

## Sensitivities to consider when handling the Qur'an.

These informative notes have been provided in conjunction with members of a local Muslim community.

Whilst they are pleased that pupils learning about Islam will encounter accurate teachings from their faith, many Muslims are concerned about how the Qur'an and Qur'anic extracts are used in schools. This is particularly significant when textual extracts are produced in their original Arabic to stand alongside an English translation but also applies to photographs of textual extracts on buildings or translated text.

In order to understand the origin of this concern, we need to understand that in Islam there are pre-requisites for ritual purity for both handling the Qur'an and entering the prayer area of the Masjid beyond merely washing one's hands or performing wudu. In Islam there are times and situations that are considered times of major impurity, such as when a woman is menstruating or experiencing an issue following the birth of a child or if a man or a woman is not suitably cleansed following sexual intercourse. At these times entering the mosque or handling a Qur'an is not permitted.

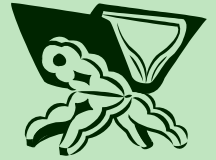
Visitors to a Mosque avoid this issue of ritual purity as they are usually in a position to see into but not to enter the prayer area.

### ***How must a Muslim prepare when they wish to handle the Qur'an?***

A Muslim is taught to handle the Qur'an with respect and care. The Qur'an is revered above other non-Divine books and so while there may not be textual requirements on how to handle the Qur'an, Muslims believe that they should take the importance of the Qur'an into account when handling it. Therefore they would consider it inappropriate for example to place a general text book on top of the Qur'an in a pile and would never toss one around or treat it carelessly.

Generally it is expected that Muslims perform wudu and should not be in need of a bath before handling the Qur'an.

# ISLAM Sensitivities to consider when handling the Qur'an



## ***How should a non-Muslim handle the Qur'an?***

The most common advice given is that in order to avoid anxiety about broaching any sensitivity when handling the Qur'an, a non-Muslim should use a translation of the Qur'an. However it is important to appreciate that even though a translation is not the actual Qur'an, it should be treated with great respect because it still conveys the same meaning. There would be no requirement for performing wudu prior to handling the book but one would expect that it is handled as little as possible, with clean hands and great respect. Storage of Qur'ans, including translated texts, should always be respectful. Do not leave these items on displays in classrooms or corridors. Wrap the texts and store in a safe place.

Within the Agreed Syllabus we have endeavoured to introduce pupils to the teachings of all faiths in a more immediate way than previous syllabuses have attempted. Thus pupils have been able to encounter the actual teachings of the faiths without them being 'pre-digested' by a third party. Any Qur'anic textual extracts produced for use with pupils should be treated with respect. It is important not to write on these or throw into a rubbish bin. When tasks have been completed extracts should be destroyed respectfully. Teachers may find that producing texts for the class to view via a computer makes it easier to manage this.