



The Muslim Community in Scouting

0845 300 1818

The Scout Information Centre

Gilwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW

Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103

email info.centre@scout.org.uk www.scoutbase.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

The information in this document was compiled by the Scout Association with updates from the Muslim Scout Fellowship.

Scouting as such does not teach a religion or attempt to educate children in religious matters; however Scouting activities are used to give young people a moral code based on religious beliefs. Scouts are also encouraged to take part in religious activities; in the case of a Muslim group this will be Islamic traditions.

Muslims are not new to scouting. Scouting started in many Muslim countries in the 1920's. Currently almost a third of the 28 million Scouts worldwide are Muslim.

Over 300,000 of the two million Muslims in the UK are children and young people of school age. The majority of Muslims living in the United Kingdom have their origins in the Indian Subcontinent (Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India); the rest come from the countries of the Middle East such as Egypt and Iraq; and African countries such as Somalia, and Nigeria. However, a large proportion of Muslims are second and third generation who have been born and brought up in the United Kingdom.

Items marked thus:  -

Are items which need to be addressed in Muslim Scouting activities. Other text is for information.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this factsheet is to provide general guidance to:

- those setting up a Muslim Scout Group,

- those hosting a visiting Muslim Group,
- for HQ when dealing with the Muslim community, and
- those just wishing to understand Islamic practices.

SCOPE

This document covers issues around: -

- Dress code,
- Food,
- Socialising

Scouting and Islam

Scouting develops one's physical, intellectual, social and spiritual being. This can be achieved within Islamic etiquette, while fulfilling health & safety requirements.

The values, ethos, educational focus and international scope of the Scouting Movement are all consistent with Muslim teaching. Young people in Scouting are encouraged to respect and love God and other people, and to cultivate a sense of moral responsibility; these are also fundamental principles of Islam.

ISLAMIC OVERVIEW

Muslims live according to a religious code of Islamic values which encompasses their culture, morals, family, social relationships, finance, justice, food and dress. It is a complete way of life with an emphasis on what unites people rather than on what divides them. This leads Muslims to view themselves as one nation, regardless of country of birth or national identity. Islam is embraced by over 1.3 billion. This factsheet aims to highlight the major common elements that exist amongst the majority of Muslims, though as in all religions there are some different schools of thought.

Muslims submit themselves to the Islamic faith – a faith that was conveyed by prophets since Adam and finally completed by the last messenger, prophet **Mohammed** (peace be upon him) who lived between 570-632 CE.

Islam means submission to the will of **Allah**, which is the Arabic name for the **one and true God**. Muslims believe in one God, The Supreme Being and Creator of all humanity and the universe. The two complementary foundations of Islam are belief and action: Muslims believe in the oneness of God and in practicing that belief. Allah is not spatially restricted/limited and has revealed His message to us through His Messengers and Prophets (Peace be upon them all).

Mohammed (peace be upon him) is the last prophet. He was born in Mecca and later lived in Medina where he set up an Islamic State, and on his death was buried there. Through him, Allah revealed His final word, which was collected in the Holy Book, the Qur'an (also written '**Koran**'). Despite his centrality to the Islamic faith, **Mohammed is not the founder**

Factsheet – Guidance on Islamic Etiquette & Setting up a Muslim Scout Group in the UK

of the faith, but a prophet (**nabi**) and a messenger (**rasul**) of God; it is Allah who is the source of Islam.

Islam has five basic pillars:

1. **Shahadah:** to declare the belief that there is only One God, (one Supreme Being) and Mohammad is His servant and final messenger.
2. **Salat (Namaz):** formal prayer, which is observed five times a day at prescribed times.
3. **Zakat:** an obligatory specified tax (2.5%) of a Muslim's wealth is given annually for the welfare of the needy and the poor.
4. **Sawm:** to fast during the month of Ramadhan from dawn until dusk. (i.e. abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual relations.)
5. **Hajj:** pilgrimage – Muslims strive to visit Mecca at least once during their lifetime.

The general context of Islamic social guidance is to help Muslims conduct themselves in a moral, ethical and respectable manner when conducting themselves and when dealing with other individuals whether Muslim or non-Muslim. Muslims should observe and respect relationships with individuals of other faiths and do as much as possible to accommodate them while staying within Islamic principles.

Islam is an integral part of daily life; therefore Muslims do not separate the teachings of Islam from their day-to-day activities. The family is a focal point in Islam therefore Islamic guidance helps to keep the family together. The degradation of the family life is a concern for most Muslims living anywhere in the world.

THE HOLY BOOK - QUR'AN

Muslims believe that God has sent His guidance to humankind through the messengers and these have been sent with a number of books: -

- Torah – revealed to Moses (peace be upon him)
- Psalms – revealed to David (peace be upon him)
- Gospel – revealed to Jesus (peace be upon him)
- Qur'an – revealed to Mohammad (peace be upon him)

The Qur'an, which is wholly comprised of Arabic verses, is believed to hold the final and unchanged word of God as revealed to Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) through the Angel Gabriel. It is handled with reverence and respect and the verses are learnt by heart (many attempt to memorise the entire Qur'an).

Muslims also follow the practice and sayings of Prophet Mohammed known as **Sunnah** and **Hadith**. Muslims in addition recognize the teachings of all the prophets. The Bible is considered as a holy book and Muslims have deep respect for the prophets who are mentioned within it. The life stories

of twenty-five prophets such as Abraham; Moses ; and Jesus (peace be upon them all), are mentioned by name in the Qur'an. Muslims believe in the miracle of Jesus' birth and he is recognized and revered as a special prophet, though not as the 'Son of God', but as the son of Mary (peace be upon her). It is important that Leaders consider this when planning prayers for Scouts Own or at the end of a meeting.

As well as undertaking every day's school work, many Muslim children attend special classes after school. Here they are given religious instruction and learn Arabic so that they can read and study the Qur'an. These classes often require extra homework, so it is important to remember that children often have other obligations before they can attend Scouting activities.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

The place of worship is known as the Mosque (Meeting place) (or *Masjid*). However any clean place can be used to hold prayers and is regarded as a place of worship. Muslims remove their shoes before entering the prayer area so as to preserve the cleanliness of the area.

Muslims pray five times a day: -

Fajr: - From dawn until just before sunrise.

Zuhr: - After mid-day until afternoon (i.e. until halfway between noon and sunset),

Asr: - From late afternoon until just before sunset.

Maghrib: - After sunset until daylight ends.

Isha: - Night until dawn.

The actual prayer time is flexible within the above. Therefore with some planning, scouting programmes can be adjusted to fit the local prayer times. When travelling special travellers' prayers are made which are shorter than normal.

Prayer itself consists of reciting verses from the Qur'an, and a number of movements from standing to kneeling to prostrating positions. This procedure reflects that the human being has physical and spiritual dimensions hence the prayer unifies the mind with the body in a form of meditation enabling the person praying to concentrate wholly upon God. It is important that all Scouts are made aware of the importance of prayer and why their Muslim friends may not be able to join in activities during prayer times, so that they respect the time taken for prayer.



The prayer area needs to be clean and large enough for the attendees to pray in straight rows which signifies equality between the worshipers. A Sheet/prayer mat provides the best clean surface, but is not compulsory; etiquette can be met provided the ground is clean. The location can be indoors or outdoors, therefore praying while in camp should not present a problem.

Muslims pray towards Mecca in Saudi Arabia. A compass can be used to determine the direction (Qiblah); this is

Factsheet – Guidance on Islamic Etiquette & Setting up a Muslim Scout Group in the UK

approximately South East in the UK. (This activity could be part of map reading and compass training).

WASHING

Before praying, Muslims wash, (the hands, mouth, nose, arms, and feet, and wipe over the head). Provision should be made for Muslims to conduct ablution (wudu). Covered areas should be provided for female members to perform Wudu.

MOSQUE (MASJID)

The Mosque (Masjid) is not just a place of worship. It is a place where Muslims meet together to discuss community matters; where they can carry out individual or communal prayers and meditation; and where children can play and socialise together. The Mosque is the focal point of any Muslim community and provides a wide range of activities.

The person who leads the congregational prayer is called the **Imam**. Imams are not priests but are specially recognised members of the Muslim community because of their knowledge of the Quran. They look after the religious welfare of their community and tend to the social and domestic needs of individuals. The Imam is an excellent contact to make to encourage young Muslims to become Scouts. They have considerable influence within the local community and will help you; but remember; that they may require details of scouting and how this fits into the Islamic framework. Therefore you may need this factsheet and help from the Muslim Scout Fellowship as well as other information about Scouting to explain both the concept of scouting and the religious policy of the Scout Association.

HOLY DAYS AND FESTIVALS.

The Muslim calendar is based on the lunar year, when a new moon appears this denotes a new month. The Islamic year is shorter by about 10 days than the year denoted by the Gregorian calendar, which is based upon the movement of the Earth around the sun.



For Leaders it is worthwhile enquiring when the festivals listed below are due to take place to enable you to include some activities for all Scouts in your group and to anticipate the absence of Scouts who are Muslim from meetings.

Jumu'ah: On Fridays there are special congregational prayers that have to be performed in the mosque or in a congregation in any other place. These are conducted just after mid-day and are called Jumu'ah or general assembly.

Ramadhan – The ninth month of the Islamic calendar is a very important time for Muslims as it is the month of fasting.. It was also the month when the revelation of the Quran to Mohammad (peace be upon him) began. Muslims are

expected to fast between dawn and sunset throughout the month, i.e. they abstain from eating, drinking and marital relations. Young children below the age of puberty do not have to observe the fast.. Fasting aims to help Muslims be conscious of God and to make them empathise with the suffering of the poor and hungry.

Muslims during this month try to improve their behaviour by attempting to leave any bad habits they contracted (such as anger, backbiting, foul language...) and by developing good habits. It is also a month where people are encouraged to visit their families and friends and to invite them over breaking the fast and over meals. There are special extra night prayers that are performed each night in the mosque; these prayers are called *Taraweeh*. The prayers last for about an hour and a half each night during which the imam recited a small part of the Quran with the aim of finishing it all by the end of Ramadhan.



Muslim will need to have finished eating before Fajr (approx 1.5 hours before sunrise); and will need to break their fast at sunset (specific exact times are usually provided).

Therefore special consideration will be required during Ramadhan. Leaders need also to bear in mind that because of the Taraweeh prayers, some of their scouts will not be able to attend the evening weekly meeting.

Leaders can organise evening programmes around the Ramadhan themes of self-control, empathy with the poor.

They can also include a breaking of the fast where all scouts are invited to bring cultural food to share together.

Eid-al-Fitr - marks the sighting of the new moon and the end of Ramadhan. The festival lasts several days and is a time for celebration and parties. Presents are exchanged, new clothes are worn, and people are encouraged to visit friends and relatives to strengthen their family and friendship ties.

Eid-al Adha – is the festival of Sacrifice and begins on the tenth day of the twelve-month of the Islamic year, and lasts 4 days. It celebrates the story of the offer of Ishmael as a sacrifice to God by Abraham.. Muslims are encouraged to donate and give part of their sacrifice to those in need. The festival aims to enable Muslims to sacrifice their desires in obedience to God

Miladan'Nabi - is Prophet Mohammad's (peace be upon him) birthday. Even though it is not a religiously prescribed festival, some Muslims do celebrate it as an opportunity to remember the life and example of Muhammad, peace be upon him.

PILGRIMAGE

All Muslims who are (physically and financially) able are expected to perform **Hajj** by visiting Mecca in Saudi Arabia at least once in their lifetime. Mecca is the place where Abraham with the help of his son Ishmael built the first place of worship to Allah, called the Ka'bah. The Ka'bah is the focal point for Muslims and Muslims around the world face this single point for prayer representing singularity of faith (Oneness of Allah) The Ka'bah is however not an object of

worship. All pilgrims are required to wear two white garments throughout the pilgrimage to denote their equality before God

BEHAVIOUR AND VALUES.

Muslims Strive to demonstrate a variety of personal qualities, which include: -

- Good manners, truthfulness and forgiveness of others;
- Maintenance of bodily cleanliness;
- Respect for the rights of others;
- Respect for living things;

e.g.

- Muslims follow guidance given in the Qur'an and Hadith that cruelty to animals is forbidden. Animals should not be killed without legitimate reasons in Islamic Law.

- Muslims strive to educate themselves and to work hard as they see this as part of their religious duty to Allah and the Qur'an enjoins this when it says: - My Lord increase me in knowledge (Q20114)

DRESS: -



The Islamic dress code for male and female, leaders and young people, should be followed.

The Scouts Association requires that the uniform should be the same within the group, (otherwise it is not "a uniform") it must be consistent with the Scouting movement (badge layout etc.) and within health & safety guidelines.

The uniform: -

The uniform is worn when representing the Scout Group.

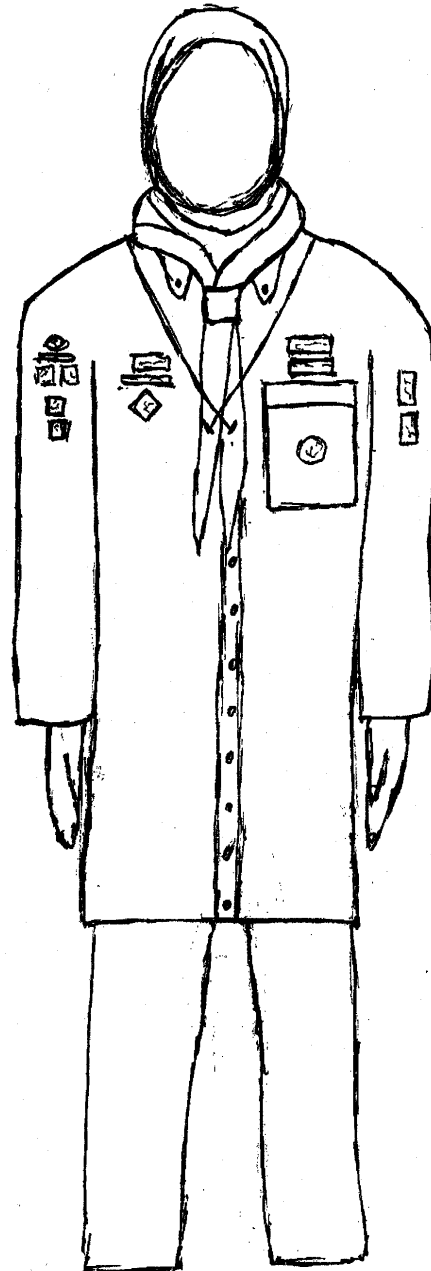


The uniform for Muslim men is as described in the Scouting Association Policy Organisation & Rules (POR).

The uniform shape for Muslim females has been modified to ensure that the guiding principles of covering oneself without exposing the shape of the body as shown below.



Female uniform: -




- It is recommended that the headscarf should be tucked into the shirt (especially during activities see below) so that the badges and group neckerchief are visible. **Or** outside the shirt over the chest, with the group neckerchief on top of the head scarf.
- The shirt top (same colour as standard uniform): Parallel sides, with the hemline (bottom) just above the knees. The side would be split from the hemline up to approximately in line with the crutch.
- The neckerchief is the colour of the group.
- The trousers would be standard issue Scout uniform navy blue trousers. Navy blue, ankle-long skirts can also be worn.
- Badge layout as per standard Scout procedures.
- Black shoes would normally be worn when in uniform.


Factsheet – Guidance on Islamic Etiquette & Setting up a Muslim Scout Group in the UK

The colour for each section colours and badge layout (Beaver Cub etc.) are as described in the Scouting Association Policy Organisation & Rules (POR).

Activity dress code: -


 Garments are usually those that suit the individual for comfort, but must be appropriate to the activity so that safety is not compromised. Leaders should always conduct risk assessment for the young and themselves. Leaders should not put themselves or the child at risk. Female members should for example tuck in the headscarf when using an axe so that the axe does not get entangled with the headscarf.

“Young People First”.

 If articles of clothing need to be removed for any reason this must only be done within the company of a single sex group. If undressing is required then this cannot be done in the presence of others even from the same gender. Muslims must not be naked in the presence of others; therefore towels or separate cubicles should be used for changing or showers even in single gender groups; whether young or leaders. When changing for activities or in camps a separate room, tent or screened area should be used. (Males must also adhere to this principle) Males should keep the area between the navel and the knees covered at all times. Activities that require tight fitting clothes or the removal of the headscarf for female members may only be done in the company of a single sex group.

FOOD: -

Muslims do eat meat, but only if it is **halal**. This means that it has been slaughtered to allow all blood and harmful bacteria to drain naturally, and that the name of God has been pronounced over it at the time of killing. Any meat or by-product derived from the pig is not eaten by Muslims, and food cooked in pig fat or that includes animal rennet is likewise forbidden.

 The food needs to be cooked in pans that are used for Halal food only; this may require segregation of cooking utensils. Cooking utensils that have been used for non-halal food, require thorough cleaning to purify the utensils.


The Leader for any event should check the food and its preparation and cooking utensils, and follow strict Islamic guidelines, if in doubt seek a second opinion, or resort to eating known Halal food. Alternatively Muslim scouts can eat vegetarian meals or fish or kosher meat. .

ALCOHOL; DRUGS & GAMBLING


Alcohol and drugs are strictly forbidden and should never be consumed at Scouting activity or meetings.

Muslims cannot handle, consume or sit at the same table where alcohol is being consumed. Therefore others should not take offence when Muslims do not socialise in this manner. Gambling is not permitted within Islam, and therefore games involving chance or betting etc are forbidden

MUSIC (Music/Disco's/Singing)

 There are conditions regulating the permissibility of music, such as the lyrics, manner of performing, etc. and scholars differ on these conditions. The children's songs used in scouting are acceptable but care needs to be taken. However discos are considered to be undesirable because of the environment where alcohol, drugs are consumed and where free mixing occurs.

SEGREGATION (male/female)

 It is recommended that the male and female young people be segregated at the Scout age 10 ^{1/2} and above as follows: -


- Leaders should run activities within Islamic guidelines taking the opportunity to separate females and males if physical contact may take place.

FLAG BREAK

It is the duty of every Muslim to honour the country in which they are living. Even to the point of defending that country therefore the Flag used for the above should when ever possible be the flag which represents the country in which they are now living as they stated in the scout promise.

PROMISE

The Muslim Scout Promise

 On my honour*,
I promise that I will do my best
To do my duty to Allah and to the country in which I live,
To help other people,
And to keep the Scout Law.
(* On my honour can be replaced with “In the **name** of **Allah**, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful
“.)

The Scout law

1. A Scout is to be trusted,
2. A Scout is loyal
3. A Scout is friendly and considerate,

Factsheet – Guidance on Islamic Etiquette & Setting up a Muslim Scout Group in the UK

4. A Scout belongs to the world-wide family of Scouts,
5. A Scout has Courage in all difficulties,
6. A Scout makes good use of time and is careful of possessions and property,
7. A Scout has self-respect and respect for others.

feel comfortable and make them feel that their needs are catered for.

The Muslim Cub Scout Promise

I promise that I will do my best
To do my duty to Allah and to the country in which I live,
To help other people
And to keep the Cub Scout law.

The Cub Scout Law

1. Cub Scouts always do their best,
2. Think of others before themselves,
3. And do a good turn every day,

For further information about this factsheet or if you have any questions and you need advice please contact the Muslim Scout Fellowship on

info@ukmsf.org
bmeukscouts@yahoo.co.uk

www.scoutbase.org.uk

The Scout Association, Gilwell Park, Chingford, London. E4 7QW. Tel: 020 8433 7100 or 0845 300 1818

Email: info.centre@scout.org.uk

Website: www.scouts.org.uk

The Muslim Beaver Scout Promise

I promise to do my best
To be kind and helpful
And to love Allah

The Beaver Scout Law

1. There is no formal Beaver Scout Law. The concepts expressed in the Scout Law are to be presented to Beaver Scouts through games, storytelling and other informal activities.

Hand-Shaking

Baden Powell based the Scouting activities on African local tribes skills and actions. The tribesman held their spear in the right hand, and the shield in the left. In order to show that they trusted the person they were meeting they put down the shield and shook hands with the left hand, while still holding the spear. In order to show trust of a fellow Scout, all Scouts shake hands with the left hand. This is a Scouting tradition.

There is no Islamic reason for not shaking with the left hand, however as with most societies Muslims may prefer to use the right hand for hand shaking. People should not feel offended if a Muslim uses their right hand not the left one.

Many Muslims do not shake hands with the opposite gender. Therefore people should not be offended if a Muslim does not shake hands with the opposite sex because it is not a sign of disrespect.

CAMP.



Muslims will wish to practise their faith whilst at camp and therefore leaders should be sensitive to these needs and try as much as possible to accommodate these needs. It is advisable that you discuss any such needs with the parents or the scouts themselves because this would make the parents and scouts