



Parent Handbook 2018-2019

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Table of Contents

About Us

Our Philosophy
Al Hadi Model

Admission & Tuition

Admission Policies
Tuition Policies

Procedures

Arrival & Dismissal
School Dress
Snacks & Lunch
Discipline
Potty-Training

Parent Participation

Parent Board
Board of Trustees
In the Classroom
Professional Staff

Health & Safety

Weather-Related
Emergency Related
Transportation & Carpool
Illness
Safety & Security

2018-2019 Calendar

Al Hadi Contact Information

About Us

Dear Families,

Welcome to our Al-Hadi family! We are pleased that you chose Al-Hadi for your child's educational experience. We recognize the importance of finding a quality early childhood experience for your child and are honored to be part of your child's growth and development. I hope you find this handbook useful in helping you understand the organization's model, policies, and practices. Please take the time to read the handbook. I encourage you to ask questions, participate fully in your child's learning experiences, and grow alongside our students and teachers!

Sabera Husain, M.Ed.
Executive Director

Our Philosophy

Al-Hadi Learning Organization offers an age-appropriate, cooperative learning platform for toddlers and preschoolers that fosters love of learning, community, and Islam. Al-Hadi Learning Organization welcomes students of any race, religion, national, social-economical status, or ethnic origin.

Our mission is to create a learning organization that fosters growth of the whole child encompassing intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development and inspire lifelong learning in a rich, nurturing environment.

Our purpose at Al-Hadi is to partner with parents, to insha'Allah (God-willing):

- Foster a joy in learning and discovery that will serve the child over a lifetime
- Create a safe and nurturing environment for all learners
- Cultivate a love for Islam and its values
- Provide a balance of play-based and academic learning

We know the earliest years of childhood are the most critical when it comes to setting the foundation for learning. We believe that young children learn best through hands-on, sensory rich environments. Our co-op (cooperative) inspired model is designed for parents to have a greater involvement in their child's education so that together we can encourage and support each unique child's learning journey. In order to support the child's intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development, our curriculum delicately balances play-based and academic learning. It is only through active involvement with their environment, peers and adults, children learn to make sense of the world around them.

The Co-op Model

At the heart of our organization, you'll find the "cooperative spirit." Parents, Board of Directors, Board of Trustees, educators, and the community all work together to stand behind each of our students.

As a co-op inspired model, Al-Hadi offers the parents the unique opportunity to participate in children's earliest educational experiences because we understand that parents know their children best. Through regular participation under skilled teachers, the parent observes the behavior and growth of his/her child, but also of young children in general. Often, sensitivities and insights are born and new attitudes acquired that are valuable to the parent both at home and at school. With that there is also an inner satisfaction in the child knowing that his/her parents are involved in this important learning journey. The parents too, are able to offer their own talent and expertise to add richness to our school and curriculum that would otherwise be impossible with just one teacher. Finally, the low adult-to-child ratio allows a program of greater flexibility and a variety of learning experiences thus providing a quality educational experience for all students. Together, we build relationships with families, students, and the community at large to support each student's learning. The co-op philosophy is founded on the notion that learning is a shared journey!

As a co-op parent you will not only be involved in the daily operations of the school through volunteering as a teacher-aide on a rotating basis, but you will also get the opportunity to serve on various committees in order to perpetuate a holistic and balanced philosophy. This results in a secure, loving, and nurturing environment for children, a more solidified community, and maintains low tuition costs.

Parent Participation

Parent Membership

All parents with a child enrolled in Al-Hadi are known as members of the school for the duration of the child's enrollment. All parents have a say in matters related to how the school operates on a day-to-day basis. Obligations of members include:

- Attending Parent Meetings
- Devote a scheduled morning to "co-oping" in the classroom. As a co-op parent, the parent acts as a teacher's aide in the child's classroom on a rotating basis each month
- Participate in ongoing activities in school, be responsible for the admin, operation, and maintenance of the school under the Parent Board and Board of Trustees.
- Pay required tuition and fees

Board of Directors, aka Parent Board

The Board of Directors, also known as Parent Board, is headed by the Executive Director and/or President. The Board of Directors represent the school to the community and coordinate activities to further the school's vision. This includes making recommendations on matters of school operations, programs, fundraising, and any other ongoing activities that occur on a day-to-day basis. Each member has the right to nominate themselves or another member to the Board of Directors. Annual elections are held in May of each year to fill open seats in the following year. Board members serve 2 year terms with no term limits. All directors must attend monthly meetings and each board member is required to chair one or more committees, which include:

- Outreach & marketing
- Curriculum
- School Maintenance
- Special Programs
- Financial
- Any other committees deemed necessary

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees ensure the perpetuation of the vision and philosophy of Al-Hadi through long-term strategic planning. The Board of Trustees serve a 2 year term with no term limits, and this Board is composed of a President, VP, Treasurer, Secretary, former Presidents and other Trustees who advise the Board as needed. Board of Trustees meet annually and as needed.

In the Classroom and Beyond

Co-op parents have certain responsibilities towards the learning organization as specified in the Parent Membership section above. This includes:

- Assist as teacher-aide monthly on a rotating basis. All co-op parents must undergo background checks before aiding and attend a brief training session
- Attend parent meetings
- Serve on parent committees
- If able and nominated, serve as a Board of Director

Parents who cannot commit towards the co-op responsibilities can pay a one time opt-out fee to waive all co-op responsibilities. Non co-op parents are also required to attend scheduled Parent Meetings. Non co-op parents may still volunteer and serve on committees, but cannot serve as a Board of Director.

It is every parent's responsibility to find a replacement if they are not able to co-op on their assigned day. We suggest you:

1. Try calling parents in your class that co-op on the same weekday but alternate weeks with them
2. Try calling parents in your class that co-op on different day than you
3. Try calling parents from a different class
4. Call people listed as substitutes on the list provided

Co-op days count towards the required participation hours per semester.

The training session required for co-op parents provide a general idea of what is expected of them when aiding a teacher. Teaching techniques, general principles for guiding behaviors in the classroom will be introduced during the session. Teachers will always be present in the classroom with students and will be a source of guidance during the co-op parents' time in the classroom.

Parents who elected to play a larger role in operating Al-Hadi, known as "admin parents" have additional responsibilities that they and the Director agree upon. This role may include: coordinating/teaching a class, coordinating field trips, coordinating a special program, or fulfilling some other need.

Professional Staff

The staff consists of paid professional teachers, aides, and administrators as needed. Teachers will always be present in the classrooms and co-op parents will never replace the professional teachers. In order to uphold the highest quality and standards of Al-Hadi, we ensure our teachers are highly qualified to work with our students and parents. All of our teachers and staff are CPR certified.

Admission & Tuition

Admission Policies

Al-Hadi Learning Organization welcomes students of any race, religion, national, or ethnic origin. All families are encouraged to register their child(s) by submitting a registration form and an application fee. Once registration is received, the director will contact the parents to schedule an informal interview with the director and/or teacher. We interview each of our prospective families so that we can personally discuss our school's values, philosophy, and become acquainted with the family and child's needs and educational goals. The informal interview may be conducted at the child's home or another place to allow the director and/or teacher to meet the child in his/her comfort zone, helping to ease the transition to school and a new teacher.

A decision on the child's acceptance into Al-Hadi will be made after the informal interview. All other application forms should then be completed and submitted before the start of school.

Disenrollment may be a result of the following:

- Abuse of other children, staff, or property by child and or parent
- Continued violation of policies by child or parent
- The school's inability to meet the child's need or the parent's expectations
- Non-payment of tuition

Tuition Policies

Tuition payments, as specified in the tuition contract, should be personally dropped in the tuition mailbox, submitted online via Al-Hadi website, or mailed. To assist in making timely payments, please consider automatic bill payment plans through your financial banking institute.

Each tuition payment must be postmarked on or before the 5th of each month. If the payment is not received by the 5th of the month, a \$20 service fee will be required.

No tuition rebate will be granted for temporary withdrawal or removal of student since Al-Hadi has financial commitments it needs to make on a monthly basis. Please notify the school ahead of time if you plan to permanently withdraw your child from school. Please see tuition contract for additional policies.

Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal

Parents and students should enter/exit the Al Hadi premises as outlined at the Parents Orientation.

School hours for 2's class is:
10:00am--1:15pm

School hours for 3's & 4's class is:
8:00am-9:30am (optional)
9:30am--1:00pm
1:00pm--5:00pm (optional)

School hours for KG class is:
8:00am--9:30am (optional)
9:30am--3:30pm
3:30pm--5:00pm (optional)

School Dress

There are no uniforms. However, we encourage all students and parents to dress modestly. Outdoor play is an integral part of our curriculum, so children should be dressed warmly in the winter with hats, gloves, and coats. If there is snow on the ground, please send in boots and snow suit.

All children should keep a spare pair of clothes, underwear, and socks in their backpack in case of accidents. If child is not yet potty-trained, an extra diaper will also be needed.

Snacks & Lunch

Each day, the co-op parent is responsible for bringing in a healthy snack for their children's classroom. Please adhere to the list of suggested items. Parents may also send in a snack with their child's lunch if they choose to.

Water will always be available for students to drink at their leisure.

Lunch time is an opportunity to educate and model the importance of healthy eating habits, table manners, and thankfulness to God for what we're given. Keeping this philosophy in mind, parents should ensure that food offerings are nutritious. We will start off the meal with washing our hands, reciting a dua, use proper table manners while eating, and finish with reciting a dua. As with all classroom activities, lunch time is also an opportunity to encourage practical life skills, including unpacking and repacking lunch, and clean up. These opportunities encourage independence and confidence for

children. We ask students to leave uneaten portions in their lunchboxes so that we do not waste food. To reinforce to students the importance of environmental awareness, we ask that you limit the amount of waste in packaging (use reusable containers, cloth napkins, silverware, beverage dispensers, etc).

Discipline

We take pride in setting up our classroom environment where our student to teacher ratio is low and we are able to engage all of the children.

- Preventative-The orderly environment, consistent routines, child-appropriate materials, and mindfulness-based learning prevent disruptions in our class. We feel that through choice of work in free play and project based learning, individualized lessons, and teaching responsibility of using materials properly allows children to form inner discipline
- Redirection-Should a disruption occur, teachers are able to redirect a child's attention offering a different age-appropriate activity than the one they are struggling with, or having trouble cooperating with peers on. Children feel empowered when they make the right choices, and this encourages them to keep on trying. This may mean that the teacher has to find new ways to be flexible and to acknowledge that the child is attempting to make these choices.
- Consequences-We discuss natural consequences with students at the beginning of the year with gentle reminders throughout. For instance, if a child misuses a material and it breaks, the classroom does not have that material for use anymore (we wait a substantial amount of time before replacing or do not replace with exact same item if possible). We discuss logical consequences of actions. For instance, if a child hurts a friend's feelings, we discuss how her actions or behavior hurt her friend or the classroom.

Allowing a child to form inner discipline is the goal of our classroom. Instead of continually giving praise or rewards, the teachers encourage desired behavior, allow the child to feel a sense of pride in work accomplished and discuss the feelings this brings to oneself and the effect on his/her environment.

From time to time, children exhibit inappropriate behavior causing injury (like biting), jeopardizing safety, or substantially harming property. In the event of said behavior, the following steps will be taken:

1. Inappropriate behavior is first brought to the attention of the student. Conflict resolution is encouraged and facilitated by the teacher using redirection and consequences as stated above.
2. If inappropriate behavior persists, the teacher will notify parents. A formal conference with parents to discuss possible causes and potential solutions may also be scheduled.

3. An appropriate course of action may be recommended by the school. Documentation will begin, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and reported back to parents regularly. We will make every effort to support the needs of each child in the classroom.

Potty-Training

Students aged 3 and 4 must be already potty trained to enter the 3's and 4's program. A spare of clothes, underwear, and socks must be placed in the child's backpack everyday. Bathroom breaks are scheduled into the daily schedule and they may request to go to the bathroom other times as well.

Students aged 2 years old or below do not need to be potty trained. A spare of clothes, underwear, diaper, and socks must be placed in the child's backpack everyday. We ask parents to change diapers before entering the class. If a child's diaper needs to be changed during class, the co-op parent and/or staff will change promptly.

Health & Safety

Weather-Related

In the case of weather-related closings or delayed openings, please check your email and phone. Al-Hadi will make an independent decision whether to close during a weather-related emergency. We do not follow Montgomery County Public School schedule.

Emergency-Related

In the event of an emergency, Al-Hadi will directly call or send a message to the phone numbers you provided on your emergency forms. It is imperative that Al-Hadi has parents' and authorized contacts' most current information. It is the responsibility of each family to advise the Director of any changes in telephone and/or email contact information.

If the students and staff need to be evacuated from the building, please know that the the staff and co-op parents will be transporting the students to a predetermined holding shelter until further notice. Parents and emergency contacts will be notified of the designated location once the students and staff arrive to safety.

All of our teachers are certified in Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED. If an injury or illness occurs to a student, the teachers will assess the emergency, decide on which action to take, activate the EMS system if needed and give care until EMS personnel arrive to take over. Student's parents and emergency contacts will be notified as soon as possible.

Transportation and Carpool

In accordance with Maryland law updated June 30, 2008, all children are to be secured in a car seat or booster seat until their 8th birthday, unless they weigh more than 65 pounds or are 4'9" or taller. All children must ride in the back of the car seat.

For field trips, parents are responsible for transporting their children to the location. If a parent is not able to do so, he/she must arrange with the teacher or a co-op parent to have their child be transported to the field trip. Note: All co-op parents must have undergone the background check to transport another child to a field trip.

Illness

Keep your child home when the temperature is greater than 100F. 24-hour period of free of symptoms is a good rule.

- Notify your teacher so that other parents may be alerted of sickness and symptoms, which could spread.

- If the absence is due to a serious illness, please bring a note specifying diagnosis and verifying that the disease is no longer communicable.

Safety and Security

We take the safety of your child, our parents, and teachers very seriously.

- The entrance doors to Al-Hadi will be locked 15 minutes before/after the arrival times at 8:00am (early morning extension drop-off), 9:30am (core preschool), 1:00pm, 3:30pm and 5:00pm (afternoon extension pick-up).
- Class teachers will have a cell phone on them at all times.
- All co-op parents must undergo background checks before aiding in the classroom. Background checks include criminal, sexual, and traffic violations.

Al-Hadi Learning Organization 2018-2019

Aug 29, 2018	All-School Parents Meeting & Orientation, required
Sep 5, 2018	First Day of School
Sep 10, 2018	Al Hadi's Day1 of Community Service (siblings invited)
Sep 19, 2018	Al Hadi's Day2 of Community Service (siblings invited)
Sep 17--Sep 21, 2018	Al Hadi closed for Teacher's Professional Days & Ashara
October 10, 2018	Back 2 School Night
Oct 30, 2018	Al Hadi closed for Arbaeen
Oct 31, 2018	Al Hadi Closed for Professional Development Day
Nov 6, 2018	Al Hadi's Day3 of Community Service (siblings invited)
Nov 20, 2018	Mawlid-an-Nabi Party!
Nov 21--Nov 23, 2018	Al Hadi closed for Thanksgiving Break
Dec 24--Jan 2, 2019	Al Hadi closed for Winter Break
Jan 21, 2019	Al Hadi's Day4 of Community Service (Siblings Invited)
Jan 28, 2019	Al Hadi's Day5 of Community Service (Siblings Invited)
Feb 18, 2019	Al Hadi's Day6 of Community Service (Siblings Invited)
Feb 20, 2019	All-School Parents Meeting, required
Mar 2, 2019	Al Hadi's Annual Comedy Night, 5:30-10:00pm
Apr 15--Apr 22, 2019	Al Hadi closed for Spring Break
May 1, 2019	All School-Parents meeting, required
May 6-May 10, 2019	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 27, 2019	No School for Memorial Day& Martyrdom of Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)
Jun 3-Jun 5, 2019	Al Hadi Closed for Eid-ul-Fitr
Jun 7, 2019	Eid Al Fitr Celebration!
Jun 14, 2019	Last Day of School!

**Parent Board meeting-1st Wednesday of every month, 7pm*

Al Hadi Contact Numbers

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Parent Board of Directors, 2018-2019

Rida Bukhari-Rizvi
Ambereen Hussain
Tasnuva Khan
Mariam Thakkar
Dr. Taqi Tirmazi
Staff Representative (open)