

**Al-Aqsa Islamic
Academy
2016-2017**

Parent-Student Handbook

2016-2017 Calendar

1437-1438 Hijrah

Cafeteria opens at 8:00 a.m. Classes end at 3:30 p.m.
Classes begin at 8:30 a.m. PreK-K finishes at 3:15 p.m.

Sept. 2 Open House, 2-3 p.m.

Sept. 6 First day of school

Sept. 12,13,14 School closed: Eid Al-Adha

Oct. 10 School closed: Columbus Day

Oct. 25 Early dismissal (12:00) Staff Development

Nov. 11 Early dismissal (12:00) 1st Report card conferences
(2:00-6 p.m.)

Nov. 24-25 School closed: Thanksgiving

Dec. 22-Jan. 1 School closed: Winter recess

Jan. 2 School resumes

Jan. 16 School closed: Civil Rights Day

Jan. 27 Early dismissal: (12:00) 2nd Report card conferences (2:00-6 p.m.)

Feb. 20 School closed: President's Day

March 15,16,17 School closed: Spring recess

April 7 Early dismissal: (12:00) 3rd Report card conference (2:00-6 p.m.)

May 29 School closed: Memorial Day

June 7,8,9 Early dismissal (12:00)

June 9 Last day of school, 12:00 dismissal

There is a total of 180 days. In the event that school is closed due to inclement weather, Al Aqsa utilizes the weather opening/closing procedure of the Philadelphia School District. If they are closed due to bad weather, Al Aqsa is too - most of the time. Otherwise watch the TV or listen to KYW. Our school code is 210.

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.

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 academics 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 volunteer efforts and encouragement of your child in doing his/her homework. We would also encourage you to monitor the time spent watching television. 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 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!**

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...”

Therefore, welcome to Al-Aqsa! We look forward to meeting your child and helping him/her become a good Muslim scholar. With your cooperation this will become a reality. Abdur Rahman, Principal

Parents Are Essential Partners

All parents are expected to:

- Recognize that the education of their child (ren) is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community.
- Send their children to school ready to participate and learn. Ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Ensure that absences are excused.
- Insist that their children be dressed and groomed in a manner consistent with the student dress code
- Help their children understand that in a democratic society appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe, orderly environment.
- Know school rules and help their children understand them.
- Convey to their children a supportive attitude toward education.
- Build good relationships with teachers, other parents and their children’s friends.
- Help their children deal effectively with peer pressure.
- Inform school officials of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.
- Provide a place for 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 anger 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 11, January 27, April 7 and the last day—June 9. 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 grades only. This program begins November 9, 2015. A child receiving a D in any subject should attend summer school. Two D grades may result in retention in that grade for the coming school year, 2017-2018.

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 for instant communication. 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

For the Middle School and Upper School (gr.6-10) there is a Code of Conduct that each student receives during the first week of school. Parents should ask their children to see it or they may pick up a copy in the office.

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 to be picked up by the parents. After the first offense they will be kept for a month.

The Code of Conduct is listed on a separate document.

Rules and Regulations

School hours: 8:30-3:15

Children will go directly into the school at 8:20. Homerooms meet from 8:30-8:40 and classes end at 3:15. 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-3rd 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 must be purchased at Cramer's Kids Uniforms, 4533 Frankford Ave. Girls' uniforms must be purchased at the Al Aqsa Bookstore (on campus).

Girls The following is required: Navy blue jilbab, navy blue Al Aqsa button up sweater, white khimar (Hijab).

Boys The following is required: plain blue polo shirt with the Al Aqsa logo, grey dress pants, Navy blue sweater (optional), black dress shoes, (no sneakers or **sneaker like** shoes allowed except during gym day).

Gym Uniforms: plain navy blue sweats pants and plain navy blue sweatshirt or the cotton sweatshirt. Make sure the girls' shirts are long sleeves and long enough to go to mid-thigh level.

Lunch, Snack and Cafeteria Rules

A hot lunch will be provided by the Federal government to each student during the first week of school. After that period forms will be distributed for reduced price or free lunches depending upon the income of the parents. Candy, high sugar foods, breakable bottles or **microwavable foods are not allowed**. Children from grades 7-10 may purchase their lunch from the Arabic delicatessen on the school campus.

Students must follow the directions of the teachers in the cafeteria such as exemplifying good manners, etc.

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

- **Three busses from the Philadelphia School District for grades 1-6**
- **Trans passes for grades 7-10 (Phila. residents only)**

- **A nurse one day a week**
- **Counselor (career, personal and testing) as needed**
- **Reading specialist five days a week**
- **Math specialist four days a week**
- **Speech therapist once a week**
- **Educational psychologist services from the Catapult Corporation**

Extracurricular Activities

In years past we had the following: Each year's classes will determine their preferences:

- **Sewing/design club**
- **Journalism club**
- **Sports club**
- **Hadith club**
- **Home economics**
- **Student Council**
- **Debate Club**
- **Arabic Club**