



MALEK FAHD ISLAMIC SCHOOL

ABN: 41003 864 891

KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT & WORK IS WORSHIP

www.mfis.nsw.edu.au

8th May 2020

Assalamualaikom WRWB

Welcome back to Term 2 and Ramadan Mubarak! While we have started off very differently to how we normally begin the term, the Staff are very much looking forward to seeing their students again! As we slowly implement a safe return to full time schooling for our students, please note the steps the school is taking in order to keep everybody safe while COVID-19 continues to be a serious concern.

First, our start time for Primary School will be 9:00am, so that we can reduce the crowds at the school in order to implement social distancing at the School. We are also providing face to face teaching days for half classes to help students complete the set tasks that we have emailed you for remote learning. This is to consolidate students' skills in literacy and numeracy, as well as to reconnect with them and provide them with social interactions in a classroom setting. By now you should have received an email informing you of which day your child is scheduled to attend face to face teaching. **We believe we have identified the siblings so that they are scheduled on the same day. If we have missed your child, please contact us at the Primary Office.** We are also making sure that the classrooms and other parts of the school are cleaned and disinfected daily, and all the rooms have been provided with hand sanitiser. As remote learning continues, we are still emailing the work to you. Furthermore, when you bring your child to school, you will notice several signs have been put up around the school reminding us of social distancing to keep you and everyone safe and healthy. We have also staggered play times to reduce the number of children in the playground, and at lunch time Years 3 - 6 students will be able to pray individually in the hall.

For the duration of Ramadan our start and finish times are as follows:

K – 6 students all start at 9:00am

Kindergarten and siblings will be dismissed at 1:15pm

Years 1 – 6 dismissal time is 1:30pm

K – 2 students will be waiting in the drop off and pick up area. There we have shelter if we have wet weather.

Years 3 – 6 are dismissed from class and will walk to their parents/carers.

It is strictly drop off and pick up only. You will not be able to park or walk into the primary school at all as parking will be unavailable. Simply drive through and drop off or pick up your child and then kindly leave immediately. We will have staff at the drop off and pick up area before and after school to assist your child should they need it. Please do not arrive earlier as you will not be able to park inside and you will not be able to wait on the school grounds. If you are asked by a staff member to wait in your car, please follow the instructions.

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If you arrive late, your child will have to walk into the primary school on their own. If you are picking up your child earlier than dismissal time, please let the security guard know your child's name. Wait at the drop off pick up area in your car until your child comes out to you. Younger children will be escorted by a staff member.

You will not be able to go to the office for any reason. If you need anything from the office, or you want to talk to a teacher please call or email instead.

Student Wellbeing to Return to School

We understand that returning to school may pose the same stress and anxiety as the start of a new year would. In addition to the classroom teachers, the School counsellor will be on hand to help your child if required. Please find attached to this newsletter some helpful tips that you could use to help your child get back to school.

Remote Learning

Remote learning will still continue. When students are here on their scheduled days, the work will mainly focus on the English and Math components of the set remote learning tasks. However, if your child can't attend their scheduled day, they can still continue the remote learning tasks which will be the same as what is being done at school.

Attending on non-scheduled days

Students who attend school on their non-scheduled day will be supervised by a staff member other than their class teacher. The supervising teacher will provide guidance to help the students independently complete their remote learning tasks.

Health and Wellbeing

We want your child to be happy and healthy when they come back to school, and most children are very excited at coming back. However, we have a responsibility to every single person who works and learns in this school community, so If your child is unwell, please keep them at home until they are better. Any child that is sick, will be isolated and their parents contacted to take them home. With your help and understanding we can keep everybody safe.

Until we get back to normal full time schooling again, stay healthy, be kind, be happy.

Wasalam

Ms El-Ahmad

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Helping Your Child Return to School

Exposure and repetition help ease anxiety. If your child is anxious, try doing some practice test runs; drive by the school a few times before your child's first day back, (you can even drive to the school on the weekend and have your child practice getting out of the car or a drop-off point). For some children, even getting out of the house after such a long stay at home may be anxiety provoking. Practice going out for walks, visits or errands. Support your child to stay connected to school friends while at home. Role-play making new friends. Role-play what your morning drop-off and morning routine may look like. Send them to school even if anxious – the more we avoid situations that make us anxious, we reinforce in our brains that those situations are indeed dangerous or scary.

Planning and Routines: For anxious kids, plenty of detail, preparation and routines can be calming. Involve your child in plan making. Talk through the steps of getting to school or class: "First we'll have breakfast, then... we'll say our morning Qur'an/Dua for protection together.... then you wait in the assembly area, say salams to your friends and play until the bell..." Creating visual checklist or 'To Do Lists' or gradual Independence Charts can help them remember goals, what they need to do or take with them. Token economy systems or reward charts can also help motivate and reinforce positive behaviour. Plan a family celebration to mark their first day/week back or milestones.

Some children may want to child to bring a security item from home to help them cope (e.g a drawing of or note from a parent, photo or comfort object). This can remain in the child's pocket or bag during the day.

Develop a morning ritual – Invent a fun routine for saying goodbye at drop off – try a high-five, bear hug or secret handshake and establish a specific pick up or 'see you later area.' Keep to regular routines and activities as much as possible. Wake children up at usual school times, have them eat at regular times and stick to school day bed-time schedules. Get your child involved in planning or packing their lunches and snacks. For younger children, help them pack their bag the night before. Lay out or have them prepare their uniform. Allow some extra time to get ready on their days back so you can remain calm and not rush.

Check medical concerns: Anxiety about school sometimes takes the form of dizziness, headaches, chest-pain, difficulty breathing and stomach-aches, especially when they appear in the morning before school, the night before school or on a Sunday evening. If your child has any flu/ Covid-19-like symptoms, do not bring them to school. Get your child checked out by a GP. If a pattern persists, anxiety may be the cause.

Listen and talk – listening to and acknowledging your child's feelings will help them feel more secure. Validate their feelings ("I know that's hard") and demonstrate confidence that they can handle the situation. Increase confidence by encouraging children to think about ways they have and can handle things they are worried about.

Don't dismiss fears (e.g. "there's nothing to be worried about! You'll be fine!") and don't ask questions that suggest you expect kids to be anxious (e.g. "are you worried about going back to school?"). Don't focus on hypothetical 'what ifs', - steer them towards 'what is'...and what they can do to change a situation. Find out what your child's understanding is and correct any misunderstanding or confusion. Be optimistic and encouraging and help children to explore the positives. Talk about school as a fun, positive opportunity. Set time aside each day to talk about challenges or new experiences at school. Talk through any issues – whether these are about friends, catching up on schoolwork etc.

Stay calm and check your own emotions: Model and practice relaxation and coping strategies with your child. Reassure yourself and your child that it is normal for children to feel some anxiety. They will adjust, it just takes time. Parents just need to be calm and firm, positively reinforce and follow through.

Drop offs - Talk positively about the day ahead on the way to school and remind your child where you'll be at pick-up time. If safe to do so, stay in your car when dropping off and picking up your children. Maintain social distancing by avoiding gathering outside of school gates. Ignore reluctance, give positive attention and specific praise for brave behaviour and coping. Remind your child you will be back and say, "Great job staying calm and coming to school today. When I pick you up, I look forward to hearing about something fun you did." Drawn-out goodbyes can be upsetting, especially for other kids nearby. Give your child some final positive reassurance and leave promptly. Reward and praise the child for successful separations and for positive coping behaviours.

If you think your child will be reluctant to separate at drop off, talk to the school (we can try to organise for a buddy or staff to meet with and engage your child on arrival).

Utilise resources and help: The school is there to help. If your child shows signs of extreme anxiety and has difficulties, let the school know by phone or email. You can also get in touch with Wellbeing or a School Counsellor or consult an external telehealth mental health professional. The evidence based, free, online interactive BRAVE Program helps prevent and treat childhood and adolescent anxiety. There is also a parent program. See <https://brave4you.psy.uq.edu.au/>