



Council on American-Islamic Relations
Washington State Chapter
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March 12, 2019

SENT VIA EMAIL

RE: Informative Letter on Upcoming Islamic Holidays and Religious Accommodations

Dear Educators,

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, Washington (CAIR-WA) is a branch of the nation's largest Muslim civil liberties organization. We would like to kindly remind you that three major Islamic holidays are approaching for the 2018-2019 school year, some of which extend into the summer. We therefore encourage you to note the following religious observances and holidays in your planning process:

Ramadan	May 5 - June 4, 2019 +/- one day
Eid Al-Fitr	June 4, 2019 +/- one day
Eid Al-Adha	August 11, 2019 +/- one day

*Note: the date may vary by one day depending on the individual's religious school of thought

In 2019, Ramadan will begin on May 5 (+/- one day) and lasts 29 to 30 days, during which Muslims abstain from food and drink from pre-dawn until sunset. Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory for Muslims. Muslims also increase their worship and study of the Qur'an during Ramadan, and often attending late night prayers that begin an hour and a half after sunset and last for two hours. These late nights cause many Muslims to rise later than usual, and some people may appear fatigued due to hunger, thirst and disrupted sleep. For more information about Ramadan, please see "Why Muslims Fast" by www.whyislam.org.

Eid Al-Fitr signifies the end of the month of Ramadan, a period of religious observance essential to the Islamic faith, and Eid Al-Adha signifies the end of Hajj, Islam's annual holy pilgrimage to Mecca. Both days are commemorated by Muslims worldwide through prayer and celebration per their unique faith traditions.

After consulting with local Muslim parents and reviewing federal and state rulings concerning religious accommodation such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Revised Code of Washington 49.60, and 1981 Supreme Court case *Church of God v. Amarillo Independent Schools*, we urge you to take the following into consideration while planning for next year:

1. Teachers can accommodate Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha by not scheduling tests or important assignments on those days. If tests or assignments are scheduled on these days, we ask that teachers allow students to complete them before or after the student's excused holiday absence.
2. Many Muslim employees, students and parents are unaware that excused absences are allowed under federal law for religious holidays. We ask schools to inform their Muslim students & parents of this option.
3. Consider adding Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha to your school's calendars.
4. Note that some Muslim students might fast while others might not, depending on their faith-involvement. If a student chooses to fast, we ask that the student be given the option to visit the library during lunch.