

Muslim pupils 'should be spared detention during Ramadan'

[A Labour council has advised teachers](#) to avoid giving after-school detentions during Ramadan.

Council guidance issued to schools for the holy month states that Muslim pupils facing punishment should be allowed to return home to break their fast.

The Ramadan guidance states that teachers should "consider alternative sanctions during this period".

The guidance was drafted by a mosque with a history of controversy and shared with local schools by Lewisham council in south London.

On the Lewisham council website, the guidance states: "With Ramadan now occurring during the winter months, after-school detention or activities for a pupil who is fasting will mean that the pupil is not able to reach home in time to break their fast.

"Whilst accepting full responsibility for breaching school rules, schools should be aware that pupils should be able to carry out their religious duty of breaking the fast on time."

The guidance adds: "The need for pupils to be at home before sunset might also have implications for the school's behaviour management practice, e.g. after-school detentions. Schools may wish to consider alternative sanctions during this period, including the use of lunchtime detentions."

The Lewisham Islamic Centre created the guidance. Shakeel Begg, the mosque's chief imam, has been described by a High Court judge as an "extremist Islamic speaker who espouses

extremist Islamic positions”.

Meanwhile, Ashraf Dabous, the centre’s head of education, claimed in a sermon that [anti-immigration rioters in the summer of 2024](#) were being “misled” and “manipulated” by Zionists. “It is quite well known now, publicly, due to information that has been released online, that they are Zionists and they are supporters of the state of Israel.”

It is not clear from the Lewisham guidance for this year’s Ramadan, which ends next week, whether after-school detentions would be suspended for all pupils or only Muslim children.

The advisory document notes that “many Muslim staff and older Muslim pupils” may wish to pray at prescribed times during Ramadan.

Guidance that appropriate prayer rooms – “where possible one for girls and one for boys” – should be provided, along with washing facilities.

Schools might also “consider the provision of a larger room for prayers or contacting their local mosque to arrange for an Imam to lead Friday prayers”.

Teachers are told they can take this opportunity to “be more inclusive by teaching the pupils about Ramadan and inviting guest speakers from the Muslim community”. The Lewisham Islamic Centre has offered to “be a liaison”.

Former guest speakers at the Islamic Centre itself have included Moazzam Begg, a former Guantánamo Bay detainee who was arrested in 2025 at a pro-Palestine Action march.