



## SUPPORTING MUSLIM MEMBERS IN THE LOCAL SCOUT GROUP

### Overview

While Muslims live in tight-knit communities which are responsible for the members within it, there may not always be a Muslim Scout Group within the community and Muslim youth and adult members may wish to join the local Scout Group. Group Leaders will need to fully understand Scouting's policy statement on Diversity and Inclusion (refer QBSI 1.8.) and integrating these members within their Group.

The family is central to Muslims. Extended families, where members look after one another, are key and there is deep respect for the elders of the community. Although Islam affirms the equality of men and women as human beings, rules governing the roles and behavioural conduct of the sexes differ. Public and social contact between men and women is discouraged unless it is necessary, such as at educational institutions, work places and social gatherings.

### Names

Each Muslim has their own first name and family name. In some Muslim cultures the children's family name is their father's given name. In this country Muslim women often add their husband's last name to their own for official purposes although some retain their maiden name. This will often mean that the mother will have a different family name to her children.

### Food

It is important not to include any kind of meat derived from pigs in meals or snacks. Muslims may also insist on meat which has been

prepared using lawful means; that is killed to allow the blood and bacteria to escape naturally and the name of Allah recited over the animal while it is slaughtered (this is known as halal meat). The best way to avoid confusion is to provide fish or vegetarian food which can be enjoyed by everyone. There may also be a Halal butcher in the local area.

Before a meal Muslims wash their hands and offer thanks to Allah 'Bismillah' ('in the name of Allah') and afterwards 'Alhamdulillah' ('all praise be to Allah'). Muslims do not drink alcohol and usually prefer to avoid areas where alcohol is served.

### Dress Code

Muslim girls and women will keep their bodies covered and dress modestly, especially after puberty. Although, some young Muslim women will wear the Hijab (traditional scarf covering the hair) others will choose modest, loose fitting clothes which do not emphasise their body shape. They will usually keep the arms and legs covered. No prescribed dress has actually been given for Muslim men, but a male should cover himself from below the navel to the knees.

### Scout Meetings

Muslims males are expected to attend the Mosque for congregational prayers at mid-day on Fridays (the holy day) before and after that they may be free to participate in Scouting activities. Mixed Units for Joey Scouts and Cub Scouts may be possible. Mixed Scout Troops may not be possible because Muslims discourage contact between young women

and men. It is worth consulting with Community Leaders about all mixed provision.

### **Camps**

Scouts who are Muslim will want to practice their faith whilst at camp and therefore consideration will need to be given to this during the planning stages. A compass activity could be devised to locate the direction of Mecca.

Food at camp should not cause problems as fish is quite permissible and vegetarian options will be suitable for all campers.

It may also be possible to arrange the camp program around the five set of prayer times if preparation is made beforehand to find out exactly when these should take place.