

31 March 2020

Dear Parents

Assalaam-Alaikum

We hope and pray that this letter greets you in good health and strong Emaan. Under the current global situation, we pray that Allah swt grants us prophetic qualities of sabr and shukr and uses this as a means of our forgiveness.

Further to the enforced closure of all schools by the UK Government, a number of independent Muslim schools have expressed their concern about the financial future of their settings and whether they will be able to remain open once the Coronavirus Covid 19 crisis has subsided InshaAllah. The Association of Muslim Schools has been contacted by a number of its concerned member schools in regards to the tuition fees they normally charge parents and the refusal of some to no longer pay these fees as their child is not currently in attendance at the school.

We understand that this is a difficult time for the UK, especially under the current social distancing and stay-at-home restrictions which have been placed upon us as a result of the spread of Coronavirus Covid 19. The Association of Muslim Schools wholly supports the efforts of the government and statutory bodies in the actions they have taken to ensure the health and well-being of the UK population and will continue to support them in order to protect the NHS and save lives. It is therefore imperative that once this crisis is over, we are able to return to some sense of normality and that our children can return to the schools where they are enrolled. It is now, more than ever, we would encourage you as parents to support your child's school and ensure that they are in a position to stay open over the coming months and years.

The Association of Muslim Schools is aware of some schools who are actively working to ensure they are able to provide remote learning to their students through online applications, thereby maintaining a degree of normality and continued learning for their students. We believe that our member schools are doing as much as they possibly can in these unprecedented times to ensure that none of their students are at a disadvantage academically for when they return to school.

To support people in employment, the government has put together the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which aims to pay 80% of the salaries of employees who would have otherwise been laid off by their employer. Details of this scheme can be found on the government's website however it is important to clarify that this grant isn't available for all employees, rather only for employees who are furloughed. Meaning that these are staff who will NOT work during the school closure. Furthermore, if a school was to furlough their entire staff, then it will not be able to offer any online or remote learning as none of the staff will be able to work whilst receiving this grant.

Most of the independent Muslim schools are not businesses and do not make a profit and many struggle to pay a decent wage to their staff. Staff continue working in Muslim schools to provide a much needed community service. Receiving 80% of a small salary from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will help the schools financially but the difficulty of maintaining a school without tuition fees will make it extremely difficult for most independent Muslim Schools to remain open.

For independent Muslim schools, tuition fees are their main and, in most cases, the only source of income, with which they must ensure the financial viability of their school. This includes, paying salaries of teachers and support staff, rent payments, utilities, stationary and maintenance costs. This is only possible with the timely payment of

tuition fees and support of parents. We would therefore urge and implore those parents who send their child/children to an independent school to continue supporting them by paying tuition fees which are due. This will not only ensure that your child remains enrolled at that particular school, it will ensure that your child continues to receive the relevant education and that the setting remains open for when the government directs schools to reopen InshaAllah.

We also would like to stress the importance of Islamic etiquettes and adaab. If you are called by your school for payment of fees, it is important to remember to be polite. The staff member who is calling you is doing so on behalf of an Islamic institution; he/she has a job and fulfilling an amanah that has been entrusted on him/her. Shouting or abusing school staff is not becoming of any good Muslim. These are testing and trying times for all, and it is at these times that we can and must exercise qualities of sabr and shukr.

The Association of Muslim Schools would again like to thank all parents for continuing to support independent Muslim schools and prays for the good health and well-being of all students, parents, staff, their families and our communities, Ameen.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashfaque', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ashfaque Chowdhury
Chairman
Association of Muslim Schools