

A Message from the Principal

Dear Parents,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to The Sunday School. In 1957 The Sunday School was established by the Islamic Center of Southern California. Our vision was to provide our children with Arabic and Religious education in an Islamic Environment. Today our vision remains the same. We started with a handful of children and have continued to grow. With our growing needs, our task of offering quality Arabic and Religious education in an Islamic environment becomes more challenging. We are determined, with Allah's help and your support, to have a model Sunday school that will become an example of a quality Islamic Sunday school of which all of us will be proud. We believe our school's mission and goals are crucial to the growth of Islam, especially in the development of our "Future Leaders" and the continuity of our tradition.

The Sunday School is designed to provide our children with religious education. The children attending this school will receive excellent Arabic and Islamic education, enjoy the love and care of The Sunday School staff, and experience a positive upbringing in an Islamic environment of the Islamic Center of Southern California.

This manual will serve as a kind of road map of the school. It contains general information and important rules, which govern The Sunday School. We use the language of rules and regulations in the context of mutual concern. The manual becomes a realization of our social contract, the bond of our community, and as such it outlines the basis of relationships and responsibilities that are carried out in our school community.

As educators, we hold the vision of our world united in harmony, with each individual living life to it fullest. The Sunday School is where we begin.

Shahida Alikhan

Principal

PROGRAM

The Sunday School dedicates itself to "Quality Arabic & Religious Education in an Islamic Environment." Our school helps shape the children's first and lasting ideas about themselves, their religion, their country, their culture, and the world. It helps preserve their Muslim identity, gives structure, substance, and meaning to basic religious knowledge, and encourages our children's interest in further learning. Our school's mission & goals are crucial to the growth of Islam, especially in the development of our "Future Leaders" and continuity of our traditions.

It is our goal to develop in each child a love for and understanding of God and Islam and to nurture an identity in each child as a confident and faithful American Muslim. We hope to accomplish these goals through instruction in three basic areas: Islamic Studies, Quranic Studies and Arabic Language.

Using a series of text materials in Arabic, the teacher follows a sequential program in which students develop their reading, writing and speaking ability. In Islamic Studies, the program emphasizes various themes each month from basic beliefs to stories of the prophets to moral values and ethics. Verses from the Quran are selected according to these themes for children to understand and memorize as part of our Quranic Studies curriculum. Chapters from the Thirtieth Part of the Quran are also taught according to age-appropriate meaning.

STAFF

The Sunday School has qualified and competent teachers to ensure high standards. All teachers are experienced and hold degrees.

Research has confirmed that one of the most significant factors in providing a quality learning environment for children in a group setting is the number of educated staff available with whom the children can interact. Not only do more staff provide better supervision and care, but also a greater variety of personalities so that the children will find a "special someone" to bond with. The high ratio of adults to children encourages the best in teacher competencies. Each of our teachers bring energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to the program.

Staff Meetings

Size and training of staff are not enough to assure a quality program unless that staff has adequate opportunity to plan, coordinate and evaluate program goals and activities. To facilitate our operation, we conduct monthly staff meetings and individual meetings for all teachers with the department heads and the principal.

Staff Growth and Development

Staff development is the key to a quality school. Our on-going training program includes:

1. Annual orientation and retreat

2. Aldeen workshops
3. In-service seminars
4. BIAE Workshops

These training programs are designed to meet the needs of the teachers. They will cover a variety of topics the teachers will need, such as instruction techniques, classroom management, and discipline. The Bureau of Islamic and Arabic Education (BIAE) and Aldeen Foundation conducts Islamic education workshops.

POLICIES OF OPERATION

Admission Policies

The primary concern of The Sunday School is always the welfare of its students and the admission applicants. The Sunday School enrolls a diverse student body, welcoming students of all races, creeds, national or ethnic origins, and socio-economic backgrounds. Our main consideration is to ensure that any student admitted is capable of handling the curriculum successfully and happily. We look for families whose goals for their children are compatible with the school's goals. We follow the "No Child Left Behind" policy for The Sunday School.

Enrollment Procedures

The primary goal throughout the enrollment process is to provide information about the school, while learning as much as possible about the prospective student.

School Hours

School hours are from 9:55 a.m. to 1:20 p.m every Sunday of the month, from the second Sunday of September through the second Sunday in June. There will be classes in Ramadan and a day off for Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha.

We begin the day with a five minute assembly by reciting Al-Fateha and the school pledge. There will be a 40-minute recess after the first two periods. Students will be given a snack and drink at this time and go down to the playground and mingle with other children. There will be one more period and Zuhr prayer before we end the school. The children from lower grades pray upstairs and older children go down and pray with the community.

Daily Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is critical to the maximum achievement of our children. In case of absence, parents should call the school office between 10:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. to inform the school of the absence. Upon returning to school, the next Sunday the child should bring a note signed by the parent or physician indicating the reason for absence.

Tardiness

Parents are responsible for getting their children to school on time. When students are tardy they disturb the class and also miss the lesson.

Dismissal

Parents must pick up their child/children from preschool and Kindergarten at 1:00 pm sharp. Children from Levels 1 to 5 will be released after Zuhr prayers. Parents of children from Level 1 and 2 should be picked up from upstairs. The older children will be allowed to go down to meet their parents.

Excused Absences

Excused absences are those due to illness, injury, family emergency or religious commitments. All homework may be made up for full credit. Parents should not excuse students to avoid tests or project deadlines. Such action is unfair to other students and undermines standards.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences result from truancy, unauthorized early departure for or late return from vacations, or any absence, which is not excused by the school. In such cases, teachers are under no obligation to help the student make up missed work.

Make-up Work

Students are responsible for getting assignments and making up missed work. The homework can be accessed from the school's website.

Personal Items

For all students, toys, comics, make-up, jewelry, perfume and other inappropriate items are not permitted at the school. If brought to the class, the teacher will take those items from the child.

Lost/Found

A lost and found area will be maintained in the office. The Sunday School will make every effort to safeguard personal belongings brought by the child, but will not be responsible for lost or damaged items. Expensive or irreplaceable items such as jewelry, watches or expensive toys should not be brought to school.

Visiting

Parents are welcome to observe classes but they need to make an appointment with the principal and they must not disturb the classroom with their presence. All visitors must check in at the office before going into the classes. They will be required to wear a visitor's badge.

Furniture

Students are expected to keep all furniture in good condition by not writing or scratching on the surfaces. Any damage done to school property will result in monetary compensation for repairs or replacement. Disciplinary consequences may also be issued.

Fundraising

Students and Parents participate in the yearly school fundraising activities by selling selected items. They are also requested to participate in all PTO planned activities.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Class Size and Groupings

The child shall be placed in a group of peers based on age, grade, or Arabic level and/or special needs as determined by the staff. Classes will be formed consisting of 18 to 20 students. Changes in class assignment may be necessary to accommodate enrollment changes after the school year begins.

Homework Policy

Homework is assigned every Sunday. Parents are responsible for providing a quiet, well-lit comfortable place for the child to complete his/her homework assignments. Parents should make sure children give proper attention to neatness and accuracy. However, parents must not do the children's work for them. Homework is an independent activity in which the child reinforces skills learned at The Sunday School. Parents may assist their children in a limited way. Parents should be prepared to sign homework papers at the teacher's request. Parents must also follow through with homework assignments that require their direct involvement and remind students to submit the homework regularly.

The students will be given Arabic books, Islamic Studies and a Quran book with a CD. Along with the books, they must bring a notebook, a folder, and a box of supplies to school every Sunday.

Guiding one's children in using the time appropriately is also an important responsibility of the parent. Setting limits on watching T.V. and video games will help a child to develop responsible work habits for homework and a better attention level for school work and school activities.

Testing

Testing will be done twice a year, half-yearly exams in January and final exams in June. Report cards will be sent on student evaluation in February and June.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Discipline is considered a direct consequence of a personal choice on the part of an individual. Students are taught that they have the ultimate responsibility for controlling behavior and they should always consider carefully the consequences before they act. Students know clearly that they will be held accountable for their actions at all times. The ability to act responsibly, independent of adult direction, is considered the greatest achievement.

Courtesy, self-control, and personal development are desired goals of good discipline. In addition, good discipline will provide a classroom situation conducive to learning for all.

Discipline is considered an aspect of moral guidance and not a form of punishment.

A safe and orderly environment is crucial to an optimum learning situation for all the children. Our school believes in a positive discipline approach where school, playground, and classroom expectations are discussed and reviewed with the students. Our primary expectation is respect for all involved in the school programs: staff, students and parents.

The Parent's Responsibilities

1. Reviewing school rules with students to insure that everyone is familiar with the standards that are expected by the school.
2. Cooperating with school staff in enforcing the school's disciplinary measures when necessary.
3. Reinforcing appropriate behavior by students in the home.
4. Developing an interest in the student's academic and other school related activities.

The Student's Responsibilities

1. Behaving in the classroom and in the school in a manner that does not disturb or interfere with the rights of others.
2. Respecting the authority of teachers and other school personnel to enforce school policies and rules.
3. Acting responsibly when caring for and using school property.

The Teachers' Responsibilities

1. Establishing Classroom Rules and Consequences and a classroom management atmosphere, which encourages proper behavior and gives each student the chance to learn.
2. Assisting in the development and enforcement of school rules.
3. Communicating with parents, and students, regarding student's performance, recognition of progress and excellence, as well as generating possible solutions to problems.

The Administration's Responsibilities

1. Enforcing the discipline policy within the existing school policies and State and Federal laws.
2. Supporting teachers by holding conferences with disruptive students and, when necessary, with their parents to obtain commitments to improve behavior.
3. Advising students and parents of possible consequences for continued violation of school-wide rules and policies.
4. Ensuring that the due process rights of students are observed.

GENERAL RULES

1. Everyone is expected to follow directions the first time they are given.
2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to ones' self.
3. Use appropriate language at all times. Teasing and name calling are inappropriate.
4. Students are expected to show respect for school property.

- Littering and/or defacing school property is not allowed.
5. Students are not to bring gum, candy, sunflower seeds, etc. to school.
 6. All students are to follow uniform guidelines daily. Extreme hairstyles, excessive Jewelry and wearing of make-up are not allowed.

OFFENSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Offenses and Consequences

School-wide rules at The Sunday School are divided into three categories. Students are disciplined in a progressive manner according to the seriousness of the offense and the number of times he/she has been referred to the office. Teachers will normally handle minor offenses and some major offenses. Major offenses may, and severe offenses will, be referred to the office. Referrals should be specific and briefly review previous actions taken.

MINOR OFFENSES

Violation of general school and/or class rules, being in an unassigned area, or tardiness.

CONSEQUENCES

Warning, student conference, behavior standards. Possible parent conference

MAJOR OFFENSES

Repeated minor offenses
Profanity or vulgarity

CONSEQUENCES

Referral to office, apology letter, Parent conference, School suspension

SEVERE OFFENSES

Repeated major offenses
Defiance, Fighting. Habitual profanity or vulgarity, Severe defacing or destruction of school property

CONSEQUENCES

Referral to office, restitution for damage, Parent conference, Community service, Suspension or expulsion

Students who follow the school-wide and classroom rules will be rewarded. Students who do not follow rules will receive the appropriate consequences as outlined above.

The following serious violations will result in immediate disciplinary action and may result in community service, suspension, or expulsion.

- Fighting
- Failure to respect the authority of adults
- Theft, Lying, Actions gravely detrimental to the spiritual welfare of other pupils
- Open, persistent defiance of the authority, profanity and vulgarity
- Continued willful disobedience

A suspension from school for one or more Sundays, or expulsion, may be administered immediately at the discretion of the principal. During this suspension, the student should be supervised and counseled by the parents towards responsibility to improve behavior.

The rules and discipline procedures at The Sunday School have been established for the protection of all students. Students are expected to respect these as the people responsible for carrying them out. Our goal is for each student to learn to be responsible for his/her own actions.

Cleanliness

A code of cleanliness is expected for all students. Hair must be properly combed or brushed. Students should bathe or shower every day. Nails should be trimmed. Clothing should be clean and free from noticeable stains. Shirts and blouses should be neatly pressed. Shoes should be cleaned and shined regularly.

Dress Code

Proper dress is the student's responsibility when choosing appropriate clothing. The following guidelines must be followed to ensure that this privilege will continue.

- No short shorts (should be below the knee)

- No short skirts

- No tight jeans or leggings

- No very baggy pants

- Mid-arm or long sleeved shirts only

- Loose fitting clothing

If a student does not follow the dress code according to our values, he/she will be given a notice.

First Aid

The school will give appropriate first aid to a hurt child. A parent or guardian will be contacted if the school staff feels that immediate medical attention is necessary. If The Sunday School Staff feel that the injury is of an emergency nature, paramedics will be called to the school and a parent or guardian will be contacted.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are the most important people in a child's life. Their love, affection, support and approval are a fundamental need of all children. Because parents are #1 in importance, they are also #1 in the ability to influence and motivate their children. Research shows that programs designed with strong parent involvement components produced students who performed better. We encourage our parents to participate in our school events, PTO meetings, and be part of our school community. Parents are also expected to attend the Sunday lectures at the ICSC.

Parent Communication

The Sunday School recognizes how important it is for parents to know about what is happening at school with their children. Open communication is the foundation of a

harmonious school. Please make use of our willingness to listen by communicating your needs and concerns as they arise. To be able to have a productive meeting, please make an appointment.

Bulletin Board

A parent bulletin board exists for notices, advertisement of community wide events and information of interest in the lobby outside The Sunday School.

School Bulletin

Our school will send letters and memos for upcoming events, reminders, and changes of events. This will be our primary means of communicating The Sunday School information to you. All this information will also be posted on our website for your convenience. Our website is www.SundaySchool-ICSC.org.

Parent Concerns

We care about your concerns for your children. We have found that when such concerns arise, a scheduled conference time works best for sharing between parent and teacher. If you desire a conference, please schedule one with your child's teacher. Additionally, you may request principal's presence. Or, if the need arises, you may schedule a conference with the principal alone. We are here to meet your needs concerning you and your children. Please don't hesitate to make use of our service.

GENERAL

Child Assessments/Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers assess children on a regular basis. Our assessment forms are non-judgmental but still give the teacher and parent many areas to discuss as well as specific behaviors to be aware of. Conferences give you and your child's teacher the opportunity to discuss your child's development, progress, personality, or problems.

Parent Teacher Organization (P.T.O.)

P.T.O. is a service organization established to aid and enrich the school. We recognize that the education and welfare of our children is not just the job of one or two interested groups, but also the responsibility of every one. Studies report that those students, whose parents are active and involved with their religious education, have a much better chance of achieving their goals. Active and involved parents are communicating to their children and to their school that religious education is very important. We therefore encourage our parents and friends to join the PTO and show your child that you care.

All parents are required to sign a parent service contract to volunteer, 10 hours for one child and 15 hours for more than one, to serve the school. Parents can volunteer to be a teacher's aid, snack helper, recess helper, and / or office helper. Please see the list on the contract.