



Collective Worship Policy

Date approved: - Autumn 2024

Date to be reviewed: - Autumn 2025

Governing Body Committee: - ESB

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (without a religious character)

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN OUR SCHOOLS

- It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. Collective worship is an educational activity, which is inclusive, involving pupils of all faiths and beliefs.
- We recognise that in asking our children to worship, we have to consider the background that our children come from so that the faith followed by our children's families, as well as our staff, is respected at all times. The Head Teacher is responsible for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing bodies.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- Collective worship is not the same as an assembly, though can take place in the same gathering. A school must have a daily act of Collective Worship, which can take place as a whole, a class or in small groups for shorter periods of time.
- A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring "collective" not "corporate" worship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.
- Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way, collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

WORSHIP OF A BROADLY CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

- The majority of acts of worship must be of a "broadly Christian character", and those that are, must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. The DfE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ. This must be provided for all registered pupils of compulsory school age or above.
- If we are to be inclusive in our worship when according a special status to Jesus Christ, and take the family backgrounds of all children into consideration, then all beliefs need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer. Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

VALUES AND AIMS

We believe that Collective Worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

Through our Collective Worship we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment for children to:

- become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community;
- grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in everyday situations and beliefs;
- explore the language which people use to express their feelings;
- deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them;
- grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school;
- respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus;
- acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether religious or not.

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of our schools. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular, school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community, which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

OBJECTIVES

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community;
- celebrate special occasions together;
- show concern for daily happenings in school life, the local community and wider world;
- share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within school;
- explore and review the variety of values, attitudes and standards, manifested in religions and society;
- reflect upon dimensions of human life - the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....;
- reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

PLANNING

We combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad, educational framework. We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

SONGS & MUSIC

Songs and music are a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and music genres. Likewise with the songs we sing, when we take time to consider carefully the lyrics and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to a song.

PRAYER

We feel that moments of reflection, or prayer, are good ways of enabling children to focus their thoughts. However, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to our prayers which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'And now in a moment of stillness'. In this way we are able to use prayers or reflections from many different traditions. It is not always necessary to have a prayer, as the use of moments of silence and reflection also provide opportunities for pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship, and are not obliged to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal. If a parent asks for a child to be wholly, or partly, excused from attending Collective Worship the school must comply until the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Head Teacher. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from Collective Worship and will not be discriminated against for doing so.