

MEND: PRAYER & REFLECTION SPACES

CONTINUED CONVERSATIONS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

This guide supports the development of an inclusive and welcoming environment that centers student identity to allow for student voice. Staff, students, and families have the right to access spaces for prayer or spiritual practices during the regular school day.

Please refer to:

[Draft Students' Rights and Responsibilities - Information Sheet.](#)

REFLECTION SPACES IN SCHOOLS:

A supplementary resource to support requests from Muslim students/families:

Muslims, similar to other faith groups, experience faith individually. As such, please expect variations in the use of faith spaces based on each person's personal preference and need. A tenet of Islam includes prayers. These prayers are offered at five different times of the day.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Where in my school can prayer and reflection spaces exist?

- Location should be near a washroom for ease of access to ablution spaces or students should be aware of the washroom location.
- Avoid high traffic or shared areas; quiet spaces are required.
- Collaborate on appropriate location site with those accessing the space.

2. What environmental conditions are needed for prayer and reflection spaces?

- Prayer is performed in the direction of the Qibla (direction toward Mecca, direction which Muslims face when performing prayers), which is marked North-East.



- The space/room should be a clear, private, empty or should have an empty portion large enough to facilitate prayers free of obstruction (meaning free of posters, drawings, images, photographs, flags or statues) Examples include: library, office space, meeting room spaces.
- The use of an all-gender bathroom prior to prayer to perform ablution should be accessible.
- A prayer mat or clean sheet to pray on (these can be kept in the room).
- During COVID-19 – all students/staff are required to bring their own prayer mat and should not be praying on the same prayer mat as others.
- Floors/prayer mats should be clean (free of dust and dirt); a carpeted room would be ideal; encourage students to bring prayer sheets or mats from home for personal use.
- For students who do not have a prayer mat, we ask that schools purchase a clean sheet. [Please contact us through email for more info.](#)
- Males and females can pray in the same space - Traditionally in Muslim faith, **men and women pray separately** — sometimes in different parts of the same room and sometimes in different rooms or divided by a partition.

3. What time does prayer take place? How long does prayer take?

- Each prayer takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.
- During the school day, and depending on daylight savings, students may perform up to two prayers (Zhur and Asr).
- Educators and Admin may want to find a prayer timetable from online apps (i.e. Islamic Finder).

4. How are Friday Prayers performed?

Friday is a significant day of worship for Muslims. If your school community chooses to pray incongregation for Friday's Zhur (mid-day prayer), please see below.

- Friday prayers can take 10-20 minutes to complete.
- Depending on the population of Muslims in your school, a larger space for prayer may be required.



- The prayer requires a short sermon delivered by the prayer leader. This will differ school to school based on the community, the number of practicing students/staff, interest, and availability of someone to lead (the prayer leader could be an older student or an identifying staff member or member of the community).
- Encourage the prayer leader to keep the sermon (khutbah) short, such that the prayer can be completed in a timely manner.

5. How would supervision work in the prayer space?

- Supervision of the prayer and reflection spaces in both elementary and secondary can be facilitated by appointed staff members through supervision scheduling (elementary) or through alternative supervision arrangements (secondary), it is not necessary for supervisors to physically be in the prayer spaces during prayer as it may be perceived as intrusive, rather at a respectful distance while still supporting is suggested.

6. What are health/safety criteria and contact tracing measures should be taken?

- To ensure the safety of all students and staff in the school, a sign in/out sheet should be used for students leaving the classroom for prayer during class time/school hours. Please note that accommodations will be unique and specific to the individual or groups accessing spaces.
- Permission forms are not required as protected under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Human Rights.



This communication highlights guiding principles for students, staff, and families who identify as Muslim. For further questions or clarifications, please contact wearemend.ca