Welcome to Saskatoon Misbah School! There are several guiding principles that non-Muslim educators joining or visiting an Islamic school environment may encounter. The purpose of this guide is to educate non-Muslims about Islamic morals and values. Many of these issues stem from religious beliefs.

1. What is Islam?
   The name of the religion is Islam, which comes from an Arabic root word meaning "peace" and "submission." Islam teaches that one can only find peace in one’s life by submitting to Almighty God (Allah) in heart, soul and deed.

   The ‘Five Pillars’ of Islam are the foundation of Muslim life:
   - Faith or belief in the Oneness of God and the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad peace be upon him (Shahadah);
   - Establishment of the five daily prayers (Salah);
   - Concern for and almsgiving to the needy (Zakah);
   - Self-purification through fasting (Sawm); and
   - The pilgrimage to Makkah for those who are able (Hajj).

2. Multiculturalism – Canadians are familiar with the definitions, “diversity” and “multiculturalism” but they may not be entirely prepared for the diversity of cultural backgrounds and nationalities of students attending at Muslim schools. Students in Muslim schools may come from North America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and other places. Their families speak a variety of languages and dialects. Bonds with their countries of origin are generally well maintained and families feel that passing their traditions and culture on to their children is exceptionally important. Obviously, there are also Canadian Muslim families and many households may even be multicultural.

3. Religious observations – Islam is considered by Muslims to be more than just a religion, but rather, a way of life. In fact, teaching this way of life to Muslim youth is one of the purposes of establishing Islamic schools. At least one, if not two of the 5 daily prayers are scheduled into the school day. Salat (prayers) must always be preceded by ablutions (wudu’) of ritually washing the face, hands, and feet. Teachers must accommodate their students to the mosque for prayer (female teachers must not enter the mosque during menstruation). During prayers, women must also wear a hijab (headscarf).

   During the month of fasting known as Ramadan, the school schedule may be altered to accommodate the increased religious observances made during that month. Religious classes are taken by all students throughout the year.

   Arabic language classes are taught by school professional Arabic teachers.
4. **Religious terms & phrases** – Muslims often employ religious terminology into their speech as well. For example:

   a. **Greeting**: Muslims greet one another with “Assalamu Alaikum” which means “May peace be upon you” and they will respond to this greeting by saying “Walaikum Salaam” which means “Peace be upon you too.”

   b. **Praise**: “Alhamdulillah” meaning “Praise be to God.”

   c. **And another common phrase**: “Insha’Allah” meaning “if God wills” which is usually said anytime something is planned for the future.

5. **Dietary considerations** – Muslims do not eat pork or pork-based products. Some Muslim families also may not eat other meat that has not been slaughtered in an Islamic “halal” manner. Alcohol is strictly forbidden.

6. **Holidays and celebrations** – Muslims celebrate the holidays specified in Islam which are called “Eid”. The first of these is the Eid of breaking the fast, “Eid El Fitr”, which is celebrated when Ramadan ends. The second Eid, “Eid Al Adha” is celebrated during the season of the “Hajj” or Muslim pilgrimage. These holidays should be scheduled on the school calendar. Other holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentines, and Easter are not celebrated in the school.

7. **Islamic Art** – Islamic art is diverse with a history dating to more than 1400 years of creativity and exemplary artwork. There are certain guidelines that Muslims are advised to follow, these include, abstaining from sculpting or drawing anything that is attributed to God’s genuine creations like humans and animals. Musical stringed instruments are not approved form of art in an Islamic school. Percussion and non stringed musical instruments are allowed form of art in an Islamic school.

8. **Gender Relations** – Muslims hold own views regarding relations between the sexes to safeguard the family and to build respect for people and society. In general, casual mixing between unrelated males and females is discouraged in Islam. However, interactions that take place for a particular reason (such as educational institutes, professional meetings or parent conferences) are allowed with certain principles in place:

   a. No physical contact should be made, including.

   b. Students may be seated separately according to gender, and if space allowed, separate classes may even be established, inquiries about
personal non-marital relationships should be forwarded to the school’s Islamic studies teacher for an appropriate answer.

9. **Physical Appearance and Attire** – In light of the previous point about gender relations, Islam requires that modest dress be employed. Some aspects of this modesty are specified for each gender. Both genders must wear non-revealing clothing that is loose, non-formfitting, and not see-through. For the woman, such clothing should cover all of her person except her face and hands. Some Muslim women should cover all of her person except her face and hands as well.

**SPSD Teachers (Female)**

- SPSD teachers working in our school are required to wear an abaya (loose fitting dress) that can be worn over their clothes. These abayas will be provided by the school. Hijabs (head coverings) are not required to be worn unless you are in the mosque.

**SPSD Teachers (Male)**

- SPSD teachers are required to wear long pants and a shirt or sweater. There is no clothing provided; however, males are required to dress modestly.

**SPSD Teachers (General)**

- The Saskatoon Misbah School is very welcoming to all our teachers (both current and new). If you are visiting our school as a sub, please do not hesitate to ask our staff members any questions you may have. In addition, please feel free to visit our mosque during prayer times.

10. **Additional Notes:**

- Islamic text: Qur’an verses, the name of Allah (God), etc. should not be placed in unclean places such as the floor. In addition, to dispose of Islamic text, teachers must shred them (shredder is located in the office).

11. Sensitive topics or additional topics can be discussed with an Islamic teacher. For example, students may inquire about the topic of sexuality especially during health lessons, if the teacher is unsure on how to answer a student’s question in an Islamic manner, he or she can contact an Islamic teacher.