

Assalaamu alaikum,

Dear Parents and Carers

September re-opening of Madrasah

I trust this letter finds you in the best of health and firm Imaan. With the will of Allah we would like to welcome back all our Madrasah students at Balham Mosque & Tooting Islamic Centre. The term will start on Tuesday 8th September at normal Madrasah times, 5.00pm to 7.00pm.

Firstly, we would like to assure you that the Balham Mosque & Tooting Islamic Centre Trustees and Imams have had detailed discussions on implementation of the government guidance for the full re-opening of Madrasahs in September.

In preparation for the reopening of the Madrasah we have carried out detailed risk assessments and will be delivering special training to all staff members in regards to safety and our new guidance. We aim to operate within the framework of the government guidance set out for schools, to ensure the safety of all students, staff and parents.

Below you will find guidance in regards to the reopening of the Madrasah and the arrangements in place. Please do take the time to read it carefully.

Health advice

It is very reassuring for us to know that COVID-19 cases in Wandsworth are at an extremely low level and the benefits of being back in Madrasah far outweigh the very low risk from COVID-19. The data is very encouraging, but in order to keep transmission rates low, when students return in September, it is essential that they do not attend Madrasah if they become unwell with a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of or change in their normal sense of taste and smell. If students develop any of these symptoms they must stay at home and follow public health guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>. Please advise us immediately in the usual way if your child is unwell. The Madrasah will be cooperating fully with NHS Test and Trace.

Dropping and picking up students

We strongly urge that all students come to Madrasah on time before 5pm. When parents do drop off students we urge that parents do not wait around or congregate in the main hall and instead leave children with their assigned teachers. It is understandable that many parents will be waiting in the hall to pick up their children but we ask that social distancing measures are applied. Upon picking up your children parents must leave the hall immediately. Students are not to be mixing with other people either at this time.

Social distancing

We would really value your support in emphasising to the children the importance of social distancing when they return to Madrasah, both in Madrasah and on the journey to and from Madrasah. We will be delivering a curriculum to all Year groups and whilst it is understood that

such a large number of children on a Madrasah site will inevitably find it difficult to adhere to social distancing at all times, we have taken a number of actions to minimise contact between children and staff. It is essential that the children try to maintain a distance from staff at all times and we thank you for discussing the importance of this with your child.

Curriculum

As Madrasah closed leaving the last term incomplete we aim to complete the studies from the previous academic year in this new term. The curriculum originally set for the new academic year will strategically be taught in the remaining two terms of the year. A curriculum target will be set for all teachers and there will be regular reviews to assess the progress of students inshallah. Students are reminded that the syllabus changes intend no undue pressure and they will be provided the support needed.

Hygiene

As we are all aware, good hand and respiratory hygiene is essential to halt the spread of the virus. Please could you ensure that your child brings with them each day a pocket hand sanitiser and a packet of tissues. Please emphasise to your child the importance of regular hand washing (or using sanitiser if they can't easily get to a wash basin); coughing or sneezing into a tissue or the crook of their arm; and disposing of any used tissues in a lidded bin. Clearly any kind of throat clearing or spitting is as always, an absolute no-no. We have invested in a number of hand sanitising stations and ask that students sanitise hands as they come onto the Madrasah site.

Bathroom and water needs

Whilst we have taken measures that bathrooms are regularly cleaned and will remain open during Madrasah times. We urge that students use the bathroom facilities at home in an attempt to limit the amount of students using the bathroom. Along with that, access to water taps will remain open but we encourage that students bring with them their own water bottles.

Travelling to Madrasah

We are advised that the public transport capacity will continue to be constrained in the autumn term and that the use of it, especially during peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum. A reminder that face masks must be worn on public transport.

Face masks

At the time of writing, the guidance is that these are not required in Madrasah. The government has left it to Head teachers in England & Wales to decide their own policy. We are encouraging our students and staff to wear a face mask travelling to and from Madrasah. Students who wish to wear a face mask in the classroom will be able to do so.

Absence

From September, all students are expected back in Madrasah. Where a child has received an NHS shielding letter, parents and carers should contact the Madrasah admin team to engage in a discussion regarding their return to Madrasah. Should you have any concerns regarding medical / clinical vulnerability of a child, please do make contact asap with the Madrasah admin team. As outlined previously, we anticipate significantly reduced bus services and buses which will not stop

when they are at capacity. For this reason, it is important that students determine how long it will take them to come to Madrasah, and to ensure that they leave on time to avoid being late.

Behaviour

We will not tolerate any jokes regarding COVID-19, particularly as some of our students have suffered bereavements relating to the illness during the period of Madrasah closure. Similarly, although we are willing to remind students regarding the need for social distancing, we will expect them to follow staff instructions first time, every time. This will be essential to ensure student and staff safety. Additionally, we would not expect any of our delightful students to display such disappointing behaviors, but any instances of a student coughing/spitting purposely, will be dealt with at the most serious level.

Visitors to the site

We are sorry but in order to meet the government guidance for re-opening Madrasahs, we are not permitted to have visitors on site unless by prior appointment. In addition, it will be not be possible for equipment to be dropped off at the Madrasah office during the day, so please ensure that your child has everything they need for the day ahead before they leave home.

All that remains to be said now is a huge Jazak'Allah to all of you for your support, kindness and patience during this incredibly challenging year. May Allah reward you all abundantly, Aameen.

We really look forward to being able to return to something resembling normal in September and hope it is not too long before we can resume our full programme and welcome you back to the Madrasah properly.

From all my colleagues,

Welcome Back!

Wasalaam and duas

Maulana Hamza Patel, Imam Khubaeb Raja and Balham Mosque & Tooting Islamic Centre Trustees