

Safe and Caring Schools for Arab and Muslim Students

A guide for teachers

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This booklet was made possible through grants from National Crime Prevention, Community Mobilization; Department of Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism Program; and Alberta Community Development's Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund.

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Printed in Canada.

ISBN 1-897189-37-0



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Safe and Caring Schools for Arab and Muslim Students

Recent world events have focused public attention on Arab and Muslim people. Many images, stories and news reports portray them negatively—as sympathizers, conspirators, terrorists or oppressors of women. People who look like the stereotypical Muslim or Arab—that is they have brown skin (including aboriginal people), or wear traditional dress—people who have Arabic or Islamic sounding names, or people who belong to faiths that are not Christian have been viewed with suspicion. Many have been subjected to both overt and subtle forms of discrimination, and there are many instances when students have been taunted, excluded, bullied and harassed. Students subjected to such acts can become confused, anxious and hurt and may even begin to question their identity or reject their heritage.

Among the general public, growing concerns about personal safety are used to justify intolerant attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate negative stereotypes of Arab and Muslim people. This occurs even when the stereotypes are not true for the majority of people.

This booklet will help teachers address discrimination and prejudice directed at Arab and Muslim students (or those perceived as such). It will provide

- a guide for dealing with the issues that specifically affect Arab and Muslim students,
- basic information about Arab culture and the Muslim faith,
- strategies teachers can implement to counter the harmful effects of stereotyping and discrimination, and
- teaching and professional resources.

Our children are half of today and all of tomorrow.

Arab proverb

Aisha's Story

Aisha,¹ a grade 3 Alberta public school student, watched with sorrow as the World Trade Center towers fell on September 11, 2001. That morning, she went to school anxious to share her sad thoughts with her two best friends, Madison and Shawna. The girls were such good friends that their mothers said that trying to break them up was like trying to separate triplets! The day of the terrorist attacks was different. When Aisha greeted her friends, they told her that they could not talk to her. Aisha was baffled and wanted to know why. All they said was that their parents had said so.

The next day, Aisha approached her friends again and asked why they were behaving this way. At first they looked afraid, and then Madison shoved Aisha, pushing her to the ground. She screamed, "Leave my family alone! If you ever hurt them, I will kill you!" She ran off crying, leaving Shawna behind.

Aisha didn't understand. Through her tears, pain and confusion, she wondered why Madison would think she would hurt her best friend's family. Janice, an older girl, saw Aisha crying and came over to help her. Aisha told her what had happened, and Janice offered her an explanation. She said that Madison and Shawna wouldn't talk to Aisha anymore because they were afraid she was going to bomb their homes and kill their families.

That evening, still devastated, Aisha told her mother what had happened. Her mother called Madison's mother and was surprised to learn that the mother agreed with her daughter. Madison's mother said it would be in the best interest of both girls if Aisha found friends of her own kind. Shawna's mother said the same thing.

Aisha did not want to go to school the next day. She was worried about facing her former friends, especially at recess. Aisha's mother did not feel comfortable approaching the school principal or Aisha's teacher. She feared that their reactions to the terrorist attacks would make it difficult for them to understand Aisha's confusion.

¹ All names in this story have been changed.

That year was difficult for Aisha. Her grades went down, and she became angry and resentful toward her friends and family. In desperation, her mother approached the Canadian Arab Friendship Association (CAFA) in Edmonton for guidance. CAFA contacted the school and set up a meeting with the parents and teachers to discuss Aisha's situation. Prior to the meeting, a representative of CAFA spoke with the principal, explaining the situation and the concerns of Aisha's parents. During the meeting, the principal and Aisha's teacher learned the reasons for her fear and sadness. As a result, the teacher consciously found ways to include Aisha in positive discussions and in school activities and events. CAFA was invited to the school to present a 45-minute information session on Arabs and Muslims to help the students understand more about the people and the culture. The presentation assured students that they were safe and emphasized that now more than ever all students must be supported. The organization helped Aisha by providing counselling and guidance.

Why was this approach successful?

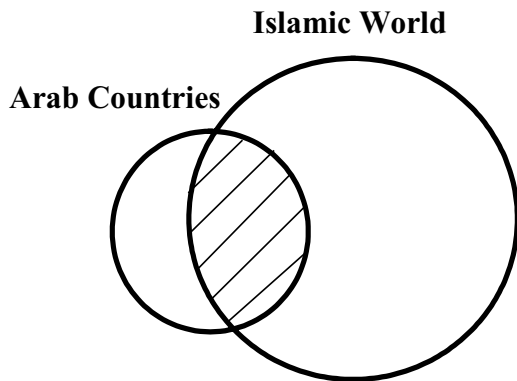
This is a true account of eight-year-old Aisha's experiences after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Even though Aisha has made new friends and learned better ways to cope with the hostility and anger directed at her, the hurt she experienced in losing her two best friends will likely remain for a long time. In her case, the family, community and school, with guidance from an outside organization, worked with school administrators and others to help everyone understand the Arab and Islamic culture and beliefs. Together they found ways to help Aisha cope with what had happened to her. How can this story inform us about similar situations in our own schools?

What is the difference between Muslims and Arabs?

Not all Arabs are Muslim. In fact, about 25–30 per cent of the Arab world is not Muslim. Many Arabs practise forms of Christianity or other religions. Also, Arabs make up a small minority of the Muslim world—about 20 per cent. Arabs are considered the keepers of Islam, because the Qur’an (Muslim holy book) is written in Arabic and prayers are performed in Arabic.

The diagram on the next page illustrates the relationship between Arabs and Muslims. The circle representing Arab countries indicates that about two-thirds of Arab people are Muslim, while the circle representing the Islamic world shows that approximately 85 per cent of Islamic people are non-Arab. Fifty-seven countries in the world are considered to be Islamic. An estimated 1.2 billion people practise the Islamic faith worldwide.

Organization of the Islamic Countries (OIC)



Afghanistan**	Indonesia	Qatar*
Albania	Iran**	Saudi Arabia*
Algeria*	Iraq*	Senegal
Azerbaijan	Jordan*	Sierra Leone
Bahrain*	Kazakhstan	Somalia*
Bangladesh	Kuwait*	Sudan*
Benin	Kyrgyzstan	Suriname
Brunei	Lebanon*	Syria*
Burkina Faso	Libya*	Tajikistan
Cameroon	Malaysia	Togo
Chad	Maldives	Tunisia*
Comoros Islands*	Mali	Turkey**
Côte d'Ivoire	Mauritania*	Turkmenistan
Djibouti*	Morocco*	Uganda
Egypt *	Mozambique	United Arab Emirates*
Gabon	Niger	Uzbekistan
Gambia	Nigeria	Yemen*
Guinea	Oman*	
Guinea-Bissau	Pakistan**	
Guyana	Palestine*	

* Indicates the 22 countries that make up the Arab world.

**Indicates countries commonly mistaken for Arab.

The History of Arab and Muslim People in Canada

Canada has been home to many Arab and Muslim people since the 1800s. Arab and Muslim people came from various places in the second half of the 20th century: Palestinians immigrated to Canada starting in the 1950s; Egyptians came in the late 1960s; people from Lebanon and Jordan came between 1975 and 1990; Muslims from the Gulf region, Iraq, Somalia and China came following the Gulf War in 1990; Bosnians and Albanians came in 1997; and more recently people have come from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia and Iraq.

The first Arabs came to Edmonton and Lac La Biche in the 1890s. The first Arab and Muslim immigrants were merchants and fur traders, and they established some of the first businesses. Presently, approximately 55,000 Arabs and 85,000 Muslims live in Alberta.

Did you know?

- The Edmonton Islamic community established the first mosque in North America in 1936. It is currently housed in Fort Edmonton Park.
- In the 1890s, early pioneers from Lebanon settled in Lac La Biche. The second mosque in Canada was built there in 1958. Today a large part of the population of Lac La Biche is Muslim.
- Approximately 300 Arabs and Muslims were on the *Titanic*. The 20 who survived settled in the “Eastern world”.
- Indonesia has the largest Muslim population 170.3 million people.
- The largest Muslim minority population lives in China.
- Of the 10 countries with the highest Muslim populations, Egypt is the only Arab country (it ranks seventh with a population of 53.7 million).

What does it mean to be Arab?

Arab is a cultural and linguistic term—not a racial term. It refers to people who speak Arabic as their first language and share a common Arabic heritage. Arabs are united by language, culture and history. Arab countries share a rich heritage that can be likened to a mosaic. Each country’s Arabic culture is unique, but the cultures piece together to form a picture of the whole. Arabic is also the universal language of Islam.

There is much diversity in Arab peoples’ appearance. It ranges from the dark chocolate black skin in Somalia and the North African nations to the olive skin most common in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf and Egypt to the light-skinned, blond and blue-eyed people of Syria and Lebanon. One area in Lebanon – Lala—has the distinction of having many redheads!

In Arab culture, teachers rank next to clergy in status. Because of their high status, teachers are expected to model moral and exemplary lifestyles both publicly and privately. Teachers are expected to instruct and support spirituality and morality as well as teach academic subjects. It is not unusual for parents to contact teachers for guidance in children’s overall development, not just academic education. An Arabic saying is, “The parents own the bones of the child, but the teachers own the flesh.” That is, the parents bring the child into the world, and the teacher shapes him or her.

Who are Muslims?²



The crescent and the star is the traditionally recognized symbol of Islam.

The Basics of Islam

The root of the word *Islam*, comes from *salam* which means “peace” and to submit to the will of God. Islam is an Abrahamic, monotheistic religion—there is no God but the one God. Muslims call God *Allah*. *Allah* is the literal translation of *God* into Arabic – Christian Arabs also call God *Allah*. In Islam, Allah is supreme. Allah does not have mortal or human characteristics.

Islam does not have sects; however, there are two accepted schools of thought. The most common school of thought is Sunni (approximately 75–80 per cent) and the other is Shia.

Muslims believe that all the prophets (Adam, Noah, Moses, Jesus and so on) were sent with divine guidance for their people. Every prophet was sent to his own people, but Muhammad was sent to all of humankind. Muhammad is referred to as the seal—the final messenger sent to deliver the message of Islam. He is considered to be a man like all men, who was chosen by Allah to lead by example and receive the words of the Qur’an. Allah removed hatred, jealousy and evil thoughts from Muhammad and, because of this, he lived an exemplary life. His solutions to both everyday and complicated problems were chronicled and have become established traditions of the faith. Muslims do not worship Muhammad, and to say so is to do a grave injustice to the fundamental belief of the oneness of Allah.

Muhammad was of Arab descent and the Qur’an was revealed to him in Arabic. This is why the Arabs are considered by many to be the keepers of Islam.

² In Alberta teachers can inform students about the tenets of various religions; however, they cannot proselytize a particular faith. All of the secular schools in Alberta are based on moral principles and adhere to the program of studies. This mandated curriculum requires the teaching of positive attitudes in every course.

The Five Pillars of Islam

Islam's holy law is known as the Shari'ah. It is the duty of a Muslim to carry out the five pillars of the Islamic faith.

First Pillar—Declaration of Faith (called Shahadah): To bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is his final messenger.

Second Pillar—Prayer (called Salat): To pray five times a day. Prayer is the opportunity to reaffirm one's commitment to Islam.

Third Pillar—Alms Giving (called Zakat): To pay *zakat* or alms to the poor is mandatory in Islam. People must pay 2.5 per cent of their net worth (savings) every year to help the poor obtain food, shelter and education.

Fourth Pillar—Fasting (called Sawm): The holy month of Ramadan is the time when Muslims pledge their commitment to Allah and purify themselves spiritually and physically by fasting. Believers refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and marital relations during the daylight hours. The purpose of the fast is to increase empathy for those who have less and to return to basics. Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad.

Fifth Pillar—Pilgrimage (called Hajj): To make a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holiest place for Muslims, at least once in a lifetime is a goal of Muslims. This pillar takes into account financial and physical limitations.

Islamic and Arabic contributions to world culture

Education:

Seeking both religious and secular knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim man or woman. Seeking knowledge is considered to be the best way to know Allah and to appreciate and be thankful for his wondrous creations. The main inspiration for seeking knowledge comes from the Qur'an and from Muhammad's injunction to seek knowledge and become scholars. The command from God for humanity to learn resulted in a flourishing Islamic culture and civilization. Islamic civilization is evident in the following:

- The oldest universities in the world.
- The introduction of algebra, trigonometry and the Arabic numerals to the world.
- The invention of the astrolabe, the quadrant, and other navigational devices and maps all important in the European age of exploration.
- Muslim scholars studied and preserved knowledge from the ancient civilizations of Greece, Rome, China and India and translated the works of Aristotle, Ptolemy, Euclid and others into Arabic.
- Muslim scholars and scientists contributed to the Renaissance by adding their own creative ideas, discoveries and inventions (for example, the sextant and many astrological and medical discoveries).
- Many scientific and medical treatises were translated from Latin to Arabic. These were standard text and reference books as late as the 17th and 18th centuries.
- The main medical textbook titled *Canon of Medicine* by Aben Senna (Avacinia) was used until 150 years ago.

On Mathematics

The Holy Qur'an states; "We (Allah) will show you (mankind) Our signs/ patterns in the horizons/universe and in yourselves until you are convinced that the revelation is the truth" (14:53). This invitation to explore and search the universe stimulated interest in astronomy, mathematics, chemistry and the other sciences. Muslim scholars developed a clear understanding of the relationships between various fields of geometry, mathematics and astronomy. Muslims invented the symbols for *zero* and unknown quantities (x).

Misconceptions

1. Muslims do not regard Christians and Jews, “People of the Book,” highly.

Muslims do believe in the original scriptures of the Old Testament and consider Christians and Jews to be the People of the Book.

While Muslims do not subscribe to the belief that Jesus is the Son of God, they do believe that Jesus was created through the miracle of God. Furthermore, they say that Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary through a miracle, much like Adam was born without a mother or a father through a miracle of Allah.

Islam recognizes Jesus as one of Allah’s greatest prophets. Islam believes that Jesus, Moses, Abraham and all the other prophets were messengers of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad had the distinction of being the “seal” of the prophets, meaning he is the last of the prophets until the return of Jesus.

Islam dictates that there must be respect for People of the Book (Christians, Jews and others). It also says that Muslims must be good neighbours: “The neighbor who is near is dearer to you than the brother who is far.”

2. Muslims are violent, terrorists and/or extremists.

The media has perpetuated stereotypes of Muslims by naming the religion when extreme acts are committed. This implies terrorists are driven by their faith. Similar assumptions are seldom made when the offender is non-Islamic. Some dictators and politicians have used Islam to advance their own interests and have gone away from the original meaning, which implores people to be peaceful and submit to the will of Allah.

3. Muslims believe in promoting their aims through jihad “holy war”.

There is a misconception about the term *jihad*. The word *jihad* means “striving”. In its primary sense, it is an inner struggle to strive to be a good, kind human by ridding oneself of debased actions or inclinations. It involves the exercise of constancy and perseverance in achieving a higher moral standard. The popular Western press promotes the idea of *jihad* as a holy war. Suicide bombings are shown as evidence of a belief that implores Muslims to die in defence of their religion by committing suicide. This is not the basis of *jihad*.

Like Christianity, Islam does permit fighting in self-defence, in defence of religion or on the part of those who have been expelled forcibly from their homes.

The term *holy war* was coined in Europe during the Crusades, meaning the war against infidels (those who were not Christian)—in the Middle East, this meant Muslims. The term *holy war* does not have an Islamic counterpart, and *jihad* is certainly not its translation.

4. Muslim women and girls are oppressed.

This is perhaps the most controversial and visible area of Islam. Many images depict women in heavy blue or black tent-like clothing that covers them from head to toe. These images are extreme examples of rights violations and oppression. In some Islamic states, sadly, this is true. This oppression occurs in cultures where politics has overridden the true intent of the religion. In reality, Islamic women have many rights, many of which are not extended to women in other faiths. Islam led the way in recognizing women's rights. In the 16th century, when most women in Europe were considered chattel, Muslim women were allowed to vote and to hold key positions in government and business. They owned their own land, had rights to inheritance and were generally treated with admiration and respect. The Prophet Muhammad constantly preached about respecting and honouring women. In Islam, when a woman marries, she is not required to change her last name.

5. Muslim women wear the hijab (head scarf) or the burka (full body covering) as a sign they are not free.

The observance of chastity and moral standards is demanded by Islam for both men and women. Muslim women and men believe that modesty is an act of worship. Islam asks that women cover their hair and neck and wear loose, opaque clothing that covers the body except for the hands and feet when they are in public. Men must also cover their bodies by dressing conservatively. In many Islamic countries, covering the whole face is not mandatory; this decision is made at the woman's discretion. If she wants to wear it, she can, but it is not mandatory. Some states have dictated that women wear the burka; however, this is not the norm in Islamic countries. Muslim people don't believe that the *hijab* is ordained by men and worn to please men. Rather, it is ordained by God and is worn to show obedience to God.

An Alberta principal expressed this opinion about the *hajib*: “If it was ripped off, the girl would be free.” The student explained to the principal that she was not forced to wear the *hijab*. She said, “I am so tired of people looking at me as an object. I don’t want people to like me because of my hair or makeup. I want them to like me for my mind and how smart I am.” Those profound words from a 16-year-old explain much of the reasoning behind the *hijab*.³

Geraldine Brooks, author of *Nine Parts of Desire, The Hidden World of Islamic Women* (Brooks, 1996) commented, “A lot of us don’t have a problem that our daughters might be in school with somebody who is wearing a bare midriff and a bellybutton ring and 10 boyfriends, but we do have a problem that she’s in a class with a girl who wears a headscarf and doesn’t date.”

³ This conversation was witnessed by a Canadian Arab Friendship Association member.

What can I do in the classroom?

1. Improve communication.

Be proactive in involving parents. Specify actions that can be taken. Most parents will respond with enthusiasm if they understand the problem and the nature of their involvement. Remember that for many people from the Middle East, getting involved in their children's education is unheard of, so they may have to be encouraged to be more proactive.

2. If there is a crisis or a traumatic event such as the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, consider the following suggestions⁴:

- Be aware of your own feelings, attitudes and behaviour. During times of emotional stress, students will look to you as an example of how to behave and respond.
- Assure students that they are in a safe and caring school and explain the precautions the adults in the school have taken to keep them safe. Reassure students that feeling anxious or concerned is a normal response to violence and uncertainty. Help students examine the precautions being taken to prevent further harm and to keep everyone safe.
- Give students time to talk about the incident and express their feelings. Acknowledge that there will be many different emotional responses ranging from fear to anger to grief to ambivalence to a sense that things are out of control. Help students put these emotional responses into perspective. Explore positive ways to manage these emotions. Respect a student's choice not to participate in discussions.
- Move on. Maintain routines. Avoid projects that fixate on the daily reporting of events.
- Watch for signs (for example, a change in behaviour) that students are not coping well with their emotions. Let all students know that they may speak to you in private if they are having trouble managing their emotions. Be sure to arrange appropriate counselling or mental-health support for students having trouble coping.

⁴These suggestions for teachers have been adapted from ATA website and are provided by the Safe and Caring Schools Project and the ATA's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee http://www.teachers.ab.ca/diversity/Anti-Racism_and_Religious_Beliefs/Article_and_Books/Index.htm

- Whenever appropriate, link the teachable moments arising from discussion of the terrorist attacks and the aftermath to aspects of the curriculum. For example, you might integrate a discussion of recent events into lessons about coping with stress and trauma, building global peace, respecting different cultures and religions, and preventing racism and hate.
- Dispel any myths related to Islam and Muslims. Resource information to help teachers engage students in positive discussion that promotes anti-racism and religious tolerance can be found at www.ctf-fce.ca/e/press/mentorfinal.PDF.
- Explore with your students some of the stories found in the book *The Strange War* by Martin Auer, published by Beltz & Gelberf in Germany. These stories, some of which can be downloaded without charge from the Internet, have been published in several languages, including English, Spanish, French, Russian, German, Danish, Estonian, Chinese, Czech, Italian, Armenian, Croatian, Serbian and Japanese. Martin Auer's books have won several Austrian and international awards.
- Be on the lookout for students who engage in behaviour that shows disrespect for or discriminates against students of other ethnic or religious backgrounds. Deal with all such incidents, even those that are very minor. Focus on logical consequences that will help misbehaving students undo the wrong they have caused and learn more appropriate ways to behave.
- Encourage students to report any concerns they have about such inappropriate behaviour. Follow up on all reports.
- Help students channel their concern into some form of helping action.
- Encourage older students to critically examine news coverage and to explore the historical and political context within which events are occurring.

3. Deal with derogatory language.

When you hear derogatory language that labels Canadian Muslim and Arab students as terrorists or other derogatory names, deal with it immediately. Name-calling in any form is unacceptable. Spend time countering negative stereotypes and capitalize on teachable moments to inform all students of the harm that name-calling and putdowns have. Reiterate the fact that events such as September 11, 2001, are the work of a few who use religion as an excuse to do harm to others. The more students learn to empathize with others, the less likely they are to bully.

4. Invite informed and knowledgeable guest speakers to your

class. Many people from the Arab and/or Muslim community are more than happy to speak to students. Speakers often offer a perspective that is seldom heard and can answer specific questions that the teacher may not be able to.

5. Become informed about Muslim holidays and observances.

Muslim observances, holidays and fasts are based on a lunar calendar of 12 months. Each month has 29 or 30 days, depending on the sighting of the new moon. The Islamic, or Hijra, calendar is about 10 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar, so each year Muslim holidays will be observed about 10 days earlier than the previous year. Every Friday the weekly prayer is held in the mosque (place of worship for Muslims). Like most religious observances, the gathering provides opportunities for community building through social as well as spiritual interactions.

There are two major celebrations:

- **'Eid al-Fitr** (Festival of the Breaking of the Fast) marks the end of the fast of Ramadan. Students may be absent from school on 'Eid day.
- **'Eid al-Adha** (Festival of Sacrifice) is the culmination of the Hajj, or holy pilgrimage to Mecca. It is commonly a three-day holiday that commemorates Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son for Allah.

6. Be sensitive to students' physical stress during the month of Ramadan.

Students will be fasting during Ramadan. Generally, students fast all day after they reach puberty. While teachers should be sensitive to the physical stress of these students, it cannot become a reason for students missing classes or not doing assignments. Use discretion in dealing with students during the month of Ramadan. Try to schedule prayer opportunities into regular break periods. If students tell you that they need to leave school to participate in Friday prayers, ask that they provide you with parental consent. Most parents are somewhat flexible in timing religious observances with natural breaks in schooling.

7. Integrate knowledge about Arab culture or Muslim religion into curriculum KSAs.

For example, in social studies discuss points of view in the news reports that feature Arab and/or Muslim people. Use sources from all parts of the world. Examine media bias relating to current issues. Spend time examining maps of

the Middle East or identifying the world's 57 Muslim countries. Study groups such as the Sumerians, Hebrews and Egyptians and identify their contributions to modern civilizations. In math, collect raw data related to Arab and Muslim demographics, and create various graphs that illustrate the information. Conclude with generalization based on the data. In language arts, feature stories and poetry that reflect experiences of Arab and Muslim children or youth. In fine arts, study the unique sounds Middle Eastern music and instruments, and the artistic and symbolic representations of Islam. Feature food from Islamic countries, or research the diets and cooking of Middle Eastern countries. Consider writing a cookbook and serving a Middle Eastern hors d'oeuvre at a school function.

8. Encourage students to examine racism and religious

intolerance. Explore the implications that these dangerous forms of prejudice can have for particular ethnic groups and society in general.

9. Make sure that your expectations for high achievement are articulated to all students.

Consider using verbal and nonverbal cues in making the expectations clearly evident to students and parents.

10. Be conscious of the power of positive role models.

Where possible, identify people who have made a positive difference and/or contributed to their society's culture. Examples include the following: Good role models show that members of all groups can be successful, contributing citizens. When students see themselves in others it makes them feel better about themselves.

Sports: Doug Flutie (football player), Bobby Rahal (auto racer), Eddie Elias (founder of Professional Bowlers' Association), Mohammed Ali (boxer), Jennifer Shahade (Women's International Chess Master), Khalid Khannouchi (marathon—world-record holder), Yasser Seirawan (US National Chess Champion and Grandmaster)

Activists: Ralph Nader (consumer advocate), Candy Lightner (founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

Business: Dr. Joseph Jacobs (Jacobs Engineering Group), Dr. Ray Irani (Occidental Petroleum), Najeeb Halaby (former CEO of Pan-American Airlines). His daughter, Lisa, married King Hussein of Jordan and became the only Arab

Company), Samir G. Gibara (Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company), Ned Mansour (Mattel, Inc.), Mohammed Abu-Ghazaleh (Del Monte Produce, Inc.), Roger Farah (Polo Ralph Lauren)

Law: In the late 1990s, Edward Masry and Erin Brockovich filed a direct-action lawsuit against Pacific Gas and Electric for polluting the drinking water of Hinkley, California. Their efforts secured the largest toxic tort injury settlement in U.S. history, \$333 million in damages, and was chronicled in the blockbuster film starring Julia Roberts and Albert Finney.

Entertainment: Paul Anka (Canadian-born singer-songwriter), Herbert Khaury (the ukulele-plucking, falsetto-singing entertainer who became famous as Tiny Tim), Frank Zappa (rocker), Paula Abdul (singer and dancer-choreographer), Shakira, (pop star), Lucie Salhany (first woman to head a television network, as chair of Fox Broadcasting Co., then of United Paramount Network), Asaad Kelada (television director), John Bowab (Broadway and television director), Jamie Farr (Corporal Klinger on *M*A*S*H*), Danny Thomas (comedian and actor), Tony Thomas (television and film producer), Marlo Thomas (actor), Wendie Malick (actor) and Kasey Kassem (America's Top 100 radio host).

Education: Edward Said (literary and social critic and music reviewer), Jack Shaheen (emeritus professor and author), Nido Qubein (writer-lecturer and president of the National Speakers' Association and the youngest member inducted into the International Speakers' Hall of Fame)

Science and Medicine: Dr. Michael DeBakey (surgeon who invented the heart pump), Dr. Elias Zerhouni (director of the National Institutes of Health), Dr. Ahmed H. Zewail and Dr. Elias Corey (Nobel Prize winners for chemistry), Dr. Charles Elachi (head of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory), Hassan Kamel Al-Sabbah (electrical engineer and inventor), George A. Doumani (geologist), Dr. Farouk el-Baz (helped plan all the Apollo moon landings and later pioneered the use of space photography to study the Earth), Christa McAuliffe (teacher who died on the Challenger space ship)

The Famous Quotation

“Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country” — a quotation attributed to John F. Kennedy, was written by famed Arab author and poet Kahlil Gibran.

What can the school do?

All of the incidents that have identified Arab or Muslim people negatively have had a profound effect on Canadian Muslim and Arab students. The following are suggestions for how the administration and staff in schools can manage and defuse these incidents.

1. Provide a forum for the expression of different viewpoints.

Many students whose families come from the Middle East and Muslim countries are far removed from the politics of their countries of origin. Students' reactions to war and stereotyping, whether positive or negative, are likely to be defensive. Most Canadian Muslim and Arab students vocalize a loyalty to visible Muslims and Arabs, not out of political knowledge or understanding, but out of a sense of loyalty to their parents' homeland, culture and/or religion. In a sense, it is like being an Edmonton Oilers fan in Calgary, even if you do not watch hockey. Some students will want to vocalize their beliefs and opinions, others will not. Try to arrange discussion periods, forums and debating opportunities so that dialogue can happen in a safe environment. Encourage students to understand each other's positions by using strategies that help them consider others' perspectives. It may be appropriate to privately ask the students to be more sensitive to others' political views. Ensure that this advice applies to everyone. Consider arranging a political forum in which the youth are encouraged to discuss ideas and political beliefs in a safe setting.

2. Provide opportunities for teachers and school staffs to learn more about Arab and Muslim people.

Help teachers become more aware of the importance of cross-cultural sensitivity about dietary requirements, dress codes, customs and holidays. Provide professional development opportunities for staff to focus on this subject.

3. Invite parents and community members to provide advice.

When tensions are mounting or a specific incident has led to increased bullying and harassment see input from outside sources.

4. Islamic marital rules encourage individual responsibility by strengthening the nuclear family.

Multigenerational families are quite common, and it is not surprising to see four generations living in one household. Parents are held in high esteem, especially the mother. In many cases, the first thing a child says when in trouble in school is “Please don’t tell my mother.” This is out of fear of disappointing or hurting her.

5. Respect religious observances and holidays.

If possible, designate a private area in the school so that Muslim students can pray during breaks. Acknowledge religious holidays and invite, but do not compel, students to share their traditions.

6. Examine hiring and advancement policies.

When minority students see members of their group in leadership and teaching positions, they are more likely to be successful in school. They can see that success is possible. Minority teachers can serve as effective mentors because they are more likely to identify with the minority group’s problems, and they can enrich the curriculum by bringing new perspectives. It helps all students overcome the urge to stereotype when they see minority teachers and administrators in the school and classroom.

7. Consider developing local religious studies courses (see Alberta Learning’s School Act Policy 1.2.2).

Alberta Learning recognizes the right of all school authorities to reflect their views and belief systems in locally developed religious studies courses, provided that such courses develop respect and promote understanding of individual and minority group differences; develop an understanding and appreciation of the beliefs, customs and practices, literature and traditions of other major world religions; develop critical thinking; develop desirable personal characteristics; and conform to other provincial policies.

Relevant Legislation

The ATA Professional Code of Conduct

www.teachersab.ca/professional/code.html

(1) *The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to the race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background.*

(4) “The teacher treats pupils with dignity and respect and is considerate of their circumstances.”

The Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities for Teachers

www.teachers.ab.ca/about/declaration.html

(9) “Teachers have the right to be protected against discrimination on the basis of race, ***religious belief***, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, age, ***ancestry*** or ***place of origin*** and have the responsibility to refrain from practicing these forms of discrimination in their professional duties.”

Alberta Learning’s Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual

Section 1 - Education Programs and Services Policy Requirements

Locally Developed Courses

www.learning.gov.ab.ca/educationguide/pol-plan/polregs/122.asp

In Alberta, teachers can inform students about the tenets of various religions; however, they cannot proselytize a particular faith. All of the secular schools in Alberta are based on moral principles and adhere to the Program of Studies. This mandated curriculum requires the teaching of positive attitudes in every course.

References

Brooks, G. *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*. New York: Anchor Books, 1996.

Sachedina, A. "What Is Islam?" *The World & I* (September 1997).

Beliefs of Islam, *Canada and the World*, February 15, 1990.

Ahmad, H. "Top Ten Misconceptions About Islam". www.alrashidonline.com/misconceptions.shtml

"Dealing with the Aftermath of September 11." www.teachers.ab.ca/diversity/Anti-Racism_and_Religious_Beliefs/Article_and_Books/Index.htm.

General Resources

Websites

There are many websites that provide information about Arabs and the Islamic faith. The following is a short list.

Canadian Islamic Centre www.alrashidonline.com

Get responses to questions about Islam, ask for a tour of the Centre or find out what services are available at the Centre.

The Canadian Arab Friendship Society www.cafaedmonton.ca

The official website for the Canadian Arab Friendship Association of Edmonton. This website provides information on the Centre's services, history of Arabs in Canada past and present and provides facts about 22 Arab countries.

Islam: The Modern Religion www.themodernreligion.com.

This site was established to present Islam in a simple way. It includes many articles, links and courses about the basics of Islam. It also has a "Dawah" corner, which provides lesson plans and curriculum resources for educators.

Discover Islam www.discoverislam.com This site offers a gallery of 25 posters, each masterfully integrating traditional Islamic art and calligraphy with modern computer graphics. This collection ranges from simple arabesque patterns to full-colour photographs of Muslims and the Islamic World. Posters that powerfully communicate the beauty of Islam, and yet are gentle enough to sway any heart, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

Islam 101.com www.islam101.com

Islam 101 is an educational site on Islam. It prides information about the Islamic way of life, civilization and culture. It includes an introductory course on Islam and presents Islamic views on contemporary issues. This site contains many articles about the basics of Islam that introduce the faith in a concise and friendly way. Islam101 is an introductory course on the Islamic faith. Challenge yourself to the on-line tests at www.islam101.com.

Islamic Networks Group: Eliminating Stereotypes Through Education

www.ing.org

ING is a non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of stereotyping through education. Surveys indicate that nearly half of all Americans believe that Islam condones terrorism, is anti-American, poses a security threat and oppresses women. The site's strategy is to present tailored educational programs delivered directly by informed Muslims to public institutions.

Council on Islamic Education www.cie.org

The Council on Islamic Education (CIE) is a national non-profit resource organization comprising of a diverse body of scholars of history, religion, education and related disciplines. The mission of CIE is to contribute to improvement of the American K–12 education system, by participating in the cultivation of knowledge, critical thinking and global awareness among the nation's young citizens.

Note: Many of these sites are American, but there are still many areas of relevant information that can be used in Canada.

Books and Documents

Understanding Islam, Muslims and Arabs: A Comprehensive Guide to Resources Available to Educators

Contact the Canadian Arab Friendship Association for a free copy.

The Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (SACSC) Project: Check out the many resources available from the SACSC Project. One of the programs developed by the SACSC Project is *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum*, which has produced a variety of lesson ideas, including *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA Resources for Integration: Kindergarten to Grade 6*, a set of resources intended to help teachers in elementary school integrate violence-prevention concepts into the Alberta Program of Studies. This resource is available from the Learning Resources Centre. Unit and lesson plans resources for the secondary curriculum are available to download from the SACSC website at www.sacsc.ca, click on resources.

Speakers

Barb Cragg, Consulting Service, Edmonton Public Schools, Centre for Education, (780) 421-8194. Contact Barb Cragg to find out about books, information and speaker referrals.

Ahmed Taha, city councillor and retired teacher, Lac La Biche, Alberta. Learn about Islam. Book free professional development sessions anywhere in Alberta by calling (780) 623-4863 or (780) 623-8481.

Organizations

The Canadian Arab Friendship Association

#18, Capital Centre, 9228 144 Avenue

Edmonton AB

T5E 6A9

Ph: (780) 473-7214

Fax: (780) 475-1039

Email: general@cafaedmonton.ca

Website: www.cafaedmonton.ca

Canadian Islamic Centre

13070 113 Street
Edmonton AB
Ph: (780) 451-6694
Fax: (780) 452-1243
Email: ask@alrashidonline.com
Website: www.alrashidonline.com

Relevant Websites

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities
www.sacsc.ca

The ATA's Diversity and Human Rights Homepage
www.teachers.ab.ca/diversity/index.html

All of Us Are Related, Each of Us Is Unique
[//allrelated.syr.edu/](http://allrelated.syr.edu/)

Calgary Cultural and Racial Diversity Task Force
www.calgary.ca/DocGallery/BU/community/diversity_Calgary_appendices

Central Alberta Diversity Project
www.mycommunityinformation.com/cadp/

Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations
www.naarr.org/

Multicultural Association of Fort McMurray
www.mcaonline.ca/

Report Hate
www.reporthate.org/

Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism: Stop Racism and Celebrate March 21
www.pch.gc.ca/march-21-mars/

Canadian Human Rights Commission
www.chrc-ccdp.ca/

Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission
www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/

Canadian Race Relations Foundation
www.crrca/rt/

Films and Videos

Playing Fair

This series of four 15-minute films depicts elementary school children dealing with racial discrimination and working toward solutions. Available from the [National Film Board of Canada](#).

Color Blind

This 26-minute film, suitable for secondary students, demonstrates that racist behaviour is not cool and that even subtle racism can explode into violence. Available from the [National Film Board of Canada](#).

Blue-Eyed

This 90-minute video, suitable for high school and adult audiences, invites viewers to participate in the “blue-eyed/brown-eyed” exercise. This is a powerful video demonstrating ways that people of colour are and have been oppressed. Available from [California Newsreel](#).

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The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (SACSC) Resources



The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities' resources and materials are available through Alberta Learning's Resources Centre (LRC), 12360 142 St. NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 4X9. Tel: 427-5775 in Edmonton. Elsewhere in Alberta call 310-0000 and ask for the LRC or fax (780) 422-9750. To place Internet orders, visit www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca *These materials are eligible for the Learning Resources Credit Allocation (25% discount). Contact the LRC for details.

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities has four program areas and an inventory of promotional items:

I. SUPPORTING A SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL

This program area helps build a SACS culture. It includes information about SACS, an assessment tool to aid in planning and quick, easy-to-read booklets that review current research on SACS topics and successful programs.

Safe and Caring Schools in Alberta Presentation: video, overheads and 30 brochures
 # 445297 \$15.00

The SACSC: An Overview (K–12) (Pkg of 30) Describes the origin and objectives of the project (2001, 4 pp.)
 # 445298 \$ 6.80

Attributes of a Safe and Caring School (K–12) (Pkg of 30) A brochure for elementary, junior and senior high schools, describing the characteristics of a safe and caring school (1999)
 # 445313 \$ 6.80

The SACSC: Elementary Booklet Series (16 booklets) (K–6) (see LRC website)
 # 445610 \$11.50

The SACSC: Secondary Booklet Series (15 booklets) (7–12) (see LRC website)
 # 445628 \$10.80

Preschool Bullying: What You Can Do About It—A Guide for Parents and Caregivers (1–6) Provides advice on what parents can do if their child is being bullied or is bullying others (2000, 24 pp.)
 # 445347 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Bullying: What You Can Do About It—A Guide for Primary Level Students (K–3) Contains stories and exercises to help children deal with bullies and to stop bullying others (1999, 28 pp.)
 # 445397 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Bullying: What You Can Do About It—A Guide for Parents and Teachers of Primary Level Students Contains tips to help teachers and parents identify and respond to children who are involved in bullying (2000, 12 pp.)
 # 445454 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Bullying: What You Can Do About It—A Guide for Upper-Elementary Students and Their**Parents** Directed at students who are the victims, witnesses or perpetrators of bullying, and their parents (2000, 16 pp.)

□ # 445321 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Bullying in Schools: What You Can Do About It—A Teacher's Guide (1–6) Describes strategies that teachers can follow to stop bullying in schools (1997, 10 pp.)

□ # 445339 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Beyond Bullying: A Booklet for Junior High Students (7–9) Explains what students should do if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied (2000, 12 pp.)

□ #445470 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Beyond Bullying: What You Can Do To Help—A Handbook for Parents and Teachers of Junior High Students (7–9) Defines bullying behaviors and suggests strategies that parents and teachers can follow to deal with it (1999, 16 pp.)

□ # 445488 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Bullying is Everybody's Problem: Do You Have the Courage to Stop It? (Pkg of 30) (7–12)

A guide for senior high students, defines bullying and provides advice on how to respond to it (1999)

□ # 445305 \$4.76 for 10 or more pkgs \$6.80/pkg

Bullying and Harassment: Everybody's Problem—A Senior High Staff and Parent Resource

(10–12) Provides advice for parents and teachers of high school students on how to deal with bullying (2000, 12 pp.)

□ # 445496 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Class Meetings for Safe and Caring Schools (K–12) Explains how regular class meetings can help teachers and students work out conflicts before they become major problems (1998, 20 pp)

□ # 445587 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Expecting Respect: The Peer Education Project—A School-Based Learning Model (K–12)

Provides an overview of Expecting Respect, a project that trains junior and senior high students to make classroom presentations on establishing healthy social relationships (1999, 16 pp.)

□ # 445462 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Safe and Caring Schools: Havens for the Mind (K–12) Reviews the role of SACS in healthy brain development and learning

□ # 445503 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Media Violence: The Children Are Watching—A Guide for Parents and Teachers (K–12)

Contains tips for parents and teachers in countering the effects on children of media violence (1999, 12 pp.)

□ # 445511 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Peer Support and Student Leadership Programs (K–12) Describes a number of programs that have been used successfully at various grade levels to encourage students to help their fellow students (2000, 30 pp.)

□ # 445503 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Niska News (K–12) A collection of articles about SACS reprinted from The ATA News (1999, 36 pp.)

□ # 445529 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Principals' Best (K–12) Describes activities that various schools in the province have undertaken to create a safe and caring environment for students (1999, 16 pp.) See website.

445545 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Volunteer Mentorship Programs: (K–12) Describes a number of successful programs in which adult volunteers were assigned to serve as mentors to school-aged children (2000, 28 pp.)

445579 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

Volunteer Mentorship Program: (K–12) A video portrays programs in which adults from the community work with children to help them develop various skills (1999, 9 ½ minutes)

445602 \$ 7.00

Volunteer Mentorship Program: A Practical Handbook (includes 3.5" disk) (K–12) Explains how to set up programs in which adults serve as mentors to school-aged children (1999, 44 pp. plus a computer disk containing sample documents used in the program)

445595 \$10.00

CHECK LRC FOR NEW TITLES

II. TOWARD A SAFE AND CARING CURRICULUM—RESOURCES FOR INTEGRATION

These resources are recommended and approved by Alberta Learning. They integrate violence prevention into all subjects K–6 and are divided into five topics: (approximately 85 pp.)

1. Building a Safe and Caring Classroom/Living Respectfully
2. Developing Self-Esteem
3. Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice
4. Managing Anger and Dealing with Bullying and Harassment
5. Working It Out Together/Resolving Conflicts Peacefully

Student resource sheets are available in French. To order, check (F).

Kindergarten # 445446 F (Out of Province \$69.00) \$49.00

Grade 1 # 445371 F (Out of Province \$69.00) \$49.00

Grade 2 # 445389 F (Out of Province \$69.00) \$49.00

Grade 3 # 445404 F (Out of Province \$69.00) \$49.00

Grade 4 # 445412 F (Out of Province \$69.00) \$49.00

Grade 5 # 445420 F (Out of Province \$69.00) \$49.00

Grade 6 # 445438 F (Out of Province \$69.00) \$49.00

Anti-Bullying Curriculum Materials: Social Studies Grades 10, 11, 12 Developed by Project Ploughshares Calgary, this booklet contains a series of exercises that teachers can use to incorporate the topic of bullying into the high school social studies curriculum (1999, 81 pp.)

445563 \$10.00

Classroom Management: A Thinking and Caring Approach Written by Barrie Bennett and Peter Smilanich, this manual outlines numerous strategies that teachers can use to cope with misbehavior in the classroom and create a learning environment that encourages student learning (1994, 342 pp.)

445660 \$31.60

SACSC series of six full-color posters A series of six full-color posters highlighting the Project's key concepts.

444836 \$ 9.00

PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

III. TOWARD A SAFE AND CARING PROFESSION

The SACSC trains inservice leaders and workshop facilitators. The following workshops are designed to help teachers implement the curriculum resources.

Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA Resources for Integration: Kindergarten to Grade 6*

Toward a Safe and Caring Secondary Curriculum—Approaches for Integration*

A series of short sessions focused on strengthening SACS teaching strategies is also available.

IV. TOWARD A SAFE AND CARING COMMUNITY

This program area is designed to help all adults who work with children—parents, teachers, coaches, youth group leaders, music instructors—model and reinforce positive social behavior, whether at school, at home or in the community. The community program includes a series of 2-2½ hour workshops for adults and older teens.

Living Respectfully*

Developing Self-Esteem*

Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice*

Managing Anger*

Dealing with Bullying*

Working It Out Together - Resolving Conflicts Peacefully*

Who Cares? brochures (Pkg of 30) Provides background on the Safe and Caring Communities Project, a collaborative effort between the ATA and Lions Clubs of Alberta (1998)

444654 \$ 9.80

Who Cares? CD-ROM and brochure Describes the Safe and Caring Communities Project, a collaborative effort between the ATA and the Lions Clubs of Alberta (1998)

444646 \$ 4.35

Who Cares? video and brochure Describes the Safe and Caring Communities Project, a collaborative effort between the ATA and the Lions Clubs of Alberta (1997, 11 minutes)

444638 \$ 5.95

Toward a Safe and Caring Community Workshops Action Handbook: A Guide to

Implementation Provides specific information about how to implement the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project—Toward a Safe and Caring Community Program. In addition, the handbook provides suggested activities and strategies to help communities continue to work on issues related to enhancing respect and responsibility among children and teens.

455304 \$ 7.00

Violence-Prevention Catalogue of Alberta Agencies' Resources Compilation of the information that was gathered from over 200 organizations and community groups who work in the area of violence prevention, and with children and youth in character development through community leadership

455312 \$ 7.00

PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SACSC PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

SACSC cards with color logo and envelopes (Pkg of 40) Blank card and envelope, featuring the SACSC logo

444547 \$ 10.00

Niska hand puppet Featuring the Niska mascot

444555 \$ 14.00

Niska labels (800 peel & stick labels per pkg) Featuring the Niska mascot

444571 \$ 4.00

Niska mouse pad 8 ½" by 9 ½" featuring the Niska mascot

444563 \$ 6.00

Niska tattoos (125 per pkg) A 1½" by 1½" temporary tattoo featuring Niska

444597 \$23.40

Niska water bottles (5 per pkg) 5 white plastic water bottles featuring the Niska logo

444612 \$ 8.50

Niska zipper pulls (5 per pkg) Bronze, featuring the Safe and Caring Schools Logo

444589 \$ 7.75

SACSC award buttons (Pkg of 30–2 ¼" white buttons)

444620 \$10.00

Safe and Caring Schools and Communities coffee mug

444604 \$ 5.45

Safe and Caring Schools and Communities pencils (Pkg of 30) Inscribed with "Toward a Safe and Caring Community"

444662 \$10.70

Niska T-Shirt (white, featuring the Niska mascot front and back)

444745 adult X-large; # 444737 adult large; # 444729 adult medium; # 444711 adult small; # 444703 youth X-large; # 444696 youth large; # 444688 youth medium; # 444670 youth small \$10.50

SACSC men's golf shirt (white, featuring the Niska mascot)

444787 X-large; # 444779 large; # 444761 medium; # 444753 small \$24.95

SACSC women's golf shirt (white, sleeveless, featuring the Niska mascot)

444828 X-large; # 444810 large; # 444802 medium; # 444795 small \$24.45

***All workshop materials can be ordered from the SACSC office by inservice leaders and workshop facilitators who have successfully completed the training: e-mail office@sacsc.ca, fax (780) 455-6481 or phone (780) 447-9487.**

ISBN 1-897189-37-0