

**Al-Aqsa Islamic
Academy
2018-2019**

Parent-Student Handbook

Dear Parents,

As-Salaam 'Alaikum!

This booklet is designed to introduce you to our fine school and familiarize you with the rules and regulations. The rules are like fences, they protect everyone. When everyone follows them our learning environment is relaxed, safe, and free from disturbance.

Our school's mission is grounded in the tradition of Islam and holding to the Sunnah of our Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) striving to promote the following:

- Moral values of Islam emphasizing responsibility and self-reliance
- To integrate Arabic and the common core standards in a comprehensive curriculum that is used by the Philadelphia School District
- To promote high standards of education as measured by Pennsylvania tests
- Lastly, we will provide positive reinforcement through sports and social programs.

We want our children to become actively engaged in the learning process. Throughout the course of the year, you will see papers and projects of your child that show Al-Aqsa's attention to creativity and scholarship. These will be prominently displayed throughout the school. We hold extremely high standards of academic prowess and want our children to exhibit their success. If anything defines our students, it is that they are academically challenged, successful, and are good Muslim scholars. Our attention to the learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies, which includes Quran recitation and learning the hadith, is exemplary. We strive to make sure our students are not bored but are challenged. We want our students to become excited about learning and creating.

You, the parent, are vital to the success of your child's education. We want your active participation in school meetings and encouragement of your child in doing his/her homework. We would also encourage you to monitor the time spent watching television.

Our Culture Is Toxic To Muslims

I feel very strongly about the impact of the media upon our children. It's as if we opened the front door of our home and invited anyone walking in front of our home to come in and teach our children anything they wanted to—how to dress, talk, deal with the opposite sex, and relate to our parents. etc. The media today is often so destructive to our children's character development. Research has also shown that children who read a lot at home and do not watch a lot of television surpass those that watch hours and hours of television. If your home is education friendly, the reading habits of your child will be of **paramount importance and television time seriously reduced!** Cell phones are especially troublesome. We understand the need for security while our children are away from home but all parents MUST check to see what their children are seeing on the phone. Time and again they are watching forbidden material, trash talking with their friends or even talking with strangers.

Also, research shows too that when young children depend upon the “mechanical devices... these devices do the brain's work and thus does not compel areas of the brain to grow normally. This is a special problem for boys because the young male brain does not naturally grow as quickly in these areas anyway...reading and writing functions—verbal skills—develop more slowly if young brains are mechanized too early...fast moving TV images, movie, computer screens reduce the time the brain spends on whole-brain activity...the whole brain does not develop as well...left-hemisphere development is generally lost.”

Above all, we strongly recommend that all family members gather to read the Quran.

“No people gather in a house from Allah's houses, to recite Allah's Book and study it together, except that As-Sakeenah (serenity) descends upon them, mercy envelops them, the Angels surround them, and Allah mentions them to those that are with Him...”

Abdur Rahman, Principal

Parents Are Essential Partners

All parents are expected to:

- Recognize that the education of their child (ran) is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community.
- **Keep in communication with the teachers using the Jupiter System which has passwords for the parents and students. This is a MUST DO. Frequently parents will say, “No one contacted me.” The Jupiter System is designed for messages from the teachers to the parents and teachers enter information weekly.**
- Ensure that absences are excused.
- Insist that children be dressed and groomed in a manner consistent with the student dress code.
- **Help children deal effectively with peer pressure. This is a challenge, especially with teens.**
- Inform school officials of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.
- Provide a place for quiet study and ensure that homework assignments are completed.
- **Serve as a role model for students by establishing salat in the home and refraining from anger. (a child—especially boys-- will not learn well if at all during the morning--following an anger incident in the home. Therefore, we must establish a peaceful home.**

Aims and Objectives

The character of any educational program is reflected in what it believes to be the principle aims and objectives of education. Listed below are the educational objectives of Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy:

Spiritual and Intellectual

- To develop each student towards achieving a state of complete worship (*Ibadah*) to Allah
- To develop each student's self-awareness, self-confidence and personal Islamic identity
- To develop each student's ability to think, analyze and solve problems independently
- To develop each student's level of Islamic awareness, his understanding of the Islamic world-view and pride in the Islamic heritage
- To prepare each student to assume his/her role as God's viceroy through faith, knowledge, righteous conduct and service
- To develop in each student respect and mercy for all mankind
- To develop each student to carry the message of Islam to his fellow Americans
- To prepare each student to be a good and productive citizen in this society and respect its laws and traditions
- To develop the occupational readiness of each student to be employable and to make a positive contribution to society

Enrollment Policy

Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy's programs are designed to meet the academic needs of outstanding students as well as average students. Presently, the school does not have accommodations for below level students or those requiring behavioral counseling or special educational requirements.

Report Cards and Parent Conferences

There are four marking periods throughout the school year. They are November 9, February 18, April 23 and the last day—June 7. On those days school will be dismissed at 12:00 and teacher conferences are from 2-6 p.m. If a parent cannot come at those times they should make an appointment with their children's teacher(s) to meet another time.

Grading System and Promotion Policy

A+	95-100%	4.0 points	A	90- 94%	3.5
B+	85- 89%	3.0	B	80-84%	2.5
C+	75-79%	2.0	C	70-74%	1.5
D+	65-69%	1.0 points	D	60-64%	0.5
F	0-59%	0.0			

Anyone receiving lower than a C in daily work (including homework) is required to attend the After School Study Hall from 3:15-4:00, Monday-Thursdays until the teachers are assured that the student is on grade level. This applies to the Upper School only (grades 6-9). This program begins November 12, 2018. At the end of June, 2018, two F grades guarantees retention in that grade for the coming school year, 2019-2020. For the Upper School we recommend Keystone Credit Recovery School for the summer to allow for graduation. This school is both online for 9-12th grades and in correspondence for middle grades. It costs about \$116 per course.

Discipline Policy

Allah is full of endless compassion for all lives. The attribute, *ya 'Adl*, means the Just and Impartial quality of Allah whereby he dispenses compassionate justice to His creations. Within the context of these Qualities of our Creator, the teachers and administrators will be governed. Each situation will be examined on an individual basis. We want each child to know that he/she will be treated with

loving respect. At the same time they will also learn that there are always limits that also have to be respected by them.

We have a four-step discipline plan: warning, detentions, suspension and expulsion. Parents will be notified regularly by phone as well as by e-mail. In the first days of school the teacher will send home the e-mail address via a Jupiter system for instant communication between home and teachers. We encourage all parents to utilize this tool. Lastly, corporal punishment is never permitted.

Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate a positive cooperative attitude
- Use respectful language and use good manners
- Respect all adults
- Respect the school property and property of their classmates
- Be friendly to other students and not tease, put down or bully others
- Never play rough, kick, or hit others at recess

One of the most troubling problems we have today is the use of cell phones and ipods. We do not permit usage during school hours from 8:30-3:15. Anyone using them will have them confiscated and held at the office for the day. After the first offence the phones will have to be picked up by the parents.

Rules and Regulations

School hours: 8:30-3:30

Children will go directly into the school at 8:20. Homerooms meet from 8:30-8:40 and classes end at 3:30. Lateness will not be tolerated. **For K the doors will open at 8:15 a.m. Please do not drop your children before this time.** It is your responsibility to walk with your child into the building. Never drop a small child (K-2nd grades) off on the curb and leave before making sure they enter the building. No toys that would cause obvious distractions such as a toy gun or electronic games should be brought to school. Nor should guns, knives, matches, lighters, razor blades or other dangerous things be brought to school. Cell phones must be kept in their locker or given to the teacher to hold. Lastly, we do not celebrate birthday parties in the school.

Dress Code

All students are expected to follow the dress code throughout the year. Boys' uniforms can be purchased in any retail store. Girls' uniforms may be purchased at the Al Aqsa Bookstore (on campus), at Islamic stores in the city or handmade.

Girls Girls should have a navy blue jilbab, navy blue button up sweater and white khimar (Hijab). There should be a school logo on the sweater and the jilbab. The logos can be purchased in the school office.

Boys Boys should have a navy blue polo shirt with the Al Aqsa logo on the shirt pocket, grey dress pants, Navy blue sweater (optional) and black shoes (not sneakers) are required.

Gym Uniforms Navy blue sweat pants and blue sweatshirt or a cotton sweatshirt. Make sure the girls' shirts are long sleeves and long enough to go to mid-thigh level. Black or white sneakers are allowed.

Rain or Snowy weather Any type shoe or boot is fine.

Lunch, Snack and Cafeteria Rules

Breakfast and lunch are provided free of charge courtesy of the Federal government to each student throughout the year. The cafeteria opens at 8:00 a.m. High sugar foods, breakable bottles or microwavable foods are not allowed. Children from grades 7-11 may purchase their lunch from the Arabic delicatessen on the school campus.

Student Health

Please keep your child at home if he/she is sick. This way you will ensure your child's early recovery and prevent other children from getting sick. Sickness includes the following: fever, headache, sore throat, mucus from the nose, nausea, stomach ache, diarrhea or unusual fatigue or a rash.

Extra Services

- Four busses from the Philadelphia School District for grades 1-6
- Transpasses for grades 7-12 issued by the School District
- A nurse one day a week
- Counselor (personal or testing) as needed
- Two Reading specialists four days a week
- One Math specialist four days a week

Extracurricular Activities possibilities (depends upon interest of students and availability of the instructor)

- Sewing/design club
- Journalism club
- Games club
- Hadith club
- Theatre
- Debate Club
- Arabic Club
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Soccer
- In the past we had 2 rowing clubs, one for boys and one for girls—on the river.

Al Aqsa Islamic Academy 2018-2019 Calendar (1438-1439 Hijrah)

August 31	Open House
September 4	First Day of School
September 14	School Closed: Muslim Day @ Six Flags NJ
October 8	School Closed: Columbus Day
October 29	Early Dismissal (12PM) Staff Development
November 9	Early Dismissal (12PM) 1st Report Card Conference
November 22-23	School Closed: Thanksgiving Recess
December 24-January 1	Winter Recess
January 2	School Resume for Students
January 21	School Closed: Civil Rights Day
January 24	Early Dismissal (12PM) 2nd Report Card Conference
February 18	School Closed: Presidents Day
March 14	Early Dismissal (12PM) Staff Development
April 4	Early Dismissal (12PM) 3rd Report Card Conference
April 18-22	Spring Recess
April 23	Early Dismissal (12PM) Staff Development
May 5 - June 4	Early Dismissal (2:30PM) for Ramadan
May 27	School Closed: Memorial Day
May 31	8th Grade Graduation 2PM - Early Dismissal (12PM)
June 3	Kindergarten Graduation 2PM (12PM Dismissal)
June 7	12th Grade Graduation 4-8PM - LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS (12PM Dismissal)