



REQUEST FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS TO BE MADE FOR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES, DRESS OR HOLIDAYS

Your name: _____

Your DOB: _____

Your school/educational institution and class: _____

Please select the accommodation/s you are seeking, and then circle it in the explainer below:

- ☐ Requesting access to a private space to perform daily **prayers**
- ☐ Taking time off school to celebrate **Eid**
- ☐ **School uniform** accommodations e.g. modest swimwear
- ☐ Reasonable requests regarding **fasting in Ramadan**, particularly in the context of playing sports
- ☐ **Halal food** and avoidance of cross-contamination
- ☐ Accommodation regarding **interactions with the opposite gender**
- ☐ Other (please specify) : _____

Dear Ms/Mr _____

The abovementioned student is seeking reasonable accommodations for their religious practice, dress or holidays, as indicated below. Information about each of these is provided in this document. This resource has been designed by the Islamophobia Register Australia to help students make reasonable requests for religious accommodations, and to explain some of the complexities that may be involved. If you would like to seek further information or clarification on the below, please do not hesitate to contact the Islamophobia Register Australia: contact@islamophobia.org.au

Prayers - Muslims are required by their faith to perform 5 daily prayers at set times. One or two of the daily prayers are likely to fall within school hours (or before the student will have a chance to get home from school). As such, the abovementioned student would like to request access to a private space, such as a classroom, to perform their daily prayers. Prior to performing the daily prayers, Muslims are required to perform ablution. A classroom with a sink would be preferable for students' privacy during the ablution process (which involves washing the feet along with hands, arms and face), although students can perform the ablution in public bathrooms if required. The process of ablution and prayer together usually takes around 10-15 minutes to perform. The student will seek to minimise disruption to class time where possible.

Religious dress - Modest dress, including the headscarf or *hijab* is practised by many Muslim girls and women as a part of their faith. Some Muslim girls may not wear the hijab but may still wish to dress modestly in accordance with their faith, such as by donning pants instead of a skirt or long-sleeved shirts instead of short-sleeved shirts. Similarly, many Muslim boys and men practice modest dress such as through the avoidance of wearing shorts above the knee or the avoidance of revealing their chest when swimming. These religious dress observances apply irrespective of the physical setting (for example, they apply during sports and swimming as well). The student therefore requests that accommodations for dress be made for them. The student will observe school uniform requirements to the greatest extent possible (for example, by observing school colours).

Eid - Eid is a religious holiday that is celebrated by Muslims twice a year. It's significance for Muslims can be compared to Christmas and Easter for Christians. Muslims typically take the day off school or work to attend the mosque and celebrate with their loved ones. The Islamic calendar runs by the lunar calendar rather than the solar calendar, so the precise dates for Eid change each year. Additionally, the exact day of Eid cannot always be known in advance because it is dependent on moon-sighting and different Muslims determine the day of Eid differently. While some Muslims follow a scientific method of moon-sighting whereby Eid day can be known in advance, for many other Muslims, the moon must be sighted with the naked eye and therefore they will not know which day Eid is until the night before. Additionally, different Muslim students may provide different information about the beginning of Eid since local and global moonlighters may have differing views about the start of Eid. Therefore, while the above named student should be able to offer an approximate day for Eid, the precise date may not be known to them until the evening beforehand and we request that flexibility be shown and this be accommodated for, as applicable.

Ramadan - Muslims are required to abstain from consuming any food or drink (including water) from sunrise to sunset, during the month of Ramadan. This is a holy month for Muslims and a time for reflection, cleansing and charity. Fasting can be physically demanding, particularly in hot weather, and we request you to consider any reasonable requests for accommodations made by the abovementioned student. For example, the student may find it difficult to partake in sports during this time.

Halal food – Many Muslims observe a halal diet, which means that the meat they eat needs to be slaughtered in a particular way and certain requirements need to be met. Additionally, they avoid anything containing bacon, pork or other swine products, or meat products from non-halal meat. Many Muslims will also avoid eating foods that have been cross-contaminated with bacon or other non-halal meats. Access to halal meat products/foods would be ideal to cater for the needs of Muslim students (for example, in the context of school sausage sizzles or other events). Where this isn't possible, it is important that the halal options (in this context, the vegetarian options) be labelled and kept separate from the non-halal/vegetarian foods such that cross-contamination is avoided.

Interactions with the opposite gender – Islam has certain rules around how to interact with members of the opposite gender. As such, some Muslim students will not want to partake in any activity that requires them to touch a member of the opposite gender (such as in sports) and may also wish to avoid certain other activities that involve intermingling on religious grounds. We therefore request that students are not required to (or penalised for not wanting to) take part in such activities, and that alternative arrangements be made for these students (such as having a female partner for the requisite activity).

Other (if your request is not covered above, you can explain it here) -

Further information (feel free to provide any further information below) –

We thank you for being accommodating to this student's needs. Please do not hesitate to contact the Islamophobia Register Australia if you have any questions, or if you would like to book an inclusivity workshop for your school/institution.

<https://islamophobia.com.au>