



Az Zahra Madressah Parents Handbook

AA Dear Parents/Guardians,

Our Family Handbook contains information on the procedures, guidelines and policies that have been established to make Az Zahra Madressah a positive and safe learning environment for our students and staff.

Please keep in mind the handbook cannot cover every situation that may come up during the course of the school year. Statements in the handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. Madressah will attempt to keep families informed of all changes as soon as possible. Some changes may be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.

Since all students are expected to be familiar with the information in the handbook, parents are asked to review the handbook with each child enrolled in Madressah. Our expectation is that by reviewing this together with your child(ren), you can fully support our mission and the procedures, guidelines, and policies that are included in the handbook.

Please know that AZM is totally committed to Islamic education and together we can make a difference in your child's life. Thank you for your help and support in ensuring a successful year at Madressah.

Sincerely,

Az Zahra Madressah Principal

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FAMILY HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Az-Zahra Madressah (AZM)

Introduction: A Brief History of the Madressah:

The Madressah of Anjuman-e-Asghari had a very modest beginning, but has mashallah grown to a sizable school with admirable facilities. It began in 1984 when a member of the community started the Madressah with eight students in the basement of their home. Every Friday, students would come to the home to gain knowledge in classes which focused on recitation of the Qur'an and Islamic studies. Between 1985 and 1986, the Madressah had grown to a size of eighteen students. To accommodate the larger class size, the Madressah was moved to the community center in Crystal and then later to North Hennepin Technical College.

Gradually more families found out about the classes and showed an interest, subsequently enrolling their children. Four years later in 1989, the Madressah had grown to 35 students and the classes were then held in the newly-built Imambara. In 1991, the number of students enrolled was 52. The Madressah classes switched from Fridays to Sundays with an added class: Arabic Language.

With such a large number of students continuously enrolling, in 1994 the community embarked upon building a Madressah Center. Consequently, from generous donations from across the globe, Anjuman-e-Asghari laid the foundation for a new Madressah Center, which opened in 1996. At the formal opening ceremony of the Center, Marhum Mulla Asghar M.M. Jaffer named it Az-Zahra Madressah. The new center consisted of ten classrooms, a library, kitchen, office, and an assembly hall. In the 90s the Madressah added Academy classes for grades ten and up, and classes switched to Saturdays.

Currently Madressah has over 100 students enrolled and approximately 40 volunteer teachers and support staff and is held on Sundays. Alhamdulillah the Madressah enrollment continues to grow every year with new students and volunteer teachers.

MISSION:

The Madressah shall be a guiding institution of learning and teaching the creed of Shia Ithna-Asheri faith; to instill the love of Allah, His Prophet, the Holy Quran and Ahlulbayt, in the heart of the new generation.

OBJECTIVES

- The Madressah will support Islamic learning at home.
- The Madressah shall help students recite Quran with Tajweed and full understanding of the message of guidance which Allah (SWT) has sent to humanity.
- To nurture conscientious practicing Muslims.
- Help the students develop a sense of positive Muslim identity.
- To enable the students/graduates to make informed choices consistent with Islamic spiritual and moral norms.
- To guide the children of the community to the right path, through the teachings of the Quran and the fourteen Masumeen.

ADMISSION AGE

Preschool: must be 4-years-old by September 1st of the year to start.

Kindergarten: must be 5-years-old by September 1st or have documentation from their traditional school, stating they are enrolled in Kindergarten.

ADMISSION READINESS/PREVIOUS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Preschool

- Be able to eat and go to the restroom unassisted.
- Be able to communicate needs clearly.
- Be able to stay in the classroom unaccompanied.

1st Grade and up

Students shall be placed at a grade level matching their traditional school.

Applications to be admitted to a Madressah grade above than that of the enrolled grade in the traditional school will be considered based on parent commitment to help student catch up on academic curriculum.

ATTENDANCE (STUDENT)

Regular and punctual attendance is expected from every student. It is necessary that the students attend every Madressah day on time in order for the student to fully benefit from Madressah.

A student who is tardy or leaves early even once will not be considered to have PERFECT ATTENDANCE.

Students with 100% attendance will be recognized and rewarded at the end of the year. Leave of absence should be notified to the Madressah Vice Principal and lesson plans for the time away from Madressah should be taken and completed before returning to Madressah classes. To get the lesson, contact the teacher (contact info attached).

CALENDAR

At the beginning of the year, a tentative calendar is prepared as a guideline for Madressah activities. Since this is a tentative calendar, some events may be added, cancelled or shifted around to accommodate other events and weather. The changes will be kept to a minimum.

The Madressah year typically begins in September and ends in May. It is held on Sundays for about 30 weeks a year.

COMMUNICATION

Parents are encouraged to maintain communication with teachers regarding their student's academic progress.

Some ways to communicate

- *Bulletin Boards:* Please be sure to check information displayed on bulletin boards displays throughout the madressah.
- *Online at - <https://emaktab.org/azm>:* Parents are expected to check the website to see posted assignments, coursework and scores.
- *Classroom Newsletter:* You might receive a parent newsletter at the beginning of the academic year with important information about your child's class.

- *Phone Calls:* Teachers are encouraged to use the phone as a means of parent communication, so you might receive phone calls from our teachers. Kindly remember teachers cannot attend to phone calls during their class time.
- *Emails:* Emails are the primary means of communication. Therefore parents are asked to read emails sent out by AZM as they will provide updated information regarding Madressah.

CURRICULUM OF MADRESSAH

Students are required to take the following classes throughout the year:

Akhlaq, Fiqh, Aqaid, Tarikh, Quran Tafseer and Qur'an recitation.

Additionally, students will be required to memorize surah(s) assigned to the grade level for Quran Competition.

Qur'an: Students will learn to recite the Holy Qur'an with proper pronunciation and its basic rules for recitation. Memorization and simplified translations will also be included.

Fiqh: Students will study practical laws of Islam.

Aqaid: Students will study the basic beliefs and ideology of Islam.

Tariq (Islamic History): Students will study the history of the Prophets; Ahlul Bait; and all the special events pertaining to Islam in the past.

Akhlaq: Students will study the teachings based on Quran and Masoomeen regarding proper and appropriate manners and etiquettes.

Quran Tafseer: (Grades 3 and above) Students will study a few suras in depth with translation.

DISCIPLINE

Every student and staff member of AZM is entitled to learn and work in a safe school environment. To ensure this, AZM has established clear student discipline policies, consequences appropriate with the behavior, and a practice to do so consistently. Students are expected to behave in accordance with federal, state and local laws and rules; district, athletic and activity policies and AZM regulations; and in a way, that respects the rights and safety of others. Staff will take corrective action when a student's behavior does not fall within the guidelines.

The basis of AZM discipline policy is to encourage appropriate behavior and self-monitoring. Students should be shown respect and you should expect it back from them. There will be times when a student may not be meeting expectations and teachers will handle these instances with professionalism and kindness.

Teachers will address discipline issue with care and respect.

The key to maintaining classroom control is respect. AZM teachers are encouraged to build classroom community by establishment of rituals, routines, and procedures at the beginning of the school year.

Each teacher shall post the **class agreements created with students** in the teaching area and frequently review the expectations with their students. So that your child is well aware and familiar with the rules in place.

The students are expected to follow the class agreements not only in their respective classroom but in ALL areas of the Madressah, Imambara and MPC including, but not limited to – **main hall, bathrooms, hallway, playground, etc.**

Minor discipline cases will be handled by the teacher. The child may be removed from

the classroom for a major behavior/ discipline issue.

The teacher will follow the philosophy, policies and procedures of AZM regarding any discipline issues. The teacher, will communicate with the parent regarding discipline issues.

Steps to support excellent behavior

Level 1	Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All electronic devices during classroom hours (personal cell phones, laptops, I-pods etc.), unless cleared by a teacher and /or office for specific reason, will be taken away by a staff member and returned at the end of the day. ● Found in an unauthorized area without permission. ● Not following directions given by an adult ● Bringing items/toys that cause disruption (water pistol, toy guns, electronic games, etc). ● Lying, cheating ● Ditching/truancy ● Spitting, spit wads, food throwing ● Verbal disrespect to other students (swearing, name calling etc) ● Profanity, obscene gestures, possession of indecent materials, violent pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verbal Warning ● Safe seat ● Communicate with the parents ● Work with the principal and parent ● After 3 repetitions - send student to the office ● After 3 office visits, principal and teacher will make a decision
Level 2	Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Threats ● Pushing, shoving, hitting with anger ● Disrespectful/defiant to school staff or volunteers ● Damage to school and private property (including bathrooms) ● Possession of weapons or items that can cause harm or incite violence ● Stealing ● Leaving school property unauthorized ● Running away from staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sent to the office immediately, student conference with Principal/Vice Principal ● Parent conference with the principal and a Discipline Plan put into place with the principal's support ● After 3 office visits, principal and teacher will make a decision

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Teachers will instruct their classes in the proper procedure for emergency drills.

Madressah will conduct unannounced fire and lockdown simulations.

TORNADO & FIREDRILL -Tornado & Fire shelter areas will be designated by the fire department.

LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

Are used to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building or external threats that may enter the building

LOCKDOWN WITH WARNING: Occurs when there is a threat outside the building or there is a non-threatening circumstance when people need to keep away from areas (e.g. medical emergency where students in the halls might interfere with emergency responders). Teachers lock classroom doors and do not allow anyone in or out, but may continue teaching.

LOCKDOWN: Occurs when there is a threat or intruder inside the building. Staff members lock doors, move students away from doors and windows, and maintain silence wherever they are.

GRADING

Throughout the academic year, the students will be tested and evaluated, and at the end of each trimester they will complete a final exam for all subjects. All test and exam results will be available on emaktab.org/azm. It is the parent's responsibility to check their child's results. Tri 1 and Tri 2 progress reports are posted on Emaktab (<https://emaktab.org/azm>) It is the parent's responsibility to check their child (ren)'s grades.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an important element of AZM's academic program. It serves to reinforce classroom teaching and develop independence and automaticity.

Parents are expected to hold students accountable for completing and submitting homework on time as per teacher's instructions.

AZM encourages teachers to use the following general guidelines for homework per week:

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Time spent doing homework per week.</i>
• Grade K - 1	10 to 25 minutes
• Grades 2 and 3	25 to 35 minutes
• Grades 4 and 5	40 to 60 minutes
• Grades 6 and up	65 to 75 minutes

HOURS

Madressah is in session every Sunday from 11:00am - 2:30pm with the exception of holidays where the parents will be notified in advance. The Madressah schedule includes regular classes along with a break for lunch and Salat.

LUNCH/SNACK

Students should bring their own snacks/beverages unless Madressah provides it. KINDLY REMEMBER MADRESSAH'S "NO NUT POLICY".

Please check Emaktab (<https://emaktab.org/azm>) for the lunch plan for every week.

NO NUT POLICY

AZM recognizes that nut allergies can represent detrimental health issues with serious consequences for those with such allergies. In order to protect those students, staff, employees, visitor and guests of the community from an environment that may be harmful to them, the Board hereby prohibits the use, serving, or selling of ALL nuts, or any product containing nuts or peanut oil in the Az Zahra premises of Madressah building and grounds. (These include cashews, walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts, almonds, peanut butter, Nutella etc.).

MONEY and VALUABLES

Please make sure that students do not come to Madressah with large amounts of money or expensive items. We cannot be responsible for broken, stolen or misplaced items brought from home. If valuables are found, they will be taken away and given at

the end of the school day.

REGISTRATION

At the beginning of every year, all parents must complete a registration process for all their children who will be attending Madressah that year.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

- Have an account at (<https://emaktab.org/azm>). It is vital for you as a parent to have a username and password for this site as AZM uses this site to post almost all of its communications.
- Advise and encourage their child to respect and obey the rules of the Madressah.
- Be sure that their child attends Madressah regularly and on time and dresses appropriately for Madressah (Please check the Uniform Policy)
- Participate in parent-teacher conferences to ensure their child's success in Madressah, discuss report cards with the child.
- To remain informed of their child's activities and lessons in Madressah, To check if any homework has been assigned. Ensure that the homework/ assignment has been completed.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

- Attend all classes, every Madressah day, and be there on time.
- Be prepared for each class with appropriate Madressah supplies and assignments.
- Be properly dressed for Madressah (Please check the Uniform Policy).
- Show respect towards others—to both students and teachers
- Follow all Madressah rules.
- Gather and complete all missed assignments and homework in the event of an absence (<https://emaktab.org/azm>).
- Share announcements with parents.

RECOGNITION & AWARDS

Madressah plans to recognize students for their achievement each month (student of the month) and at the end of the Madressah year. Recognition may be based on attendance, performance, extra-ordinary efforts, etc. or a combination of these criterias. Students will be presented with awards that may include trophies, books, snack with the principal.

SPECIAL PROJECTS & EVENTS - Check the calendar for exact dates

- Qu'ran Memorization Contest (Parents will receive a separate pamphlet with all the information)
- Field Trips (Academy students)
- Get To Know Your Child's Teacher Morning
- Awards and Appreciation Day
- Imam's Birthday Celebrations

SOCIAL MEDIA

Az-Zahra Madressah (AZM) understands that as part of 21st century learning is

adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning and sharing in these digital environments is part of the 21st century learning. **To this aim, AZM has adapted the following straight forward guidelines to provide direction for teachers, students and the AZM community when participating in online social media activities.**

- Do not post or tag photos or movies of others without parents' permission.
- Do not use photos or movies taken at AZM without permission.
- Do not post photos or movies that contain students without parent's consent.
- Do not post photos or movies that contain adult staff and volunteers without their consent.

TEACHERS

Selection of a teacher – Az Zahra Madressah Board will take the following course of action for recruiting teachers for the following school year:

1. An advertisement will be sent out to the Shia Ithna-ashari community by April 1st.
2. Interested applicants will be asked to complete and submit an application, posted on Emaktab, by May 1st.
3. Applications will be reviewed by the Board and the applicants will be notified of the Board's decision by June 1st.

TEACHER ASSISTANTS

Teacher Assistants are appointed to different classrooms at the discretion of the Principal.

The class is expected to treat the TA with same level of respect as a classroom teacher. Teacher Assistants are teacher in training.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER:

On the day a teacher is absent, an equally qualified substitute teacher will take the class. The substitute shall carry out the lesson plan that he or she is given by the classroom teacher.

TUITION & BOOKS - Fees subject to change

Tuition fee for each student is \$23.00 per month or an estimate of \$200 for full year.

Tuition fees are from the month of September to May (9 months). There is a discount of \$10.00 for parents paying the full year's fee in cash or check, \$5 if paid by credit card on the registration day in September.

The cost of books is \$40.00. It is required for Preschool to Grade Ten. Quran Competition Book is \$ 5.00.

UNIFORM & APPEARANCE POLICY

1. Students are expected to dress according to Islamic standards.
2. Their attire and grooming should not distract or disrupt the learning process; students should be neat and clean. No adornments such as piercings, large pendants, medallions, punk haircuts.
3. Boys should adhere to respectful Islamic dress code, which includes complete coverage of body, arms and legs. Parents will be called or students will be

sent home if proper uniform guidelines are not met.

4. Girls must be in complete hijab. If a student is not observing complete hijab, then proper attire will be given to the student. Complete hijab is briefly defined as clothing that completely covers the entire body except the face and hands.

UNIFORM is as follow:

All students need to adhere to the Madressah dress code and uniform.

Girls / Sisters:

Preschool – Grade 6: - Dark Blue Uniform Jumper (available in school uniform section at various stores e.g. Old Navy, Children's Place) with long sleeve undershirt (White or light Blue) or black abaya and
- Blue or White Long Pants (**NO LEGGINGS**).

Grade 7 - Academy: - Black Abaya
- Scarfs: White / Black Hijab

Boys / Brothers:

Preschool- Academy: - Long sleeve Blue Polo Shirt (available in school uniform sections at various stores e.g. Old Navy, Children's Place)
- Long Blue or Khaki Pants.

UNIFORM POLICY ENFORCEMENT

The Vice Principal/Principal and/or Vice Principal /Principal's designee shall

- 1) Ensure that the policy is enforced in a consistent manner.
- 2) The student and the student's parent or guardian to take appropriate action to remedy situations determined to be in conflict with this policy.
- 3) Students who do not comply with the **School Uniform and Appearance Policy** will be addressed by the Principal or Vice Principal.

WEATHER CONDITIONS and MADRESSAH CLOSURE POLICY

Az Zahra Madressah will remain open, if at all possible, on all scheduled days. Even when weather conditions are severe, every effort will be made to keep AZM open in the belief that it is in the best interest of the students. We encourage everyone to use caution traveling safely to and from our Madressah.

We cannot stress enough that your student and family's safety is our first priority. The AZM Board recognizes the rights of parents to make decisions that are best for their children. Therefore, the option to keep children home when weather conditions are severe is always at the parent's' discretion and AZM respects that decision. Students who are kept home will not be penalized for their absence or tardiness.

On occasions, weather may be so extreme that AZM will close or have an early dismissal. When faced with the possibility of Madressah closing, the decision will be made as early as possible, ideally the night before the anticipated weather event.

Stated below are conditions AZM will consider for closure:

Cold Day: AZM will likely cancel classes if wind chill forecasts are -35° or colder.

Snow Day: AZM will cancel classes if road conditions become too hazardous for travel. If snow forecasts are 6 inches or more within 20 miles of AZM.

We may also close AZM if conditions approach blizzard warnings, even if snowfall amounts are low.

In the event that Madressah is canceled due to severe weather, AZM will make every attempt to notify families as soon as possible.

Following are the communication procedures that we will adhere to if AZM closure or early dismissal becomes necessary.

Closure Announcements: Parents should expect an email or/and text message, by 10pm the night before, informing whether or not AZM will have classes the following day. Simultaneously Madressah closure information will be posted at:

<https://emaktab.org/azm/> (AZM web page)

Az-Zahra Madressah Contract 2017-18

This contract is for all Az-Zahra Madressah students. There are three parties involved in the education of each child: the school, the student, and the parent/guardian. This academic contract is designed to detail what the three parties at AZM are responsible for during the academic year. The signed contract will remain on file for the Madressah year to reinforce that parents and students have read and understand the Az-Zahra Handbook as well as the items mentioned below.

Read, complete and please return to your teacher

The **STUDENT** will do the following items:

1. Approach teachers for absent or missing work at appropriate times (either before or after class).
2. Check emaktab.org/azm website for assignments, due dates, and policies.
3. Take responsibility of their learning, if they need to help, talk with teachers to set up a meeting time.
4. Follow the Az-Zahra Madressah code of conduct by being safe, responsible and respectful at all times.
5. Practice the core values of Az-Zahra Madressah’s teachings: respect, responsibility, integrity, and kindness.

The **PARENT/GUARDIAN** will do the following:

1. Encourage and help your child at home as the starting point for their Islamic spiritual success.
2. Set up meeting times 24 hours in advance by phone or email with teachers and administrators. If this is not followed, teachers and administrators reserve the right to refuse the requested meeting.
3. Check AZM website for assignments, due dates, and policies.

Please sign on the lines below showing that you and your child have read the Az-Zahra Madressah Handbook, with complete understanding of its policies and expectations.

Student Name: _____
(Please Print)

(Grade & Date)

Parent Name: _____
(Please Print)

(Signature)