

Neurodivergent Students in Muslim Schools:

What You Need to Know

Neurodivergence includes

Autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and sensory processing differences.

Core principles for teachers

- Neurodivergence is not a discipline issue – it is a different way of processing the world.
- Use *strengths-based* language: highlight the student's abilities
- Modify your environment, not the child's identity.

Islamic principle

*"Indeed, all actions are judged by intentions." (Bukhari & Muslim).
A student may intend to do well but face invisible barriers.*

Classroom strategies

- Use predictable routines and visual supports.
- Reduce sensory triggers: noise, lighting, classroom clutter.
- Use simple, direct instructions: "First, write your name. Then, start question 1."
- Provide movement breaks and alternative prayer settings if needed.

Example

Bilal, a Year 5 student with sensory processing disorder, becomes overwhelmed during whole-school salat.

- Staff create a quiet space where he can pray with supervision, then return to class regulated.
- Staff can allow Bilal to have his headphones over his ears when praying in congregation or at assemblies to reduce sensory triggers in order to remain regulated.