

BIRMINGHAM ISLAMIC SOCIETY
WEEKEND ISLAMIC SCHOOL



**STUDENT - PARENT
HANDBOOK**

© **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

August 2007

http://www.bisweb.org/weekend_school

Introduction

Assalamu Alaikum and welcome to the Birmingham Islamic Society Weekend Islamic (BIS-WIS) School for the 2008-2009 school year.

This handbook has been prepared for students and parents with the intent of providing information about the rules and regulations that govern the school activities. These rules/regulations (responsibilities) were formulated and defined by the school committee for the purpose of achieving our mutual goals as parents, students, and committee; and to lay a strong foundation for our school in the years to come. Please spend a few minutes to read this handbook completely. Each year, the school committee updates and revises the handbook.

The education of our children is a cooperative effort involving the students, school and parents. Informed and concerned parents make fine partners in the educational process. The school committee, staff, and parents must work together and support each other's efforts.

The BIS Weekend Islamic School Committee is responsible for developing the policies, rules, and curriculum according to which the school activities are carried out. Additionally, the committee also processes registration and organizes extra-curricular activities. The principal, assistant principal, teachers, and assistant teachers are primarily responsible for providing high quality education based on the policies, rules and curriculum developed by the committee.

While every effort will be made to keep parents informed, parental initiative to know and keep track of their children's program and progress is key to the process of Islamic education. This handbook provides parents an opportunity to become more informed and aware of our school's programs and regulations.

Parents who have any comments or constructive suggestions regarding any school activity should contact the School Committee or leave a note at the BIS office.

School Committee

STUDENT DECORUM

Students at BIS Weekend Islamic School (BIS-WIS) will find that if they behave as responsible Muslims, they will be treated with respect. This self-imposed discipline is to everyone's benefit and helps create a pleasant school atmosphere. However, there must be certain fundamental regulations. These are in accord with the guidelines of Islam. They are not designed to inhibit or restrict students but to assist the orderly function of the school so that everyone can go about the primary task of getting a good Islamic education. Students are expected to follow these regulations:

REGULATIONS:

1. Coming on time every time to the school, dressed and groomed in accordance with the Islamic Laws of Cleanliness and Dress.
2. Being prepared for class by arriving with the intention and attitude to learn as well as the necessary items needed for class including homework notebooks, writing implements, textbooks, completed homework assignments, etc.
3. Observing the accepted Islamic Rules for behavior in dealing with the teachers, school officials, parents, non-Muslims and fellow students. Special attention should be paid to proper Islamic behavior between the sexes.
4. Cooperating with school personnel by listening and obeying instructions in order to maintain a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere in the school.
5. Assuming full responsibility for erroneous acts or bad behavior and accepting disciplinary action when applied.
6. Smoking, buying & selling, carrying or use of illegal substances as well as materials such as radios, tape-players, electronic games, weapons and similar items are prohibited on the school grounds. Should such items be found in the school the Principal / School Committee will withhold them until a decision on disciplinary action is taken.

DEALING WITH STUDENT DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS IN CLASS

All teachers shall follow these guidelines in dealing with students who misbehave and /or make a disturbance in the classroom:

1. The teacher shall ask the misbehaving child to stop engaging in the offending behavior. Although the teacher can speak firmly with the student, he/she shall not shout, or use abusive language, or behave in an un-Islamic manner.
2. If the student continues the bad behavior, the teacher shall seek the help of the Principal who may take the student out of the class and deal with him/her separately so as not to disturb the class in progress. If the Principal is not available, the teacher may ask BIS Weekend Islamic School Committee member or the parents of the misbehaving child for help in resolving the issue.
3. At no time should the teacher use any physical force on any student. Islamic teachings should be used as the guiding principle in dealing with all people.

PARENTS/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are expected to accept the following responsibilities for their children in accordance with Islamic guidelines:

1. Pay all tuition fees required by the school for the students' enrollment in the school.
2. Send students to school on time in the proper state of health; clean, well groomed and dressed in accordance with the Islamic Dress code.
3. Encourage positive attitudes toward learning by making sure that children come prepared to the class with appropriate materials such as writing implements, notebook, textbook, completed homework assignments etc.
4. Cooperate with school personnel in efforts to maintain and improve student attitudes, behavior and learning habits, as well as motivation and enthusiasm for excellence, involvement in extra-curricular activities, and acceptance of the challenges of responsibilities.
5. Assume full responsibility for damage to school property, including financial responsibility for repair or replacement of property.
6. Encourage through word and deed Islamic Character both in and out of the classroom.
7. Actively support the programs and activities of the BIS Weekend Islamic School.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS

The BIS Weekend Islamic School relies on various means of communicating with parents and students.

1. Conferences:

Parents and students are encouraged to seek individual conferences with teachers and/or the Principal. Appointments may be arranged by contacting the Principal. The School Committee will hold at least one meeting per semester with the parents to update them on the school activities and to solicit feedback and suggestions for improving the school.

2. Informal Reporting:

- a. Teachers, students and parents share a joint responsibility for informally keeping each other informed about a student's progress through telephone calls, notes, letters and other acceptable means.
- b. The teacher from time to time, to make parents aware of the unsatisfactory or commendable performance of their child, may use a form entitled "Interim Report".

3. Formal Reporting:

Students will receive a Progress Report (Mid-Semester and Semester Reports) indicating their Progress/Grade at the end of every marking period as indicated in the calendars.

PLANNED AGE GROUPS/CLASS LEVELS

Students will be enrolled into grades on the basis of evaluation, background, and prior knowledge. If there is disparity of backgrounds, the teachers shall use creative teaching methods to challenge all students alike. Following are the grades and the corresponding age groups:

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>AGE</u>
Grade I	Pre-school ages 5 and 6 yr.
Grade II	Ages 7 and 8 yr
Grade III	Ages 9 and 10 yr
Grade IV	Ages 11 and 12 yr
Grade V	Ages 13 and 14 yr
Grade VI	Ages 14 and 15 yr
Grade VII	Ages 16 and above

SUBJECTS TAUGHT

The following subjects will be taught in each class with due consideration of the prior educational background:

1. QURANIC STUDIES (Memorization of Surahs & Recitation)

- A. Reading of Short Surahs and Selected Verses from Quran
- B. Writing Exercises to facilitate memorization
- C. Memorization in Arabic and its translation in English
- D. Background, History and Blessings of Quran

2. SEERAH OF RASULULLAH AND OTHER PROPHETS

- A. Stories of Prophets of Allah
- B. Seerah of Prophet Muhammad (S)
- C. Companions of Prophet Muhammad (S)
- D. Stories of other Prophets mentioned in Quran.

3. ISLAMIC STUDIES (AQIDAH & FIQH)

- A. Five Pillars Of Islam
- B. Islamic Etiquette
- C. Dawah Among Non-Muslims

GRADING, EXAMINATIONS, AND RELATED MATERIALS

1. Examinations are an important aspect of the educational program and provide evidence of the student's level of mastery of the subject matter. A thorough review of material should be undertaken before each exam.
2. There are no exemptions from the Semester End Examinations. Semester End Examinations are mandatory. Due to unusual circumstances, students may request changing the date of the examination. Such a request must be submitted to the Principal in writing at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled exam date. The Principal may after careful consideration grant or refuse the request.
3. Semester End Grade will be kept on file in the BIS office for future reference. If parents do not agree with the grade they must submit their complaint in writing to the Principal no more than 4 weeks after the report cards are issued.

Exception: The final exam for the 1st graders will be of Multiple Choice Type for Regular 1st and 2nd graders in American school system. The exam shall be designed to be of appropriate level for these kids. The KG kids in the Regular school will be given an oral exam.

o Policies for **midterm and final exams:**

- For mid term exam, the syllabus is from the beginning of the year to the Sunday prior to the exam Sunday.
- For the final exam, the syllabus is from the beginning of the year to the Sunday prior to the exam Sunday.
- Teacher shall prepare an exam study guide for each exam and hand over to the student at least two weeks prior to the exam. Teachers may provide students with few sample questions.
- The study guide shall outline covered syllabus for the exam and key learning objectives.
- Exam shall be of multiple choice type or fill in the blank type with minimal writing required.
- Essay type exams shall not be administered.
- Exam shall be designed such that an average student shall not take more than 30 minutes to complete the exam.
- Maximum time allocated for an exam is 40 minutes, a 10 minute grace period from the stipulated time of 30 minutes.
- Exams shall be graded within two weeks time and results compiled and announced in 3 weeks time.
- All the exams shall be in class exams, no take home exams allowed.
- Final grade is 70% final exam, 10% quizzes, 10% midterm, 5% attendance, and 5% homework.
This applies to grades 2 and up only. Any deviation from this policy shall be communicated to the parents and to the administrations and obtain prior approval.
- Only the syllabus that is covered in the class shall be included in the exam.

o Policies for **quizzes**

- No more than 4 quizzes shall be administered in a year.
- Syllabus for each quiz is limited to what is covered from the last quiz to date.
- No study guide shall be provided for quizzes.
- All four quizzes shall not weigh more than 10% towards the final grade.

o **General policies:**

- No makeup exams/quizzes shall be administered unless prior permission is obtained or for medical reason.
- Students caught cheating shall be given zero marks for the exam with no re-takes or marks cut at teacher's discretion.
- Any disputes on the grades shall be brought to the notice of the principal. Final decision shall be of the principal in any disputes regarding grades.
- Students failing in the final grade shall not be promoted to the next grade.
- The grading scale will be as follows: 100-90 - A, 89-80 B, 79-70C, 69 and below is D.
- **60% attendance is required to pass to the next level irrespective of the grades.**
- There will be no written exams given to KG and 1st grades. Only oral exams will be given to these students.
- The 1st grade will be divided into two levels: an upper level and a lower level. Students will be divided according to age, maturity level, and teachers' assessment.
- Students in the 1st grade will be promoted to the next grade based upon the teachers' assessments. Only those students who seem likely to progress will be tested. Those students who still need revision and help will not be tested and will remain in the 1st grade. The decision on which student will be tested and how will be communicated to the parents at least two weeks prior to the mid term exam.
- We will not accept any student into the school two weeks after the mid term exam.

- Up to two weeks after the midterm exam has been given, any new students joining BIS-WIS will be given the midterm exam as a placement exam for that grade. Only if the student clears the placement test he/she will be admitted to the grade or to a lower grade.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements are set forth:

- Taking both Semester End Examinations;
- Successfully maintaining a 70 or higher grade point average in each subject for the entire academic year;
- Payment of all fees, fines, etc. as well as any other outstanding obligations to the School.

Passing Course Requirements

Expectations and appropriate proficiency levels have been developed for all courses and grade levels. A passing grade in a course is generally dependent on:

- Attendance. Un-excused absenteeism should not exceed 4 days per Semester;
- Class participation;
- Completion of assignments;
- Satisfactory overall performance on tests & exams.

More details on proficiency levels are available from the teachers.

Class Achievement Award /Honors:

Every year teachers will be asked to select the top students of each grade that best exemplify the School's ideals and aspirations. The selections will be made on the basis of academic performance as well as Islamic Character and Behavior. At the Annual Graduation Ceremonies those who have been selected will be formally awarded.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks and handouts issued to students should be cared for with pride. Initially the costs of the textbooks/handouts are included in the student's tuition fees. If a student subsequently loses or misplaces any textbook/handout, he/she will have to pay for a replacement.

ABSENCE AND LATE ARRIVAL (TARDINESS) POLICIES

Absence Policy:

Absence from the school jeopardizes the ability of the student to satisfactorily complete the prescribed course of study. The interruption of the instructional process caused by frequent and/or repeated absence or lateness is a major concern to all involved. It is in this light that the following attendance regulations are put forward:

1. In the case of absence from the school for any particular time period, students will be required upon return to the school to provide the Principal with a note explaining the reason of absence signed by his/her Parent or Guardian. The note should be legible and include (a) full name of student, (b) date(s) of absence, (c) reason, (d) signature of parent.
2. Failure by the student to provide the Principal with a note explaining his/her absence beyond a two school day period will cause the student to receive a cut notice and his/her Parent's to be informed. Accumulation of 2 cut notices will result in review by the School Principal as to further courses of action which may include suspension.
3. Students are required to make up all work that they missed during the course of their absence by calling other students before next class.

Lateness Policy:

The parent/guardian's cooperation is sought in ensuring that the students arrive on time. Since the teachers get less than 3 hours with the children each week for instruction, it is very important that they lose no time period due to students' late arrival and the resulting disruption.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to see that his/her child is on time for school. This means that the student should be in the assembly by 10.00am. Arriving late more than 4 times a semester will result in disciplinary action.

LEAVING THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

Unless an emergency takes place, i.e. family emergency, injuries to a student and similar cases, students are not permitted to leave the school premises while it is in session. If the student has to leave the school premises in such an event, the student/parent/guardian should inform the teacher and/or the Principal.

SUSPENSION POLICY

In addition to those items listed above, the following conduct on the part of a student shall constitute immediate grounds for suspension:

- Continued or willful disobedience;
- Open defiance of any teacher or person in authority;
- Actions that constitute an immediate or continuing danger to the physical well being of others;
- Physical assault on another student.
- Taking or attempting to take personal property or money from another student by force or intimidation;
- Willfully causing, or attempting to cause substantial damage to school property (vandalism);
- Use, possession or sale of alcohol or any other controlled substance (including smoking);
- Possession of a weapon or other item, which could be used to cause personal injury (including fireworks).

The exact intensity and duration of the disciplinary action taken against a particular student is to be decided on a case by case basis by the Principal, under advisement of concerned parties, but subject to the final approval of the School Committee in case of expulsion from the school. Fortunately, in the past 15 years the weekend school has been functioning, alhamdulillah, there has never been a need to resort to this action, and we all hope and pray, that we will never have such a need to take action in the future.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The accepted norms of Islamic Behavior and Modesty will be expected of all individuals associated with the school. These include students, teachers, parents and administration. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

DRESS CODE

Dress in accordance with Islamic Guidelines will be required of all those participating in the school (mentioned above). Specifically, the males will be required to wear clean shirts and long pants that are loose fitting and opaque. The outfit should not be adorned with pictures of animals or human beings in any form or display profane language. This particularly pertains to Musical band and celebrity shirts. The females will be required to wear loose fitting, opaque clothing that only reveals the hands and face (covering everything else including the hair). In addition, they should not wear clothing with the images detailed above.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a parent or student has a grievance, he/she may take the following successive route of appeal to correct it:

Teacher
Principal
School Committee

All major grievances should be detailed in writing to appropriate parties.

SCHOOL FEES AND TUITION

School fees for an academic year are printed on the corresponding registration form (BIS-WIS academic year is from August to June).

Tuition dues are payable in full during registration. If any family has financial difficulties in paying the tuition, a request in writing to waive or reduce the fees or to make payment arrangements should be made to the BIS Weekend Islamic School Committee.

The School Committee will announce every year, in due time, any changes in tuition and late registration fees.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Minimum age requirement:

A child must be at least 5 years of age (by August 31 of the year) to be admitted to the Weekend School in 1st grade. Years of experience has shown us that children younger than 5 years of age generally will not have the attention span or the ability to keep up with the rest of the students and tend to disrupt the class.

Registration:

A completed registration form for each family (children from the same family can be enrolled on one form) must be submitted along with the appropriate tuition to a school committee member. Registration forms can be obtained from the BIS office or downloaded from the BIS website http://www.bisweb.org/weekend_school.

Pre-registration:

Students who are currently enrolled in the school will be given an opportunity to pre-register during May for the subsequent school year and ensure that they can continue to attend the school. Pre-registration forms will be mailed to each family's home address around the end of April and should be returned with the appropriate fees in about 2 to 3 weeks (due date will be specified in the letter) to a weekend school committee member. Parents who do not avail themselves of this opportunity will lose their slots and may not get their session of choice and possibly even admission for the following year if the seats are full.

Open enrollment:

Following the pre-registration period, there will be an open enrollment day where new applications for the following academic year will be accepted. These will be processed strictly on a first-come-first-served basis to fill any slots available after the pre-registration period ends. Registration forms can be submitted until the last day of the academic year without incurring late fees.

Admission of children into school in mid-academic year:

New students will be admitted to the school (space permitting) after the start of the school year only during the first semester (till December 31). After that no students will be admitted unless they moved in from outside or they are transferring from another Islamic weekend or full-time school and evidence of their enrollment and attendance at that school is provided.

At least one parent of children in 1st grade should be in the BIS premises during the entire time that the school is in session (Sunday 9.45 AM to 1 PM). This is because children at this age have special needs, and may get lonely, teary-eyed or want a parent close by in case they are not feeling well.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

Occasionally, inclement weather, loss of water or electricity, or some other emergency forces the closing of our school. These unscheduled changes of school days are infrequent. However, it is vital that each family knows specifically what to do if an emergency forces closing of the school. When the decision is made to close the school, we will record that information on the BIS voice mail. The School Committee will also inform the Principals who in turn will inform all teachers by telephone. All families are requested to call the BIS Masjid or the Principals when a school closing appears probable.

BIS Masjid: (205) 879-4247

WEEKEND SCHOOL TIME TABLE

LEVEL		First Period 10:15 - 11:00	Second Period 11:00 – 11:45		Third Period 12:15-1:00	
LEVEL 1 5 - 6 years	10:00AM - 10:15 AM Assembly	QUR'ANIC STUDIES	ISLAMIC STUDIES	11:45 AM - 12:15 PM Break	SIRAH OF RASULULLAH	1:00 PM – 130 PM Zuhur
LEVEL 2 7 - 8 years		SIRAH OF RASULULLAH	QUR'ANIC STUDIES		ISLAMIC STUDIES	
LEVEL 3 9 - 10 years		ISLAMIC STUDIES	SIRAH OF RASULULLAH		QUR'ANIC STUDIES	
LEVEL 4 11 - 12 years		QUR'ANIC STUDIES	ISLAMIC STUDIES		SIRAH OF RASULULLAH	
LEVEL 5 13 - 14 years		SIRAH OF RASULULLAH	QUR'ANIC STUDIES		ISLAMIC STUDIES	
LEVEL 6 15 years & up		ISLAMIC STUDIES	SIRAH OF RASULULLAH		QUR'ANIC STUDIES	

ABSENCE EXCUSE SLIP

_____ be excused for being absent from weekend school _____ day to _____ day due to the following reason:

The reason being:

Parent: _____ Date: _____

ABSENCE EXCUSE SLIP

_____ be excused for being absent from weekend school _____ day to _____ day due to the following reason:

The reason being:

Parent: _____ Date: _____

ABSENCE EXCUSE SLIP

_____ be excused for being absent from weekend school _____ day to _____ day due to the following reason:

The reason being:

Parent: _____ Date: _____

ABSENCE EXCUSE SLIP

_____ be excused for being absent from weekend school _____ day to _____ day due to the following reason:

The reason being:

Parent: _____ Date: _____

***MAY ALLAH GUIDE ALL OF US
TO
THE RIGHT PATH***