

MUSLIM PRAYER GUIDANCE

GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS

PREFACE

The EFL has worked in partnership with Muslim Chaplains in Sport to produce this guidance document, aimed at assisting clubs' understanding on the importance of prayers to those of the Muslim Faith.

The document details how clubs may best accommodate this religious practice for their Muslim footballers, staff and supporters, and explains the rulings, details and information surrounding prayers, including: prayer times, conditions of prayer, types of prayers, places of prayer and more. The ritual of prayer is of paramount importance and is taken very seriously by many Muslims throughout the world. Since sport is open to all and celebrates freedom of expression in faith, as is common with most workplaces, the ritual of prayer must also be accommodated within sports.

The Islamic Faith stresses greatly on observing prayers and their punctuality. It is for this reason Muslims will attempt to carry out this duty of faith wherever they may be, and at whatever times it becomes incumbent.



MUSLIM CHAPLAINS IN SPORT

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION



The English Football League (EFL) is the World's original league football competition. Its 72 member clubs embody the unique heritage, pride, and passion of the communities that they represent, providing the game with a platform to become a global national and international success.

The EFL

In many instances, the EFL is at the forefront of society, bringing together people and communities across 72 Clubs. The League's unique reach and unprecedented impact, through a wide-ranging fanbase and global audience, allows the EFL to challenge behaviours and promote inclusive practices across the game.

The EFL wishes for its Clubs to be reflective and representative of their communities and be a driving force towards diversity across the country. To achieve its aims, the EFL requires a united vision and mission to make the game a truly reflective environment in which everyone can meet their full potential.

The establishment of the EFL's EDI Strategy 'Together' provides its Clubs and Communities a pathway to their own EDI journey in which the EFL can fully support and guide to allow for the achievement of its outcomes in a consistent and meaningful way.

The EFL is in the view that it will never complete its EDI journey and will always seek to re-address its path to ensure its ability to continuously challenge.

EDI Mission: The EFL establishes a best-in-class provision, uniting football to ensure inclusive and welcoming opportunities across the EFL environment through sustainable and effective change.

Muslim Chaplains in Sport

MCS is the only Muslim chaplaincy organisation in the country specialising in providing chaplaincy and confidential support to sporting individuals, organisations and governing bodies. MCS's services cater for all involved; from grassroots to senior management and first team players, including Academy scholars and staff.

To find out more about MCS or to request any of their services, contact them on:

Telephone: +44 (0) 121 737 9491

Email: info@mcst.org.uk

SECTION 2

PRAYERS

What are prayers?

Prayers are one of the five Pillars upon which the Islamic faith is founded. The term 'prayer' in Islamic terminology indicates a set of rituals which are performed with strict adherence to particular actions and movements. In Arabic, the term prayer is translated as 'Salaah'..

Why must prayers be observed

There are various types of prayers which are categorised in terms of importance. The five daily prayers are mandatory, whereas others are not. Nevertheless, the purpose of the prayers and the method of performing them remain the same.

There are various reasons as to why a Muslim must observe the prayers. Below are a few as per Islamic understanding:

- It is a divine order from God (the five daily prayers).
- Serves as one of the five founding pillars of the Muslim faith.
- Observing the prayers upholds the noble act of the previous Prophets.
- Reminds an individual to be thankful to God for all the blessings enjoyed.
- Draws one closer to remembering God and allows one to reflect on life, its purpose and direction.
- Provides a moment for reflection and promotes inner peace and tranquillity.
- Symbol of submission to the higher being – God

Who observes the five daily prayers?

The five daily prayers should be observed by Muslims who are stable and mature. Minors and the individuals who do not have the capacity to make sound judgements are not obliged to carry out this part of the faith. However, small children may be encouraged from an early age.

What are the conditions for any prayers to be valid?

Any prayer may only be valid if the following conditions are met. The conditions are mentioned and briefly explained below:

The time must be correct (this is applicable only for the five daily prayers) The five daily prescribed prayers may only be performed at certain times and not before the time commences. Should the time for the prayer have passed, the prayer may be made up. However, it will not carry the same reward of performing it in its correct time. For this reason, Muslims try to perform the prayers within their respective appointed time. The names of the five prayers and timings are:

1. Fajr

Early morning prayer – This is performed at dawn but must be performed before the sun begins to rise.

2. Dhuhr

Midday prayer – This is performed when the sun passes its zenith (mid-point).

3. Asr

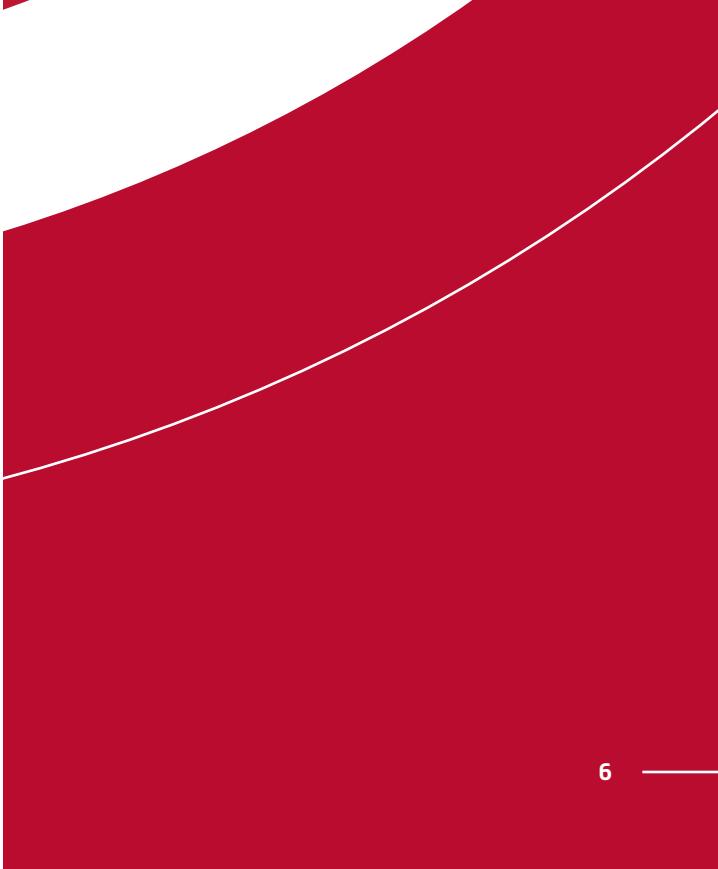
Late afternoon prayer – This is performed in the late afternoon when the shadow of an object is equal to itself in size.

4. Magrib

Dusk prayer – This is performed when the sun begins to set and must be concluded before the twilight disappears.

5. Isha

Evening prayer – This is performed after the sun has set and twilight has disappeared. This prayer may be performed until the beginning time of the first prayer – Fajr.



SECTION 3

FREE FROM IMPURITIES

Prior to performing any prayer, each individual must ensure that they are free from minor and major impurities and are in a state of Ritual Purity. Minor impurities may be removed by merely making absolution – a ritual washing known as ‘Wudoo’ in Arabic. However, major impurities will require taking a bath.

Body and clothing must be clean

Just as the individual who intends to perform the prayer must be in the state of Ritual Purity, their body and clothing must also be clean. The body and clothes must be free from droplets or stains of urine, faeces, wine, alcohol, pork, blood and vomit. However, if the clothing and body are stained by mud, soil, sand and other non-impure liquids and foods, then the clothing or the body will not be rendered impure.

Place of prayer must be clean

Prayers can generally be made anywhere. However, one must ensure that the place of prayer is clean and free from impurities. It is not a condition that a prayer mat must be laid out. However, to ensure the place is clean, it is encouraged and advisable that the prayer is performed on a mat or some sort of covering. The prayer mat may simply be a piece of cloth or one’s own clothing, such as a jacket.

It is advisable not to make the prayers near a washroom, toilet or where alcohol is served.

Covering of the body

It is important that clothing which is generally deemed as appropriate is worn at the time of prayer. However, if such clothing is not found or available at the time of prayer, then all efforts should be made to at least cover the area between the naval and knees, as this is mandatory and a condition for validity of the prayer.

It is a requirement for women performing the prayer to cover all parts of their body, but they may keep their face, hands and feet exposed.

Qiblah – Facing Makkah (Mecca)

When performing prayers, all Muslims throughout the entire world face in one direction – towards the Ka'bah (cubed shaped building) which is situated in Makkah (Mecca) in Saudi Arabia. Muslims in the UK face towards the SouthEast direction, but the direction for people facing Makkah from other countries will of course be different. In facing the direction of the Ka'bah, Muslims do not worship the building, but rather, believe it as a symbol of God's house on earth and worship only One God, Allah. The reason why Muslims face in one direction is to create a unifying bond and display unity of the Muslim world.

SECTION 4

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPE OF PRAYERS

As well as the five mandatory prayers, there are also others which are optional and voluntary.

The five daily prayers must be observed by all qualifying individuals at their respective times. In Islam, it is encouraged that these five daily prayers are performed in congregation at the mosque and, if not possible, then with a group of other worshippers.

However, the additional prayers may be performed at one's own will. It is believed that these additional prayers can be seen as a way of thanking God, can bring one closer to God and can also be performed at times of need. Below are a few types of prayers and details of when they may be performed:

Jumuah Prayer

This prayer is only performed on Fridays in place of the Dhuhr prayer. The Jumuah prayer must be performed in a congregation led by an Imaam (one who leads the prayer). It will only be correct if carried out in a group (minimum of three people). (MCS chaplains can assist clubs in facilitating this prayer as it also requires a short sermon)

Taraweeh Prayer

This is a lengthy prayer and conducted only during the nights in the month of Ramadan (Islamic fasting month). Traditionally, the Imaam leads the congregation in prayer and recites portions of the Islamic Holy book, the Quraan, by memory. This prayer can last for up to two hours per night and its observance is encouraged in Islam. It is also understood to hold many rewards and virtues. The Taraweeh prayer is not mandatory and can be performed individually or in small groups at home or in a mosque.

Eid Prayer

This prayer is performed after sunrise on the day of 'Eid' (Muslim religious festival), which is observed twice a year. The first Eid occurs at the culmination of the fasting month of Ramadan and the second one takes place at the time of the Islamic pilgrimage known as 'Hajj' which falls approximately 10 weeks after Ramadan ends. This prayer is also a communal prayer and is not valid if performed without a congregation. The two Eid prayers also require a short speech which is carried out by the Imaam.

During the day, it is likely that only the Dhuhr, Asr and Magrib prayers may clash with work and training schedules. However, situations may vary from club to club.

How much time is required in carrying out each of the Five daily prayers?

Each prayer only requires approximately 5-7 minutes to be performed. The Friday 'Jumuah' prayer and the 'Eid' prayers may require approximately 10-15 minutes as a small speech in Arabic is needed to complete the prayer.

The Jumuah prayer is seen as very important in the Islamic faith. Even those individuals who may not normally perform the daily prayers will try to perform the Jumuah prayer.

Therefore, it is highly encouraged that clubs offer the opportunity to all Muslim players and staff whereby this prayer may be carried out at their respective venues.

MCS offer workshops at clubs on the topic of Islamic prayers in which its various rulings and laws are explained. Holding these workshops will help the non-Muslim members of your club understand more around the ritual of prayers. These workshops will also help when facilitating for this service at the club's various facilities. Topics covered include; types of prayers, timings, prayer space, conditions of prayer and much more.

SECTION 5

ARE THE PRAYERS ONLY PERFORMED IN A MOSQUE?

It is NOT a condition that the prayers must be performed in a mosque, although it is highly encouraged. Prayers may be performed at any place which is clean of impurity and out of harm's way, i.e. endangering one's self and causing inconvenience to others; a small quiet space, or corner may be adequate and sufficient to carry out this act.

The midday Friday prayer known as Jumuah prayer may be performed at a club facility when at least three people are performing together. However, if this is not the case then you will be required to travel to the nearest Mosque to perform this prayer with the congregation.

Below are guidelines on how clubs may provide the correct facilities at their various locations for prayers to be observed.

Stadium

All stadiums should try to ensure that space for prayer is available for staff, fans and visitors in each stand and sign-posted clearly. The place of prayer does not need to be classed as a mosque. It may be referred to as a 'contemplation room' or 'multi-faith room' and can be open to other faiths as is the case at many workplaces, offices and airports.

Training grounds and Academies

Training facilities are an integral part of the players' daily schedule. It is at the training ground where players and many staff spend most of their time and it is likely that Muslim players and staff may require space to perform their prayers. Depending on the time of year, it is possible that up to three prayers may be performed at the training facilities, Academies and medical facilities.

During the shorter days (Autumn, Winter and parts of Spring), players and staff may perform the following three prayers while still at work – Dhuhra, Asr & Magrib.

However, during the longer days (Summer), only the following prayers may clash within training hours – Dhur & Jumuah.

A small space may be allocated for the prayers, such as a section of the canteen, board room or any other unused/available facility.

SECTION 6

GUIDANCE OF PRAYER ROOM

1. Prayer space and room

The prayer room should be a place of contemplation, relaxing and most importantly offering the space and environment in which one may boost their spirituality and reconnect to God.

In order to offer this to its users, the room may be simple yet elegant enough to provide the above. The room can be designed and decorated in club colours if they wish, however ensuring no photos/posters etc.. are hung up and used in the room.

The prayer room should be clean of imagery, photos and drawings of all living creatures, such as humans and animals as this is prohibited in Islam.

The room can be decorated with Arabic/Islamic/general artwork, or any other decoration not depicting living creatures and beings. Plants, landscape, planets etc... may be used.

The prayer room should also be away from areas where alcohol is served and consumed, and also away from bathroom facilities as this may render the space to become impure and thus, not fit to use.

In terms of the layout and what the ideal room should consist of - Carpet or any other material may be used. I would advise using a material which is easy to clean after use, such as Lino or laminate. However, this may cause the issue of becoming cold during certain times of year, so carpet may be used instead if the club wishes.

A heater may be placed for use during the cold season.

Prayers are performed in the South Eastern direction from the UK, facing towards Mecca in Saudi Arabia. The direction in which Muslim face is referred to as the 'Qiblah'. To help the user in this, a Qiblah marker may be placed in a corner on the floor or ceiling pointing in that direction.

In Islam, the Men and women will perform the prayers segregated when in congregation, just as in the Jewish faith. For this reason, allocating a realistic space for both must be considered. More men will usually end up using this space, so maybe more space is allocated to the men, as opposed to the women.

Men will stand in front of the women in congregation.

Alternatively, one room/area can be allocated for both to use with a barrier of some sort between the men and women's space.

Congregational prayers are performed by standing together in a line, this can mean that multiple rows are required and does not have to be in just one line.

2. Ablution area (Spiritual wash)

Prior to performing any prayer, it is a condition that the one performing must be in a state of 'Wudu'. Wudu means a 'Ritual wash' which consists of washing certain parts of the body.

The main condition for this ritual wash is that certain parts are washed with clean water at least once. It would be advised that a separate space for men and women is dedicated for this away from the prayer space.

A sink or wudu units can be installed in setting this up.

Muslim Chaplains In Sport can help in acquiring of Wudu Units, specifically designed for Wudu in public and workspaces. Contact MCS for further information.

Though it is advised that the direction for ablution is towards the Qiblah (Direction of prayer), this is not mandatory so if this is not possible any direction or space/area may be considered.

After washing, towels or paper towels may be used to dry ones self, this could be placed in the washing area too.

Side notes

- Shoe Racks: Footwear will be removed when performing prayers, shoe racks should be considered.
- Walking space: Muslims are discouraged to walk in front of those who are in prayer, so the path to walk in/out should be considered.
- Muslim Chaplains In Sports deliver workshops and guidance on this to clubs, contact us when wishing to set up prayer room or for advise.

SECTION 7

QUESTIONS & SUPPORT

Should you require further guidance, please do not hesitate to contact the EFL Inclusion Team on:

Email: Inclusion@EFL.com

MCS offer workshops at clubs on the topic of Ramadan and fasting in which its rulings and laws are explained. Holding these workshops will help the non-Muslim members of your club understand and appreciate the stresses the fasting Muslim players may go through, and also help the medical team when preparing future planning and training schedules.

To request a workshop at your club please contact MCS.

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The EFL would like to thank Muslim Chaplains in Sport for their support and guidance in producing of the guidance.

