



Absence Policy

Importance of attending Madrasah

In this day and age, we must never underestimate the importance and significance of sending our children to Madrasah.

Some of the objectives are:

- Learn about Islam, Islamic values, etiquettes, and morals.
- Ensure our children are confident about their Deen.
- Safeguard our children's Iman.
- Being a confident Muslim in an environment that has various prevalent norms that are wholly incompatible with our values, beliefs, and principles.

It is essential parents appreciate the “bigger” picture and make a concentrated effort in sending children every day to Madrasah, on time (everything else in Madrasah time must be a secondary priority).

Importance of daily attendance

Every moment and day in Madrasah counts, and days missed add up very quickly. As an example, a pupil in Level 2, who misses 5 days in one term, has missed 10 lessons (5 lessons of Qur'an + Tajweed and a further 5 lessons of Islamic Studies + Duas). However, as the impact of one day's absence follows onto the following day, in reality your child is now affected by falling behind in 20 lessons. That is a lot of work, and if the absence rate is higher, then the harm is even greater.

When there is daily attendance, there are numerous benefits:

1. Attainment is higher, as each lesson is a “progressive activity”, building upon the previous lesson. A good example of this is being able to recite the Qur'an fluently, this is only achievable when there is sustained effort over a period of time,
2. Progress is smooth and consistent.
3. Children will enjoy coming to Madrasah.
4. The respective objectives will be met.

Harms of irregular attendance / high absences

- ☒ Bumpy and chaotic progress.
- ☒ Unable to keep up with work.
- ☒ Falling behind and always playing catch up.
- ☒ Loss of confidence.
- ☒ Interest diminishes resulting in wanting to leave (a very common problem).
- ☒ Madrasah becomes a burden.
- ☒ Constantly absent children are a burden on teachers, especially in terms of missed work and gaps in their learning.

When the absences are frequent and from an early stage, certain pupils never progress in for example Quran recitation.

Problems and challenges for the Madrasah

Even if a pupil takes the initiative to “catch up”, it is never the same as the classroom interaction. Especially, as you cannot “catch up” everything from just a book.

The Madrasah then faces various problems:

- There is an imbalance in the class.
- It is unfair on teachers who are already working hard.

What are the reasons of absences?

From our experience, with the exception of illness, the reason a child is absent is because parents are giving other things priority over Madrasah education and attendance, and at times some parents are simply following prevalent narratives (without any independent reflection or thought).

Some examples of this are:

1. **Sports activities**, it might start off with “minimal” participation, however participation in sports always requires MORE and MORE commitment.

2. **Tuition for school subjects.** This has now probably overtaken sports, where parents are compelling children as young as 7 and 8 to attend lessons in Madrasah time.
3. **Social Outings.** There are some parents whose child will be absent for 3-4 Madrasah days due to a “family” wedding. There is simply no need for your child to miss any Madrasah, especially as the “main event” of most weddings takes place on the weekend.
4. **Going abroad** in a manner where 2-3 weeks of Madrasah is missed.
5. **Trivial reasons.** These are things that are unimportant and insignificant, and is usually a result of poor organisation of routines etc.

The disappointing conclusion of the above examples is that some parents are simply not making Madrasah attendance and education a priority. ***Parents must also appreciate that without doubt some sacrifices and compromises will ultimately have to be made if you want your child to access and benefit from Islamic education.***

Sports, tuition etc must not be taking place in Madrasah time. This can be easily covered on the weekend.

Why the need for a formal policy?

Everything you have read so far is the reason for this policy.

It is fair to say that a large majority of parents take Madrasah education seriously and avoid absences (or their child’s absence is negligible – 4 or 5 days in the ENTIRE year). However in the last 5 years the number of such parents is sharply decreasing, resulting in the need for a clear policy that addresses the problems and gives parents clarity of our expectations and also the relevant consequences.

In addition to this, in the academic year 2022-23, the absences of certain children have been appalling.

Some examples are:

	Pupil of Class:	No. of days absent	
		S1	S2
1	Reception	32	26
2	Level 1	52	63
3	Level 2	50	41
4	Level 3	61	30
5	Level 4	60	38
6	Level 5	43	29
7	Level 6	42	37
8	Level 7A	-	48
9	Level 7B	-	20
10	Sanatayn Girls	-	42
11	Tarbiyah	-	47
12	Hifz	-	47
13	Hifz	-	45
14	Alimiyyah Girls	-	31

- The above is an example of just ONE pupil from each class.
- In some classes there are several pupils with very poor attendance.
- You will note that some pupils had absences of 30, 37, 48 and even 63 days.

Hence, we as a Madrasah have a serious issue, if it is not addressed, then it will only get worse.

Absence Policy

1. We have thus devised a policy which is based on a minimum attendance every term (or nearest holiday etc that is near a term).
2. If a pupil exceeds the “maximum absences permitted” (authorised absences), then disciplinary action will take place.
3. The “maximum absences permitted” (authorised absences), applies to all classes, including Hifz and Alimiyyah.
4. The “maximum absences permitted” (authorised absences), has been spread out across the year, to ensure there is a balance in the attendance.

What is an Authorised Absence?

1. Absences for illness /sickness **where you have sent notification via email.**
2. Bereavement of an IMMEDIATE close family member, **where you have sent notification via email.** We will allow three Madrasah days for this, as this is the Shariah mourning period.
3. For non-immediate family members, the authorised absence for bereavement is one day (for Janazah attendance).
4. We will also overlook FOUR days of unauthorised absences every term or other period specified below. This means we will not take any disciplinary action for absences up to four days.
5. Note: **Umrah / Palestine etc is not classified as an authorised absence.** However, you can “take advantage” of the four days given in point number 4 above.

Very Important:

In all cases, and irrespective of the absence being authorised, you **must** notify us via email, otherwise it will be recorded as an **unauthorised** absence, and there will be no retrospective appeals.

Term Dates / Absence Period

1. As mentioned, we will overlook FOUR days of unauthorised absences.
2. Please note the dates / period below for this:

Term / Period	Dates / Period	'Overlooked' Unauthorised Absences
1	September 2023 N/A	-
2	Start: Mon 8 th Jan 2024 End: Fri 5 th April 2024	4
3	Start: Mon 8 th April 2024 End: Fri 28 th June 2024	4

3. The “maximum absence permitted” equates to an attendance rate of 94%. Every pupil in our Madrasah must be achieving 94% attendance.

Disciplinary Action

1. If your child does not adhere to this absence policy, there will be disciplinary action.
2. The attendance will be for ONE day in the morning, most likely in the morning and on a weekend.
3. Your child will be supervised by a Madrasah teacher and will do Madrasah work.
4. If there are more children, there will be more teachers.
5. Naturally, this is going to use up more resources of the Madrasah, **hence you will pay £10 on the day in cash.** We do not want this to become a separate administrative burden.
6. You will be notified of this attendance (date and time) in advance.
7. A failure to attend will result in suspension of two days from the Madrasah effective from the Monday after the date set for the disciplinary action.

Illness (Important)

- a) If your child is ill (flu, fever, chicken pox etc), then this absence is not part of this policy.
- b) **You must notify the absence FORMALLY via email.** So that there is a record. Do not ring us.
- c) You must clearly state the reason of absence in your email.
- d) If you do not notify us of an absence due to illness, then we will record it as a regular UNAUTHORISED absence which will be subject to this policy.
- e) Absences must be notified on the following email:
absences@alansaar.org.uk

Persistent Absences

1. If your child is absent for several days at a time (for reasons such as sports, tuition etc), which are beyond the scope of this policy, then we will request a meeting with you.
2. It is quite possible your child may have to repeat the academic year if the number of absences is very high.
3. **It is also possible that attendance 5 days a week, in a formal Madrasah setting may not be suitable for your child due to other competing priorities.** Hence, we will request you to look for another establishment / private tuition etc.
4. Madrasah spaces are currently very limited, and demand is very high. It is unfair that your child takes up a place which they are not properly utilising, hence it is better for all concerned that we terminate your child's admission and allocate the space to someone else.
5. Parents must appreciate that we operate the Madrasah in challenging circumstances, and dealing with regular absences is not effective use of our valuable time.

Conclusions

- a. Parents must appreciate our exasperation over absences, in particular absences that equate to just 70-80% attendance.
- b. Parents must also reflect and prioritise Islamic education. You do not allow your child to miss school, in fact some overburden their child with extra tuition etc. We are not asking you to commit to this level, rather you simply need to send your child to Madrasah each day.
- c. From experience, the very same children who have a high number of absences tend to also leave Madrasah very early. Hence, our policy of dealing with “abnormal absences” robustly, where you either attend and adhere to our policy, or you make alternative arrangements.
- d. Attending Madrasah is not just for Islamic education, there are also other more “broad” reasons such as:
 - Learning moral values.
 - Countering outside influences.
 - Appreciating the Muslim community.
 - Building and inculcating genuine love and respect for parents, elders etc.
 - Time spent in Madrasah is time well spent and off the streets.
- e. Just as educational achievement and Tarbiyah are a target of ours, regular attendance is also an equally important target.

We hope you will thus appreciate the reasons for this policy and the relevant disciplinary action.

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