

Safety and Food Policies

Updated July 10, 2024

Student Arrival

Parking

While dropping off students to the school facility, parents must park in a parking spot adjacent to the building. Parents may not drop off students while in the drive aisle or in a parking spot on the other side of the drive aisle. This avoids the need for students to walk across traffic.

Entry into Building

During drop off, parents are responsible for making sure that students have opened the entrance door and have entered the building. Depending on the class, building doors may be locked 10 to 15 minutes after class start time. Especially when arriving late, when entrance doors may be locked, it is important that parents monitor student entry safely into the building. This is to avoid students being left outside in the cold or in an unsupervised environment.

If students arrive late, parents may message a teacher or obtain the code for the lockbox containing the key. The code may be utilized by the parent, or by a female or male student, to enter the building through the men's entrance. Once the student has entered, parents should lock the door again and place the key back inside the lockbox.

Prohibited Items

In addition to items prohibited in the Student Code of Conduct, any item which poses an unusual threat to the safety and security of other students, adults, or masjid property, is prohibited. This includes weapons (e.g., small and large knives, guns, air guns), poisonous or flammable substances (e.g., small or large firework, flint stones, fire starters, lighters), and toys that shoot small projectiles or resemble real weapons.

Food and Snacks

Food Safety

Several students have allergies to certain foods, especially nuts and sesame seeds. In certain cases, these allergies are severe and may be life threatening. For this reason, we strongly encourage that parents pack lunches or snacks without nuts, sesame, or derived ingredients in case the food is shared with others.

For this reason, it is also our policy that students do not share food among each other during regular lunch or snack time. However, we are unable to aggressively enforce this policy, so we request parents of children with allergies to educate their child on what foods should be avoided.

Parents sending food and snacks to share among students, or parents sponsoring food for a special event, are required to ensure that the food does not contain these common food allergens (nuts or nut ingredients and sesame or sesame ingredients.) For more information on food allergens, please visit foodallergy.org.

Students must bring lunches and snacks that do not require heating. Students will not be provided access to a fridge or microwave.

Halal Standards

It is Masjid Uthman's (Uthman Academy's) policy to ensure, as much as is reasonably possible, that only halal food is served to its students. This includes adherence to zabihah halal standards for meat and avoidance of questionable ingredients. While parents and members of the community may differ on halal standards in their own personal lives, Uthman Academy adheres to the following relatively conservative standard and approved foods list so that all parents may be comfortable having their students enjoy food and snacks while at the school and masjid. Parents bringing food and snacks to share among students, or parents sponsoring food for a special event, must adhere to the following approved list and standard:

Approved Foods:

- Food catered from a HFSAA approved list of restaurants or retail outlets. See HFSAA.org
- Food catered from a HMS approved list of restaurants or retail outlets. See shariahboard.org/halal-zabiha.
- Food prepared at home from ingredients sourced entirely from retail outlets listed above.

Approved Snacks (subject to revision and addition upon approval of academy administration):

- Potato chips from the following brands: Frito Lays, Jay, Cheetos
- Cookies from the following brands: Oreo, Chips Ahoy
- Juices from the following brands: Minute Maid, Sun's Delight

If you would like to bring any snacks or food products that have not been mentioned here above, please contact the academy supervisor.

Play, Recess, and Gym Safety

The following are steps Uthman Academy has taken to ensure student safety during play time, gym time, or recess:

- If there are a larger number of students (more than 15 or 20), classes will be divided by age or grade. In the Quran Memorization (hifz) program, students 12 years or older will play separately from students younger than 12 years during gym or recess time.
- A rubber gym floor has been installed. Padding has also been installed along the wall behind the basketball hoop.
- Harder balls (such as standard basketballs) have been removed. Only softer balls are allowed, and Uthman Academy has placed acceptable balls in the gym for use by students.

To promote safety, students must follow the following guidelines for gym usage:

- Long dresses (thobes and abayas) are not permitted while playing in the gym, as these pose a tripping hazard by limiting leg movement. Students may use a kameez, loose shirt, or t-shirt, while playing. We suggest that boys wearing thobes during class may wear a loose t-shirt underneath, or girls wearing abayas may wear a kameez underneath. The thobe or abaya may be removed for play.
- Loose items should be removed during play.
- At his/her discretion, teachers may require the use of shoes in the gym.

Medical Conditions and Allergies

Parents are required to disclose any medical or psychological conditions, or allergies, during the registration process, so that Uthman Academy teachers and staff may exercise necessary student care.

Teachers and staff will only administer medicine or medical treatment to children in emergencies where there is no alternative for treatment. In cases where a student is known to have a condition that may require immediate or emergency medical treatment, it is the responsibility of the parent to leave any directions and medication with the teacher or student for administration in case of an emergency. Examples of this include an EpiPen for allergies and an inhaler for asthma. In case of an emergency, teachers and staff will immediately notify the parents and then seek help from emergency and medical personnel.

If a child seems to be ill, or there is any other medical concern, the teacher will notify the parent as necessary. In cases where this is not an emergency, where immediate help from emergency and medical personnel is not required, the parent may be required to pick up a student prior to dismissal time.

Emergency Procedures

Once a year, teachers and staff will review and/or practice emergency procedures with students for several scenarios: active shooter, tornado, and fire.

Harassment Prevention

Students, teachers, staff, and attendees should all be able to enjoy a safe environment in the masjid, free of verbal and physical harassment and bullying. Legal Aid Online defines bullying at illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/preventing-bullying-school

The Student Code of Conduct outlines the behavior expected of students in all classes of the academy. This code is intended to prevent any type of bullying and harassment among students. Violations of the code of conduct, including any type of bullying, are causes of disciplinary action. In no case shall any disciplinary action by teachers and staff involve any type of physical or corporal punishment to a student. Disciplinary procedures are outlined in the code of conduct. Parents and students should review this code of conduct to understand what is expected of them. Teachers will also review the code of conduct with students.

Students who experience any type of harassment, from a fellow student, from a teacher, or from any adult, whether verbal or physical of any kind, are encouraged to immediately report this harassment to their own teacher or any other teacher or staff member of Uthman Academy. Uthman Academy maintains security video cameras in various parts of its facility with a video archive spanning several days. As such, incidents reported in a timely manner can be more easily resolved.

According to the Student Code of Conduct, *fighting with, beating, or otherwise physically harming a fellow student (or others at school)* is a Severe (Type 2) Violation. If a student is accosted physically by another student, the following outlines guidelines for self-defense:

The best self-defense students can use in an altercation is to walk away and report the incident to a teacher or staff member immediately. Or the defending student may restrain the attacker in a manner which does not lead to physical harm, such as holding the hands of the attacker. This is our recommendation for students, as it avoids escalation which may lead to physical harm, and it completely avoids any potential violation of the code of conduct.

In an altercation in which both parties fight, if it is clearly established that a student was defending himself/herself, and the manner of self-defense was not disproportionate, then the defending student's physical actions constituting his self-defense will be treated as a simple Behavioral (Type 1) Behavioral Violation, and not a Severe (Type 2) Behavioral Violation. The disciplinary repercussions will be different between these two types of violations, for the aggressor and the defender.

Self-defense will be not be considered disproportionate if the following criteria are met: (1) The defending student's actions were not more severe than the aggressing student's actions, considering the nature of the physical action as well as the size, health, age, and gender of the students, (2) The defending student's actions sufficed only to stop the attack and did not cross over into punitive, punishing, and vengeful retaliation of the attacker, and (3) None of the defending student's actions had significant potential to physically harm the attacker. A much larger student using a full force punch to respond to a smaller attacker who punched first would be considered to have utilized disproportionate self-defense, warranting a Severe Behavioral Violation, per (1) above. Similarly, restraining an attacker with a headlock, which may cause suffocation, would also be considered disproportionate, per (3) above.

Student Dismissal

Due to the large number of cars, traffic can be a safety issue for children. When you are picking up your child(ren), please park in a designated parking spot. Do not stop your car in the drive aisles.

During the first week of classes of each program, we will form a separate WhatsApp group for easy dismissal related communication. We may require parents or guardians to come to the respective entrances to pick up their children and text on the WhatsApp group about their arrival. Teachers will only release child(ren) when parents or guardians have arrived and are physically identifiable.