

Madrasah Salafiyyah Student Council Meeting 19th and 20th October 2016

No	Item Raised and Discussed
→	Structure and running of the Madrasah
1	Can we have more holidays? – especially when schools have half term holidays
	Madrasah already gives 12 weeks of holidays – 1 week for Eidul Adha, 1 week for Winter, 1 week for Spring, 5 weeks for Ramadhan and Eidul Fitr and 4 weeks for Summer. Apart from the Ramadhan and Eidul Adha holidays the rest coincide with school holidays. We have only one week less in terms of holidays compared to school (school usually gives 13 weeks in holidays). If we were to coincide all our holidays with school then we would not be able to give Ramadhan and Eidul Adha holidays as this would mean 19 weeks off in total – this is too many holidays for the subjects of Islamic Studies and Qur'an, especially if a student is doing Hifdh (memorisation) of the Qur'an. The holidays have been well thought out and seem to be working well for the majority of students and parents.
2	Can Thursdays be quiz days?
	Quizzes should be incorporated within lessons themselves. It would become boring having quiz day every Thursday as with everything else, the novelty soon wears off. In addition to this, some vital learning which could be delivered differently may be missed on Thursdays.
3	Come in clothes other than uniform every Thursdays
	Uniform incorporates modesty, whereas if we were to allow non uniform then students would surely wear clothes that are not modest. Monitoring this would take a lot of time and stress, that could be better directed towards teaching and learning instead.
4	Can we have more trips?
	Yes, we are looking into these. We are looking into meaningful and beneficial trips for all years. We want to visit areas that are as Halal as possible.
5	Have fun days as well as normal Madrasah days
	Yes, we are looking into these and in the process of planning some regular ones. We are yet to decide whether these should be for Madrasah students only or to allow the wider public to come.
6	Have Islamic talks from famous speakers
	As and when they come and wherever possible, we are having famous speakers come to Madrasah. We have planned Shaykh Mishary to attend Madrasah. We have yet to see how this will work out and take it from there, in sha Allah.
7	Can we have 10-15 minutes break between the 2 lessons – i.e. during crossover?
	We cannot allow such a long break as that would significantly affect the amount of learning. We may however incorporate a 5 minute break in the first lesson, at the end of it. There cannot be any food consumed in it however, as it would create mess.
8	Have snacks during proposed break times
	There cannot be any food consumed at Madrasah as it would create mess. A student should eat properly before attending Madrasah so that they are ready to learn.
9	Can we have Madrasah in the mornings during the school holidays?
	This would be nice, however, a lot of the teachers work other jobs in the day before they start Madrasah and so they cannot teach in the morning regardless of school holidays.
10	Can we have star of the week for older students?
	We are already having star of the month for the older students, this makes it 22 students that are picked every month from each class – Islamic Studies and Qur'an classes. This works out to be a lot of money spent on prizes given. We simply cannot afford to increase on this making it star of the week. The Nursery students however do have star of the week with 10 star of the week students chosen per week – which is again a lot of prizes.
11	Can students bring in ipads or tablets to listen to?

	<p>We are constantly discussing this on Teacher Training Days. We have not made a definite decision on this as there is the safeguarding problem to consider as most ipads and tablets and the like have the ability to take pictures. Pictures taken of students by other students poses a safeguarding risk. We will continue to look into this and make a final decision after weighing out all the pros and cons. Please bear with us.</p>
12	<p>Can Madrasah provide Qur'an pens for all students to help them learn?</p> <p>We have looked into this and even sourced the finances for this, however upon consultation with teachers who have had experience with working with Qur'an pens amongst students, we found that the problems outweigh the benefits. The pens need constant charging, charging takes a while and eats into the lesson time, and eventually the batteries wear out and the pens are rendered useless anyway.</p> <p>In addition to this, pens go walkabouts, the monitoring of them increases on time and stress and takes away from the lesson time and learning.</p> <p>Taking into account these factors and some more, it was decided that buying these pens was not worth it.</p>
13	<p>Can we go to residential outings?</p> <p>Yes, if they are seen to be meaningful and beneficial. At present we are still trying to get the Madrasah up to the standard at which it should be in that the Islamic Studies must be perfected. The Qur'an Curriculum, especially the Pure Hifdh Structure is in its trial period and needs to be perfected. Qur'an teaching needs to be livened up so that progression in Qur'an is faster.</p> <p>We would also like to introduce Tafseer somehow.</p> <p>So we are still sorting out the Madrasah fully before we can venture onto extra things such as residential outings.</p>
14	<p>Can we have more parties?</p> <p>We would like to fulfil the objective of why parents send their children to Madrasah – to learn the Qur'an and to learn Islamic studies.</p> <p>This is not to say that there will not be any parties taking place, as there is one for every year group at the end of the academic year. We also have 'Chill-Out Days' in which students that have earned it can attend and just chill out.</p> <p>Other than this, we may look into other times where we could fit in a party or two, however it is the teaching and learning that we want to prioritise on.</p>
15	<p>Can we have more assemblies including those that are student led?</p> <p>Yes. Student led assemblies are an excellent idea. Not only will it help them to increase in their confidence, but I have found that students come up with some amazing stuff, masha Allah, and on saying this, the adults can learn a thing or two from them.</p> <p>So we will look into the calendar and see where we can add in student led assemblies.</p> <p>Meanwhile other assemblies are supposed to take place every month, however it is currently difficult with the Salah time affecting Madrasah time. Because of this we feel that we do not want to take out any more time from the learning for assemblies. And so we will do assemblies as and when we can.</p>
16	<p>Can the Madrasah times be reduced from 2.5 hours?</p> <p>I don't see why? However, a change like this usually does not happen mid-year as that would affect the contract between the Madrasah and the parents. It can however be introduced at the start of an academic year but only after consultation with those that this would affect, namely the teachers, parents, students and Masjid operations team.</p> <p>For this suggestion and others like it, we may send out a questionnaire near the end of this academic year to gauge the opinion of parents and students and based on this, if there is enough pull towards a reduction in time, then we will seriously consider it, in sha Allah.</p>
17	<p>Can we go home early on one of the days of the week</p> <p>I don't see why? We have already reduced the Madrasah week from 5 days to four, so that it is easier upon the students and parents and Fridays could be used for more family time, in sha Allah. But again,</p>

	we could question the parents and students just like for Q16 and find out what others think, so that we know whether to consider this or not.
18	Can we have attendance rewards for those who have 100% attendance, given out?
	Yes, of course. These used to be given out before the current management, however when the current management came in, the monitoring of attendance became quite overwhelming as we shot up from around 200 students to over 400 students within a couple of months at the start of the last academic year. And so with the monitoring being affected, we could not do justice to accurately saying who had 100% attendance. However, the system we have created this year should give us no problem in working out an accurate attendance record for each and every student.
19	More debates and chances to discuss just like in this student council meeting
	Again, this should be happening in the normal lessons. Please ask and give suggestions to your teachers where such things are suitable to be added into the lessons. We will also make note of this request and ask teachers to explore more possibilities of debates within their lessons
20	More teachers i.e. 2 teachers in one class
	We already have double the amount of teachers that we used to have with a small increase in the fees. With more teachers the fees would have to be increased significantly and so it would become difficult upon the parents of Madrasah Salafiyyah, especially those with more than one child at Madrasah. Also, we have the right number of teachers within the Madrasah currently so that students can effectively progress. There are usually no more than 13 students per Qur'an teacher and usually up to 26 students per Islamic Studies class
21	Need benches
	We have these – 270 benches were ordered in September 2015. They have just been placed away within the Masjid during one of the normal events hosted by the Masjid, and not taken back out. We will get them out again.
22	Heaters needed for Hifdh classes
	Temporarily we are providing heaters in these areas, however, these areas are open space and so will not retain heat effectively. So, we will move the students of Hifdh classes to warmer areas as soon as the refurbishment works are complete.
23	Have a printer in every classroom
	This is not feasible as we used to have computers in every classroom previously and with the multiuse of the classrooms there was no accountability of the regular misuse of these electrical items. Also, we have a fully functional photocopier and printer in the Madrasah office which teachers have access to, so there is no need for individual printers in each classroom.
24	Can Madrasah students be placed into teams and gain points which counteract warnings given when students misbehave?
	We have a Discipline Policy in place which is working well. There is no need to change it. Also, what is being asked here would require a lot more monitoring – and with already limited human resources available at the Madrasah to fulfil all that is required to effectively run the Madrasah, this would not be feasible.
25	Can prizes be given out for merits?
	Yes, we will try to do this, this year. However, all teachers work differently and not all of them use the merit system and so referring to the merit system may not be fair. We have allowed each teacher to use incentives that work for them and their students.
26	Can there be better prizes for star of the month?
	We have 22 star of the month students from all the classes which adds up to a fair cost with all the prizes. Madrasah is not a profit making project and we would like to keep the fees as low as they are now, so we must be extremely careful with the spending we do on extra things other than the learning itself. We simply cannot afford very expensive prizes in the first instance. However, we do look into prizes that are practical and functional but at the same time are not too expensive.
27	Can there be Madrasah on Saturdays and Sundays only?

	Because the Madrasah takes place within the Masjid premises, this is not feasible as there is so much going on, on the weekends that we would have to regularly cancel weekend Madrasah. Also, from previously having held a weekend Madrasah we find that students do not progress effectively as the time gap between the weekends is too great.
28	Can we have less boring tests – more fun tests
	Tests are not meant to be fun; it is the learning that should be fun.
29	Can we have less tests
	Tests and assessments are there to check how much the students have learnt and because there is so much Islamic Studies learning taking place, there are also that many tests. There is a topic test at the end of each topic in Islamic Studies (a total of 8 topics) and an end of year Exam. We will also start to introduce regular Qur'an assessments so that parents can see progression in the Quality of Qur'an reading and memorising, rather than the quantity.
30	Lessons be more interactive
	Some teachers have mastered this, however for others, we are always doing regular teaching training as well as training on the job and so we will get there in sha Allah. If there are any interactive ideas that students may have for particular lessons, then please do tell your teachers – you should have a say and take ownership of your own learning.
→	Change to the Madrasah Building
31	Can we have blinds on the windows in the classrooms so that Ustadhas do not have to continue to wear niqab whilst buses go past?
	The Masjid is looking into getting blinds for the whole Masjid building soon after the refurbishment works. Meanwhile we shall add the translucent frosting to the windows to cover them so that people cannot look inside.
32	More bins please
	This will be done.
33	The classrooms get hot and so if the AC can be turned on? Or windows that open?
	The AC will be turned on
34	Water fountains in place
	This will not be done as from past experience young people mess about with water fountains and also waste water. Also, the running pipework for this is very expensive. Best to stick to water bottles as these are also portable.
35	Have a vending machine
	This will not be done as students are to come to Madrasah to learn, not to eat food, especially junk food as this will only make a child hyper and will work against the learning progress.
36	Have swivel chairs instead
	This will not be done as the current chairs are durable and were especially chosen for a learning environment.
→	Toilets
37	The younger boys mess about in the toilets – we need stricter control of toilets
	We are looking into more monitoring of the toilets and crossover time.
38	More bins in toilets with lids
	This will be done
39	A couple of locks on the toilets are not working
	This will be sorted as soon as possible. Meanwhile there are other toilets whose locks are functional.
40	Some students who are very young cannot reach the toilet locks
	We will look into replacing existing locks or placing additional locks at a lower position
41	All years 1 – 8 allowed to use the toilets
	Currently years 6, 7 and 8 students are allowed to use the toilets before and after Madrasah hours as 2.5 hours is not that long a time in not going to the toilet.

	<p>Years 3, 4 and 5 are allowed to use the toilet during a 10 minute interval in the first session and a 10 minute interval in the second session.</p> <p>Years 1 and 2 are allowed to go to the toilet as and when needed.</p> <p>If, however, if students desperately need to use the toilet, then of course they are allowed to go, no matter what year they are in.</p> <p>This tight control of toilet use is so that we can limit the behaviour problems that take place in the toilets, as we have noticed that most of the behaviour incidents seem to take place in the toilets and during the crossover time.</p>
42	Better toilet rolls
	The standard toilet rolls that are currently being used are sufficient
→	The Masjid in General
43	In the Masjid, the ladies toilets are dirty in the evening
	We will try to get an additional cleaner in or vary the times of the current cleaner to sort this problem out
44	In the Masjid, more space is needed for sisters for Jumuah prayers
	We are at maximum space for both brothers and sisters, however, the Masjid will be working on an extension programme in the near future.
45	Some areas are cold – can they be heated up some way?
	Once the refurbishment works are done, all areas will have underfloor heating and so this problem will be solved
→	Other
46	More care when a student is unwell
	<p>It is highly unlikely that a student begins to become unwell in the 2.5 hours that they are in Madrasah and very likely that they were feeling unwell before they came to us. And so it is usually the parent's decision that their child comes to Madrasah regardless of them not feeling very well.</p> <p>Although the administration staff are First Aid trained, the protocol of someone who is unwell is usually to phone the parents and ask them what they would like for us to do. It is usually under the instruction of the parents that a student is told to go back to class after we have informed them of the child's symptoms. When a student is clearly very unwell, we insist on parents taking them home.</p> <p>Other than this, we are limited on how much we can do with regards a sick child and also regards how much space we have in keeping a sick child with us.</p>
47	New design for diaries
	Yes, we will need to order new diaries for next year. So this will be a perfect opportunity to have the design changed. I propose we have a competition amongst the students near the end of the year to come up with a new design for the next set of diaries that will be published