

RAWDAT AL-QURAN ACADEMY CHICAGO
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ELEMENTARY STUDENT HANDBOOK

Grades 1 – 5

2026 – 2027 School Year

Rooted in Faith · Committed to Excellence · Built for Our Community

10S252 Kingery Hwy, Willowbrook, IL 60527
www.rqachicago.org

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Welcome to RQA – Chicago

Dear Moazzaz Waledain and Pyara Farzando,

With the *Dua* and *Raza Mubarak* of Syedna Ali Qadr Mufaddal Saifuddin TUS, the RQA Board under the guidance of Janaab Aamil Saheb Yunus bhaisaheb Hamidi, is pleased to welcome you to Rawdat al-Quran Academy Chicago Elementary School (RQA Chicago)! This Student Handbook is designed to serve as a valuable resource for students, parents, staff, and our entire school community. It provides a comprehensive guide to the structures, policies, procedures, and expectations that support our school's mission to cultivate a nurturing, respectful, and disciplined environment for our students.

RQA Chicago Elementary School is guided by mohabbat for and ta'at of Syedna Ali Qadr Mufaddal Saifuddin TUS. Our culture and curriculum is aligned to this highest ideal. RQA Chicago Elementary School's culture is shaped by and guided this central principle. At RQA Elementary School, we are creating an environment where every student is encouraged to grow, learn, and thrive. As you review this Handbook with your child, we encourage you to reflect not just on what the expectations are, but on why they are in place and how they contribute to a positive school experience.

This Handbook outlines our expectations for behavior, the strategies used by teachers and administrators to encourage positive conduct, and the procedures that support students and families throughout the year. It is important that both you and your child understand and embrace these guidelines, as personal accountability and responsibility are key to fostering an atmosphere of respect and success.

While this Handbook covers many aspects of school life, it may not address every situation. If you have questions or need clarification, please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher or an administrator at RQA Chicago Elementary School.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we will ensure that RQA Chicago Elementary School remains a safe, respectful, and accountable environment for all students.

With the niyat of gaining Moulana's TUS Khushi in the best interest of our children,

Rawdat al-Quran Academy Chicago Board

Mission, Values, and Governance

The education administration of Syedna Aali Qadr Mufaddal Saifuddin TUS has establishes and manages schools throughout the world of which RQA – Chicago is proud to be a part. Our schools are united by a shared purpose: nurturing hearts, building minds, and transforming lives.

Core Values

- Our curriculum is comprehensive, deriving standards from Awliya Kiram AS and guided by Quranic principles and teachings.
- We promote academic excellence, meaningful practice, character refinement, and moral development. Our instruction is rooted in *our* teachings.

- RQA Chicago transforms children through skill-building, character development, and fostering of community service.
- We emphasize the *zikr* of Imam Husain SA and his sacrifice for all of humanity as the essence of all knowledge.
- We nurture each child's highest potential, creating self-aware, caring, responsible, lifelong learners.
- We champion an inclusive, just, and equitable world through evidence-based social and emotional learning for all students.
- We align the four learning centres — home, masjid, school, and society — for a compelling education.
- We integrate spiritual and material knowledge, fostering the holistic development of each student.

Our Aim

Our students will reflect the following qualities:

Faithful practitioners (Mumin Mukhlis): Deeply rooted in Fatemi principles, integrating them into daily life to embody a mumin-centric existence.

Emotionally and Socially Intelligent: Compassionate, kind, and caring individuals with high levels of empathy and social and emotional awareness.

Adaptable: Resilient, flexible, and agile — able to navigate life's challenges with grace and composure.

Global Citizens: Apply skills and knowledge to contribute positively to their communities and the world.

Problem Solvers: Approach problems with creativity, innovation, and analytical thinking to find practical solutions.

Compassionate and Conscientious Leaders: Inspire and guide others with compassion, understanding, and a commitment to their followers' well-being, making ethical decisions with humility.

Governance

RQA – Chicago operates under the Education Administration of His Holiness Dr. Syedna Aaliqadr Mufaddal Saifuddin TUS and is guided by Attalim schools' shared vision, purpose, and core values. The school is organized and operated on a non-profit basis, with operating revenue generated primarily through student fees, in order to make quality education accessible and sustainable for every mumin child in the community.

General Information

School Hours

Below are RQA Chicago Elementary School's standard weekly hours for the 2026–2027 school year. Please note that hours are subject to change in accordance with the Deeni calendar (e.g., Ramadan al Moazam) and from direction from the RQA Board in consultation with the entire RQA community. Any changes will be communicated in advance.

	Monday – Thursday	Friday
Doors Open	8:15 am	8:15 am
Tilawat ud Dua	8:30 am	8:30 am
Classroom Instruction Ends	3:30 pm	Ends with Jumoa Namaaz
Project-Based Learning (PBL)	N/A	Held after Jumoa Namaaz
Dismissal	3:30 pm	3:10 pm

Monday through Thursday, students follow a full instructional day from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. On Fridays, the school follows a shortened schedule: classroom instruction concludes with Jumoa Namaaz, followed by a Project-Based Learning (PBL) period in which students engage in hands-on, collaborative projects. Final Friday dismissal time will be confirmed and communicated to families in advance.

We ask that children not arrive at school before 8:15 am, as supervision is not in place prior to that time. Your assistance and cooperation with drop-off timings are essential and greatly appreciated.

Contact Information

Address: 10S252 Kingery Hwy, Willowbrook, IL 60527

Email: admin@rqachicago.com

Website: www.rqachicago.com (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

Staff Directory

A full staff directory is distributed at the start of the school year and available in the parent portal. Key contacts are listed below.

Name	Position	Email
Shk Hussain bhai Ezzy	DeH Masool to RQA Chicago	husain.ezzy@rqachicago.com
Rasheeda bhen Peshawarwala	Front Office Administrator	rasheeda.peshawarwala@rqachicago.com
Arwa bhen Karimi	1 st Grade Teacher	arwa.karimi@rqachicago.com
Fatema bhen Taiyebi	2 nd Grade Teacher	fatema.taiyebi@rqachicago.com
Lulua bhen Tayeb	4 th Grade Teacher	lulua.tayeb@rqachicago.com
Sakina bhen Kassamali	Assistant Teacher	sakina.kassamali@rqachicago.com
Zainab bhen Cherawala	Teaching Intern	zainab.cherawala@rqachicago.com
Ibrahim bhai Al-Qamari		Ibrahim.alqamari@rqachicago.com

2026–2027 School Calendar

The calendar below reflects planned instructional days, holidays, and half days for the 2026–2027 school year. Illinois requires 176 instructional days per year; RQA – Chicago's 185-day calendar year provides built-in flexibility, including emergency days at the end of the year in case of closures.

Date	Day	Event
August 17–21, 2026	Monday–Friday	Teacher & Staff Orientation
August 24, 2026	Monday	First Day of School for Students — Half-Day Student Orientation
September 7, 2026	Monday	NO SCHOOL — Labor Day
October 1, 2026	Thursday	NO SCHOOL — Milad Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin RA
October 12, 2026	Monday	NO SCHOOL — Indigenous Peoples' Day / Immigrants' Day / Columbus Day
November 25, 2026	Wednesday	Half Day — Friday Schedule with Early Dismissal (No Lunch)
November 26–27, 2026	Thursday–Friday	NO SCHOOL — Thanksgiving Holiday
December 21, 2026 – January 1, 2027	—	NO SCHOOL — Winter Break
January 4, 2027	Monday	NO SCHOOL — Yawm al Mabath
January 5, 2027	Tuesday	School Resumes from Winter Break
January 18, 2027	Monday	NO SCHOOL — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
February 15, 2027	Monday	NO SCHOOL — Presidents' Day
March 8, 2027	Monday	NO SCHOOL — Eid ul Fitr
March 29 – April 2, 2027	—	NO SCHOOL — Spring Break
April 5, 2027	Monday	School Resumes from Spring Break
May 14, 2027	Friday	Yawme Arafa — Half Day with Early Dismissal
May 28, 2027	Friday	Last Day of School for Students — Half Day with Early Dismissal (No Lunch)
June 1–4, 2027	Tuesday–Friday	Emergency School Days (used only if needed)

Note: The dates above are based on the school's draft 2026–2027 calendar and are subject to final confirmation. Families will be notified of any changes as soon as possible.

Admissions and Enrollment

Birth Certificate Requirement

All students enrolling in RQA Chicago Elementary School must submit a copy of an official, certified birth certificate.

Registration Forms

Registration requires completion of the RQA Chicago Elementary School Registration Form, Waiver Form, Health History Form, and applicable authorization and consent forms. Families should also submit the student's most recent immunization, physical, and dental forms.

Physical Examinations

A physical examination completed by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner is required for entrance into first grade and/or when transferring into RQA Chicago Elementary School for the first time. Forms should be turned in by the first day of school, but no later than October 15 of the year of the required examination. Exam reports for out-of-state students must be turned in by October 15 or within 30 days of enrollment, whichever comes first. The exam must be dated within one year prior to the date the student enters school, and the health history portion must be completed and signed by the parent for the physical to be considered valid by the State of Illinois.

Physical examinations may be obtained through your primary care provider. If you do not have one, contact the RQA Elementary School Front Office for referrals to local Muslim physicians that may be able to facilitate a physical examination. Failure to provide a physical examination may result in exclusion from school as required by the State of Illinois. A separate physical is not required for students to participate in school sponsored extracurriculars.

Immunization Requirements

Because immunization requirements are frequently updated, parents are advised to consult with their primary care provider about the status of their student's immunizations and compliance with the most recent requirements of the State of Illinois. Failure to provide the required immunizations may result in exclusion from school. Please contact the Front Office or RQA Elementary School Administration for any special circumstances.

Attendance Policies

School Attendance

Since there is a positive relationship between regular attendance and academic success, it is of the utmost importance that students be present in class. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential if students are to make full use of the educational opportunities the school offers. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children's regular attendance.

Teachers and administrators follow, in sequence, a collaborative process beginning with the first occurrence of truancy:

- Attempts by the classroom teacher to remedy the situation.
- Referral by the teacher to school administration.
- Telephone contact between school administration and the parent/guardian.
- Parent-teacher-administration conference to address the issue.
- Development of an attendance plan between teacher, student, parent/guardian, and school administration.
- At the student's tenth (10th) absence, a meeting may be convened involving the student, parent/guardian, and school administration.
- Other measures as determined by the administration.

Exceptions to the absence cap must be submitted to the Front Office with accompanying documentation prior to the date of absence. Eligible reasons may include:

- Travel to Hazrat Aaliya TUS/Maqamaat Muqadasa
- Extended illness verified by a doctor's statement addressing the child's inability to attend school
- Death in the family
- Hospitalizations
- Suspensions

Absence Procedures

Parents/guardians must, upon enrollment, provide telephone numbers to the school Front Office and update them as necessary, and must authorize all absences and notify the school in advance or at the time of the child's absence. We kindly request that absences be reported no later than 9:00 am on the day of the absence.

If a student is absent without prior authorization, school administration or a designee will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian within two hours after the first class, by telephone, email, or message. If the school cannot reach a parent/guardian, it may become necessary to visit the home to verify the student's location and well-being.

When your child will be absent due to a trip or extended illness, please send a note or call the Front Office with the dates. Requests for homework should go directly to the teacher per the homework guidelines in this Handbook. Absences of five or more consecutive days due to illness may require a physician's note.

Tardiness

Students are expected to be in their ready for Tilawat ud Dua at 8:30 am. Punctuality is an important part of a child's development. Parents will be notified in cases of excessive tardiness. If you are aware your child will be late, please contact the Front Office or send a note the previous day.

Late Arrival — Early Departure

Students arriving late or leaving early during regular school hours must be signed in or out at the Front Office. A parent/guardian must sign the student out for an appointment or early dismissal, and sign the student back in at the Front Office upon return the same day. Our attendance accounting is computerized, and accurate attendance information is essential.

When to Keep Your Child Home

Please keep your child home if any of the following apply:

- A rash is present that has not been evaluated by a physician.
- Your child's oral temperature measures 100.4°F or higher. A child with a fever should remain home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Your child vomits and/or experiences nausea — the student should remain home until symptom-free for 24 hours.
- Your child experiences loose, watery, or frequent stools — the student should remain home until symptom-free for 24 hours.
- Your child complains of severe or persistent pain; the symptom should be referred to a physician for evaluation.
- Your child shows signs of an upper respiratory infection serious enough to interfere with learning, or signs of conjunctivitis ("pink eye") — a physician's clearance note will be required before returning if symptoms persist.
- Open sores are present; these require evaluation by a physician. Once a written physician release is provided, any open wound or sore must be covered with a dressing taped on all four sides, or as directed by the physician.

If you are unsure whether to send your child to school, call or visit your child's physician. Parents/guardians will be called if a student displays any of the symptoms listed above; if primary contacts cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called. Any child leaving school during school hours must be signed out at the Front Office by the adult assuming responsibility.

Makeup Work

Lesson plans are normally prepared on a weekly basis; planning further in advance is impractical due to variation in classroom progress. If it is necessary to take your child out of school for an extended period, please keep this in mind. Teachers will make effort to assign homework for a vacation or family trip and make-up work may be assigned upon return. Recreational reading, trip journals, and map activities may be assigned in lieu of routine schoolwork.

Health and Safety

Additional Health Services Information

It is the goal of RQA Chicago Elementary School to have all students safe, healthy, and ready to learn. Students may not leave school for illness or injury without first reporting to the Front Office for evaluation.

Medication Policy

Medication may only be administered at school with written authorization from a parent/guardian and, where required, a physician. All medication must be provided in its original container and delivered directly to the Front Office — students may not carry or self-administer medication except as specifically authorized (e.g., emergency inhalers or epinephrine auto-injectors with a physician's order on file).

School Safety Drills

RQA Chicago Elementary School establishes school safety drills and procedures for the school building. Practice and preparation are key to all safety response initiatives, and safety drills are practiced routinely throughout the school year, following guidelines set by the fire department and police department.

Safety Response Plan

RQA Chicago Elementary School utilizes ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate), a proactive approach that empowers individuals to make decisions during a crisis. All staff are trained in ALICE principles. Safety drills are conducted throughout the school year with students following ALICE principles.

Severe Weather Procedures

RQA Chicago Elementary School maintains a program for warning, protection, and, if necessary, evacuation of children in the event of tornado watches, tornado warnings, or actual tornadoes. When a warning is received, the building administrator will immediately implement severe weather emergency procedures.

Tornado Watch: Regular classes and dismissal procedures operate normally.

Tornado Warning: Students are directed to areas of safety within the building and retained regardless of normal dismissal time.

Cold Weather Recess: During winter, students will go outside for recess if the wind chill index is at zero or above, per National Weather Service reports. Check with the Front Office for specific wintertime recess information.

Students Leaving School Campus

Only a parent/guardian, or an individual explicitly authorized in writing, may sign a student out during the school day. Any child leaving campus during school hours must be signed out at the Front Office by the responsible adult.

Food Items

Given the presence of students with food allergies, parents are asked to check with their child's teacher regarding any classroom food policies before sending in snacks or treats for celebrations.

Students will be served a nutritious lunch of Faiz al-Mawaid al-Burhaniyah in thaals as a part of tarbiyat in RQA Chicago Elementary School. Snacks for snack time should be brought by each student from home. Parents are kindly requested to be sensitive to possible allergies of other children in the classroom and school. Teachers will communicate with parents before the start of the school year about any such sensitivities.

Parents are kindly requested to contribute generously to niyaaz for FMB lunch service.

Standards for Student Conduct

Behavior Expectations

RQA Chicago Elementary School is committed to cultivating a nurturing, respectful, and disciplined environment. Students are expected to treat peers, staff, and school property with respect, to act with honesty and integrity, and to take personal responsibility for their choices, in keeping with the school's core values.

Disciplinary Procedures

When a student's conduct does not meet school expectations, staff will generally follow a graduated, restorative approach: redirection and reflection in the classroom, teacher-parent communication, and, where needed, referral to school administration and development of a behavior support plan in partnership with the family. The severity and frequency of the behavior will determine the appropriate response, up to and including suspension in serious circumstances.

Anti-Bullying Policy

RQA Chicago Elementary School is committed to providing a school environment free from bullying and harassment of any kind, whether verbal, physical, social, or electronic. Any student who believes they have witnessed or experienced bullying is encouraged to report it to a teacher or administrator immediately. All reports will be taken seriously and addressed promptly and confidentially, consistent with the safety and dignity of all students involved.

Dress Code

The student dress code at RQA Chicago Elementary School is intended to promote a positive learning environment consistent with the values of RQA Chicago and to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all students, staff, and the community — regardless of age, ability, sex, ethnicity, socio-economic circumstances, or body type/size. A student's appearance, including dress and hygiene, must not disrupt the educational process or compromise standards of health and safety.

General Guidelines for the Instructional Day

- All students must wear full pants, long sleeve shirts, and socks.
- Shoes will be required to be taken off in the designated shoe rack / coat area.
- Clothes must be worn in a way lihaaz is kept.
- Topis and scarves/ornas may be worn in the building during the school day.
- Students cannot wear anything that includes inappropriate images or language.

Special Occasions

The school office will communicate any adjustments to the standard dress code for special events, field trips, spirit days, or religious occasions in advance.

Communication

RQA Chicago Elementary School Communication System

RQA Chicago Elementary School's communication system combines telephone and email notifications to families, staff, and the community. Messages are issued at the school level and range from information about upcoming events, to important decisions affecting students and staff, to emergency bulletins such as weather-related closings.

Any parent who has provided a phone number and email address during registration will automatically be included in the database to receive messages. If you did not provide an email address at registration, you may update your information by contacting the Front Office.

Visiting School

We encourage parents to visit our school. All persons entering the building must identify themselves and check in at the Front Office; all visitors must buzz for entrance, sign in, and receive a visitor's badge, then sign out and return the badge upon leaving. Please give at least one day's notice to the teacher when you wish to visit a classroom. Classroom visitations are discouraged during the first three weeks and final three weeks of school, and during testing sessions. Visits should be limited to 30–60 minutes, and preschool-age children should not accompany visitors. A visit does not automatically constitute a parent-teacher conference; if a conference is desired, an appointment should be made for before or after school.

Children who are not regularly enrolled in school are not permitted to visit or join classes during school hours. Visitors and volunteers should be aware they may be exposed to contagious illnesses when visiting schools; individuals who may be pregnant or have a compromised immune system should direct questions to the Front Office or school administration.

Academic Programs

Grades 1–4 Homework Guidelines

Definition: Homework is any work planned by the teacher to be completed by the student outside of the regular classroom, without immediate and direct teacher interaction.

Philosophy: RQA Chicago Elementary School is committed to excellence in its instructional program while taking into consideration the unique developmental stages of children. Homework is a continuation of the learning process developed in the classroom and carried on by the child at home; its effectiveness depends on careful planning by the teacher and supportive parent/guardian involvement.

Although RQA Chicago Elementary School recognizes the importance of growth opportunities provided by parents outside of school hours and the need for proper rest, there will be an amount of daily homework prescribed at the elementary level, especially for Quran and Dirasat. Additionally, work not completed in class, drill and practice activities, and occasional special projects may be assigned. Students always benefit from *murajaat*, being read to, attending masjid functions, and working on language development.

Progress Reporting

Regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held twice each school year, and both parents/guardians are encouraged to attend. Additional conferences may be called as needed by either the parent/guardian or the teacher.

Student report cards will be made available. RQA Chicago Elementary School does not withhold a student's grades or transcripts because of an unpaid balance on the student's school account. At the end of each term, parents will receive a full report card detailing their child's performance and growth.

Technology Use

Student Cell Phones / Electronic Devices

Student use of personal electronic devices is not permitted while on school property. Personal electronic devices include computers, tablets, cameras, smartwatches, and any other device capable of taking, storing, displaying, or sending images, videos, audio recordings, or text messages with embedded images. If a student brings such a device to school, it must remain turned off and kept in the backpack unless explicit permission has been provided by school administration. If a student needs to call home during the school day, a phone is available in the Front Office.

Acceptable Use and Internet Safety

Where school devices or networks are used for instructional purposes, students are expected to use technology responsibly, respectfully, and only for educational purposes as directed by staff. Students should never share personal information online, attempt to access inappropriate content, or use school technology to bully or harass others. Any concerns regarding a student's technology use should be directed to the classroom teacher or administration.

Lunch Procedures

There are lunch/recess periods totaling approximately 60 minutes at the elementary level. Children may go home for lunch during this period; however, only a parent/guardian may sign an elementary student out for lunch, and we ask that the parent/guardian email the student's teacher with as much notice as possible, but no later than the day before, when planning to sign a student out for lunch.

Parents and Community

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

RQA Chicago Elementary School's Parent Teacher Association brings together families and staff to support school events, fundraising, and community-building activities. All parents/guardians are warmly invited to participate; meeting schedules and contact information will be shared during the school year.

Volunteer Opportunities

Parents and community members are encouraged to volunteer at school events, field trips, and classroom activities. Volunteers should check in at the Front Office as outlined in the Visiting School section and follow any additional guidance provided by the classroom teacher or event coordinator.

Communication with Parents

Families are kept informed through email and phone notifications, report cards, and scheduled conferences. Parents are always encouraged to reach out to their child's teacher directly with questions about classroom life, and to the Front Office for administrative matters.

Specials and Enrichment Activities

RQA Chicago Elementary School believes that specials and enrichment activities are valuable opportunities for students. Students are encouraged to participate in the programs made available, based on their interests and abilities.

Handbook Agreement

All RQA Chicago Elementary School parents/guardians are expected to read this Handbook and discuss its key points with their children. Students and parents/guardians must sign this Handbook Agreement before the beginning of each school year.

We have read and understood the school procedures outlined in this Handbook. We affirm to live within its guidelines, and any adjustments to school policy as advised throughout the year. We recognize and appreciate the privilege and responsibility of being part of the RQA Chicago Elementary School community, and we agree with the information contained in this Handbook.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____