



**NizamiOrder**

A DECADE OF LEARNING

# **Parent-Student Handbook**

## **2021**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE IMAM           | <b>2</b>  |
| ABOUT THE NIZAMI ORDER AT TARBIYA INSTITUTE | <b>3</b>  |
| MISSION                                     | <b>4</b>  |
| VISION                                      | <b>4</b>  |
| VALUES                                      | <b>4</b>  |
| OBJECTIVES                                  | <b>5</b>  |
| EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY                      | <b>5</b>  |
| A DECADE OF LEARNING: THE NIZAMI PLAN       | <b>6</b>  |
| 2021 BREAK SCHEDULE                         | <b>7</b>  |
| MEMBERSHIP FEES                             | <b>7</b>  |
| OPTION TO FREEZE MEMBERSHIP                 | <b>8</b>  |
| ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES    | <b>8</b>  |
| GRADING SYSTEM                              | <b>9</b>  |
| CERTIFICATION                               | <b>9</b>  |
| DISCIPLINARY POLICY                         | <b>9</b>  |
| DRESS CODE                                  | <b>10</b> |
| PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT                        | <b>11</b> |
| A NOTE OF THANKS                            | <b>12</b> |
| REQUEST TO FREEZE MEMBERSHIP                | <b>13</b> |

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE IMAM

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,

Welcome to the Nizami Order! Tarbiya Institute's Imams and Mentors welcome you into this immersive program designed to foster spiritual enrichment and social-emotional intelligence to create engaged vibrant and unified community members.

The Nizami Committee has spent countless hours thoroughly researching and planning a comprehensive program that addresses the spiritual, academic and social needs of the student. Students will study traditional Islamic subjects, supplemented with practical knowledge and skill development to help them thrive in the 'real world.' We know that Islamic knowledge is worth very little unless we can transform that knowledge into wisdom, to walk in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

The Nizami Order is an intellectually sophisticated program that will demand excellence and equip students with the skills to reach their greatest potential. Graduates of the Nizami Order will not only have a strong foundation in Islamic Studies, but also be the leaders of the community. Through Majlis-ul-Ilm gatherings and activities, students will soon begin to realize they bear a spiritual and social responsibility to the people who sit in a circle with them every week, as well as to the community at large.

This handbook will provide your children with the requirements and regulations of the Nizami Order, which they will be expected to adhere to at all times. We impart wisdom and knowledge to our students, in the hopes that they, like an arrow from the hands of a skilled Bowman, will travel further than we have. Thank you for enrolling your child in the Nizami Order; they are our investment in the future well-being of the Ummah.

Very truly yours,

Sherif Azeez

*Executive Imam of Tarbiya Institute*

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## ABOUT THE NIZAMI ORDER AT TARBIYA INSTITUTE

The Nizami Order seeks to revive the tradition of Islam's rich intellectual past. The word Nizami is a reference to the Nizamiyyah institutions of higher learning, founded by the famous Vizier of the Seljuk Empire, Abu Ali Hassan ibn Ali Tusi, or Nizam-al-Mulk.

While Europe lay dormant in the Dark Age, the Nizam-al-Mulk established the Nizamiyyah institutes, lighting a torch of knowledge that spread throughout the Empire, from Baghdad to Isfahan. The Nizamiyyah became renowned as the premier academic centers of the time, hosting professors like Imam al-Ghazzali.

Many Nizami students went on to be the greatest minds of their time, including the Persian poet Sa'di. The Nizami Order at Tarbiya Institute seeks to reconnect modern young Muslims with their intellectual legacy, thereby enabling them to fulfill their spiritual and intellectual potential through education and service to the community.

The Nizami Order was created to address the lack of structured Islamic education and support beyond the "Sunday school years," for the youth and young adults. Though the Nizami Majlis-ul-Ilm, or Majlis for short, began as just one Majlis in 2017, it now comprises seven youth groups, and two groups for young professionals and adults. It is at the heart of our efforts to assist the community in finding harmony between one's divine obligations and worldly responsibilities. Through seminar based learning, the Nizami Majlis fosters high-level Islamic education, discourse, and positive social activism.

The Nizami Order also aims to provide students with the tools to help them face the difficulties of being Muslim in a non-Muslim country. The youth of today face challenges that are very different from those of the youth in previous generations. Navigating through those challenges can sometimes be confusing, with the easy access to mis-information and the peer pressure all around. Through a combination of Islamic education and a strong Muslim identity, the Nizami Order aims to prepare students to appropriately navigate through situations that pertain to current day challenges that they may face.

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## MISSION

The Nizami Order at Tarbiya Institute provides a comprehensive course of study for the spiritual, emotional and intellectual growth of our students. A faith-based program specially curated for ages 12-22, the Nizami Order aims to cultivate the next generation of scholars and leaders in the community by training students to live morally, act wisely and lead compassionately in the footsteps of the Beloved (peace and blessings be upon him).

## VISION

Graduates of the Nizami Majlis-ul-Ilm will be well prepared to serve as leaders, teachers, and mentors in the community. Our students will be accomplished in matters of deen and dunya, and choose to serve their Creator in the manner that best befits them.

## VALUES

We aim to equip our students to have strong Muslim identities and to be capable citizens and self-aware worshippers.

### ***Educational Excellence***

We provide a comprehensive Islamic education that will aid our students to live their lives in accordance with the deen.

### ***Character Development***

We supplement our students' education with their mentors as examples of proper akhlaq. We provide a guide to students through their specific challenges as Muslim Americans through an Islamic lens and guidelines emulating the demeanor and akhlaq of the Prophet Mohammed (S).

### ***Building Bonds of Brotherhood/Sisterhood***

We foster a sense of brotherhood/sisterhood amongst our students, helping them develop life-long companionship with each other and their mentors. Our students become a support system for one another, aiding one another to stay on the path of righteousness.

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## ***Service to the Community***

We foster a sense of ownership of the community in our students by involving them in all types of volunteer activities within the masjid and around the community.

## ***Love for the Masjid***

We aim to instill in our students a love and connection to the masjid through the creation of positive experiences at the masjid with their peers.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. Equip students with critical thinking tools and foundational knowledge to understand traditional Islamic texts and to then implement what they learn.
2. Provide students with the skills, training and opportunities to embrace leadership roles through public service while learning to better understand their social responsibilities.
3. Offer a system of brotherhood and sisterhood to foster spiritual and emotional intelligence, while also providing a safe space to build healthier and long-lasting relationships.

## **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

Our faith is deeply rooted in rich intellectual traditions, but the pursuit of Islamic knowledge and discourse has dissipated in the last few generations. Children have structured education through the elementary years, but have no program designed to engage them in higher learning when their minds and hearts are at their most inquisitive. Not only that, but the years between middle school and college are where these youth need the most guidance, where they are attacked on all sides with fitna. This has left an entire generation of youth and young adults spiritually and intellectually atrophied. The Nizami Order Majlis-ul-Ilm is an answer to this fracture in the Islamic education system of our community. The Majlis seeks to revive the comprehensive study of the Islamic Sciences and its application, to foster a lifelong bond with their majlis peers, and to prepare them for leadership.

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## A DECADE OF LEARNING: THE NIZAMI PLAN

The Nizami Majlis at Tarbiya Institute is the only program in the area that serves as a consistent and well-structured bridge from Sunday school learning to a more sophisticated course of study at our Tarbiya Seminary. Many parents struggle to find the appropriate Islamic Education program for their children in the crucial teenage years, and the Nizami Majlis-ul-Ilm seeks to fill this void. The program consists of three phases, as follows:

**Phase 1-** A two-year program for students aged 12-14, this phase focuses on cultivating sisterhood/brotherhood to grow a love for Islam together.

**Phase 2-** For the next four years, adolescents aged 14-18 increase their spirituality by applying Islamic knowledge in their secular lives, as well as developing professional skills needed during high school and college.

**Phase 3-** This advanced course of study for ages 18-22 encourages students to build upon their bonds and Islamic knowledge by working towards giving back to the community through service.

Splitting the groups up into phases helps to provide customized and age-appropriate support for all levels of spiritual and intellectual development. Each phase builds on the previous one, and students will engage in a Decade of Education in Islamic Studies, receiving a certificate upon completion of the program. Our students will be able to then continue their education in Islamic knowledge at the Tarbiya Seminary as well as various Tarbiya Small Groups.

The Nizami Order provides students with the tools to help them face the difficulties of being Muslim in a non-Muslim country. The youth of today face challenges that are very different from those of the youth in previous generations. Navigating through those challenges can sometimes be confusing with the constant easy access to misinformation and peer pressure all around. Through a combination of Islamic education and a strong Muslim identity, the Nizami Order prepares students to appropriately navigate through youth-related situations that pertain to current day challenges that they may face.

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After thorough research, the Nizami Committee has developed a rigorous, challenging and ultimately rewarding course of study for the Majlis student. The subjects studied at each level are as follows:

- + Tafseer-ul-Quran
- + Fiqh us Sunnah
- + Aqeedah
- + Tazkiyah
- + Hadith
- + Seerah

## **2021 BREAK SCHEDULE**

In order to accommodate families going on holiday, and to provide Majlis Mentors with professional development training, there will be no Majlis-ul-Ilm meetings held in the following 10 weeks:

1. Winter Break: December 21st, 2020 -January 3rd, 2021
2. Spring Break: April 5th-11th
3. Eid-ul-Fitr Break: May 3rd-16th
4. Eid-ul-Adha Break: July 19th-25th
5. Labor Day break: September 3rd-9th
6. Thanksgiving Break: November 22nd-November 28th
7. Winter Break: December 20th, 2021 -January 2nd, 2022

## **MEMBERSHIP FEES**

To support the long term sustainability and growth of the program, students will be charged a nominal membership fee of \$100 per month. The fee will be used to cover expenses such as student events and field trips, as well as the administrative costs of running the program.

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## **OPTION TO FREEZE MEMBERSHIP**

In the event of unforeseen trips, family emergencies, or a planned family event, students may be granted the option to freeze their membership for a short period of time. During this pause in membership, students will not be expected to pay their monthly tuition, and their position in the Majlis will be secured until their return. Students must make-up all missed work before their return date. Please see the Membership Freeze Form on the following page; forms must be submitted to your Mentor, and will be pending approval from the Nizami Committee.

## **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Majlis supports the spiritual, emotional and physical growth of the student through study, social gatherings and volunteer opportunities. Once accepted into the program, students must meet, or exceed, the basic academic expectations and responsibilities of their Majlis, as established by their teacher. Additionally, all students are required to attend the events and activities planned for Majlis members. These gatherings and events build social bonds and propel students into leadership roles; participation is mandatory. Students in every group are expected to:

- +complete all required assignments, and conduct additional research as needed.
- +attend and participate in every majlis meeting and community event
- +actively participate and engage in every class
- +have no more than 4 legitimate, excused absences per year
- +be tardy no more than 8 times per year
- +perform required volunteer hours
- +exhibit leadership skills through community projects and public speaking
- +complete a final project at the end of each phase.

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## GRADING SYSTEM

Students will be assessed in the following categories:

- +attendance
- +participation and volunteerism
- +assignments/homework/projects

At the end of each year, students will receive a progress report. Teachers will use the following grading rubric to indicate the student's level of achievement:

- Novice--the student is producing far below average work, or no work
- Intermediate--the student is struggling, but making an effort
- Proficient--this is an average student
- Distinguished--this student is excelling in all subject categories
- Exemplary--this student is producing far above average work

## CERTIFICATION

At the conclusion of each Phase, students will be evaluated on their cumulative performance throughout the program. Upon receiving a passing grade, the student will be invited to join the next Phase.

## DISCIPLINARY POLICY

The goal of discipline is to help a student develop inner controls, so that the student may exhibit appropriate, respectful social behavior. Any conduct that goes against the basic Islamic ethical codes will be considered inappropriate.

The following is a list of misdemeanors for which the Nizami Order has a zero tolerance policy.

1. The use of profanity, vulgar language or obscene gestures
2. Fighting, inflicting harm or any type of harassment, physically or verbally
3. Theft
4. Damaging private property

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5. Name calling or social/racial slurs
  6. Bullying
  7. Cell phone usage during class
  8. Non-participation
  9. Chronic tardiness
  10. Disrespectful or discourteous behavior.

If a student commits three or more of the above misdemeanors, they will be put on academic probation, and the teacher will arrange a conference with the parents to create a Student Success Plan.

The possession of drugs or weapons is a serious offense, and warrants an immediate intervention meeting with the parents, Mentor and Nizami Order Coordinator to decide on the appropriate disciplinary action. The student will not be allowed to attend Majlis meetings until the disciplinary meeting takes place, and a decision has been made.

## **DRESS CODE**

The purpose of the Nizami Order dress code is to instill discipline and ensure an appropriate standard of grooming, hygiene and most importantly, modesty. Parents and students are responsible for making sure that the general appearance of the student is respectful, neat and clean. It is also important to remain mindful that most Majlis meetings and activities occur at the masjid.

The following provides dress requirements for all Nizami students:

1. Clothing should cover the entire body, including the full arms and legs.
2. Clothing should be modest, loose fitting and comfortable for prayer.
3. Clothing should not be see-through.
4. Clothing may not depict profane or explicit words or imagery.
5. Girls are encouraged to wear hijab, especially inside the masjid.

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The above dress code requirements are not all inclusive; Majlis teachers may use their discretion to prohibit a student from wearing certain apparel that they deem offensive or inappropriate.

## **Parental Involvement**

All Nizami parents are expected to be proactively involved in the education of their child. Parents have three primary responsibilities in the Nizami Order: to stay connected and informed, maintain communication with the teacher, and participate whenever possible.

### ***Stay Connected***

Countless research studies have shown that the best educational environment for the student is that in which the parent, student and educator are all working together as a team. By enrolling your child in the Majlis ul Ilm, you have already taken the first step to providing your child with the spiritual nourishment they need. If the parents are fully dedicated and respectful of the Majlis-ul-Ilm and the teacher, the students are more likely to follow suit. For younger students (Middle School age), it is recommended that parents supervise the completion of assignments and projects to the standard set by the teacher. Parents must embrace the responsibility to bring students to their classes regularly, and make the Majlis a priority among the student's extracurricular obligations.

### ***Maintain Communication***

All Majlis teachers will communicate with parents through a variety of mediums, including newsletters, blog posts and annual parent-teacher conferences. Parents and teachers must maintain ongoing two-way communication about the student's progress. Should any concerns arise with regard to the student's spiritual or emotional health, parents and teachers will work together to find the best solution for the student.

### ***Participate & Volunteer***

Whenever possible, parents are strongly encouraged to participate in Nizami Order events and field trips. Parents will also have the opportunity to attend parenting workshops offered at Tarbiya Institute at a free or reduced rate. Additionally each students' parent(s) will host the group at their home for dinner once a year, to allow families and students to develop lasting social bonds together.

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## A NOTE OF THANKS

Dear Parents,

We are honored that you've chosen the Nizami Order for the spiritual education of your child and the administrative staff and mentors do not take your trust lightly. We are all dedicated to providing your child with the highest quality, well-rounded Islamic education that, insha Allah, will transform them into mature, engaged Muslim adults, eager to serve their families, their communities and most of all their Lord.

Our Nizami mentors are all volunteers, and despite their own full-time jobs and personal lives, they commit to planning weekly sessions to inspire your child and gently guide them to achieving their utmost potential, in both deen and dunya. We expect our students to reciprocate this commitment to the program, and their mentors, and as a parent you play a very important role in encouraging that level of respect. Open communication between the parent, mentor and student is at the heart of our educational philosophy, to help every student succeed.

We thank you again for trusting us with your child's education. Insha Allah, together we can bring out the very best qualities in your child, and help them lead a life that is successful in matters of deen and dunya. May your children always be the coolness of your eyes, ameen.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jazak Allahu Khayran!

Best wishes,

Orooj Shahid

Nizami Order Coordinator

[o.shahid@tarbiya.org](mailto:o.shahid@tarbiya.org)

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## Nizami Order

### Request to Freeze Membership

Regular attendance and participation in the Majlis-ul-Ilm are required of all students. However, the Nizami Committee understands that students may need to pause their membership due to unforeseen circumstances or planned personal time, such as family holidays. Fill out the form below, and submit to your Majlis Mentor. Your request will be reviewed by the Nizami Committee, and you will be notified of approval/denial.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Majlis Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of Pausing Membership (exact dates)\*: \_\_\_\_\_

\*please note that this cannot exceed 3 months

Reason for requesting a pause in Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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*Nizami Office Use Only*

**Mentor's Recommendation:**

**Nizami Committee: (approved) or (denied)**

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_