

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



IN SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

LEGAL RIGHTS

During the month of Ramadan, Muslim students may need adjustments from their schools and colleges to accommodate their religious practices. Laws offer protections of your rights to exercise your religious beliefs and protections from religious discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.



RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

A religious accommodation means reaching an agreement with your college or school that enables you to practice your religious beliefs in a manner that does not substantially interfere with the educational mission of the college or school. Examples of religious accommodations in schools and colleges:

- Allowing you to take an exam at a different time, if the scheduled time conflicts with Suhoor or Iftar
- Permitting you a prayer break during a required class or activity
- Allowing you to be absent on Eid, without penalty



PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

Generally, public schools and colleges have greater legal obligations to accommodate students' religious practices than private schools and colleges.

Whether you attend a public or private school or college, it is always advisable to consult available and applicable policies that your school or college has about how to request religious accommodations.



WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

DO YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO A PRAYER ROOM?

This depends on several factors that are beyond the scope of this pamphlet. Although we cannot give you a simple and definitive answer on this issue, you can still make a request for a prayer space or any other religious accommodations not listed here.

WHAT ABOUT HIJAB?

You and your children are entitled to wear Hijab in accordance with your religious beliefs. This includes the right to wear Hijab only during Ramadan, if doing so is consistent with your religious beliefs.

WHAT ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS CONCERNING REQUIRED PHYSICAL EDUCATION/ACTIVITIES DURING RAMADAN?

Depending on your religious beliefs and any impacts that required physical education/activities may have on you in the course of observing Ramadan (particularly if you observe the fast), students are entitled to accommodations and exemptions from required sports and other physical activities to enable observance of Ramadan.

IS A PUBLIC SCHOOL OR COLLEGE REQUIRED TO ACCOMMODATE A STUDENT'S ABSENCE FOR EID?

Generally, yes. Federal law generally requires public schools and colleges to allow students time off from classes for religious practices, without penalty. This includes giving students a reasonable amount of time to make up any missed assignments or exams.

IS A PRIVATE SCHOOL OR COLLEGE REQUIRED TO ACCOMMODATE A STUDENT'S ABSENCE FOR EID?

It depends. If the school or college provides similar accommodations to non-Muslims, it may be required to provide the same for Muslims. Further, state or local laws may exist to protect your right to religious accommodation, regardless of whether the school accommodates other religious groups. Additionally, you should consult available and applicable policies and/or handbooks that your school or college maintains—which may include a contractual right to religious accommodation.

FROM WHOM SHOULD I REQUEST AN ACCOMMODATION?

Consult available and applicable policies and/or handbooks of your school or college. If you cannot find relevant information there, send your request to the instructors from whom you are seeking an accommodation. For schools, send your letter to the principal, as well. For colleges, make sure you include the Dean of Student Affairs in your request.

WHAT IF I EXPERIENCE DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT BECAUSE OF MY RELIGION?

You may consider seeking legal advice and assistance. You can also [file a complaint](#) with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and/or [file a complaint](#) with the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.