it to your child's class teacher.

Thank you

Fasting Permission Slip

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

I give permission for my child to fast during the period of _____ (please specify religious period) during the dates (from: _____ to: _____) and I have read the School Fasting Guidelines and understand how this will be implemented.

I confirm that my child has no medical conditions or circumstances that might be affected by fasting.

If my child becomes unwell / faint during a fasting period, I understand that the school will ask my child to break their fast and drink water / eat food. **The school will inform me if this is the case.**

Signed (Parent): _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____