

Sheffield SACRE

Collective Worship Guidelines 2015: “Be Still and Share with Open Hearts” - A Broader Perspective for School Assemblies

Appendix 4: Collective Worship Policy Writing Framework

The text below is offered as a Writing Framework for schools to use in drafting and agreeing their Collective Worship Policy.

Rationale

The School Collective Worship Policy reflects and reinforces many of the school’s aims. The common strands are:

- care and support;
- respect and responsibility;
- reflective self-development;
- relationships.

In keeping with these aims, Collective Worship at XXXX School is planned to:

- contribute significantly to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- provide a worthwhile educational experience which takes account of pupils’ age, aptitude and family background;
- provide opportunities for staff, pupils and members of the wider community to contribute to the life of the School;
- provide opportunities for worshipping God, reverence, celebration and reflection; enable pupils to reflect on broadly Christian and other worthwhile values and beliefs;
- provide a worship experience that does not offend the integrity of the non-religious or those of different faiths;
- provide pupils with “something more than the obvious, something to wonder at, and something to respond to”.

The positive educational outcomes of Collective Worship at XXXX School include opportunities for:

- the whole community to celebrate;
- sharing and experiencing differences;
- building a sense of group identity;
- encouraging a sense of personal and social responsibility;
- a break from the busyness of life (for stillness and quiet);
- learning how to behave in a large social group;
- exploring feelings and emotions;
- learning how to perform in front of an audience;
- learning how to respond to a performance;
- making visible the school’s leadership;

- developing inner awareness.

Legal Requirements

The law requires the Headteacher and Governing Body of every school to provide a daily act of Collective Worship which, in community schools, should not be distinctive of the tradition and practice of particular religious denominations.

Schools are obliged to give their reasons if they feel they are not able to comply with this part of the law. Denominational schools should provide Collective Worship in line with their foundation.

Withdrawal from Collective Worship

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of worship and this is stated in the school prospectus and handbook. Teachers, including Headteachers, have the same right of withdrawal.

It is intended that consultation will take place before formal requests are made to withdraw from acts of worship. In the case of parents or teachers, contact needs to be made with the Headteacher. Guidance for new parents on non-participation in acts of Collective Worship is given in the school prospectus.

In community schools Collective Worship is to be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.' Denominational schools should provide Collective Worship in line with their foundation.

The programme of Collective Worship at this school is arranged so that in any one term most acts of Collective Worship will reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief and practice.

Content of the Collective Worship programme

According to the government guidance (**Circular 1/94**):

- 'Collective worship should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs' (**para 50, C1/94**).

This advice is put into practice in our programme in the following ways

- 'Worship must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power' (**para 57, C1/94**)
- Specific time is set aside for this activity and we recognise the importance of distinguishing the act of Collective Worship from other assembly activities. We attempt to distinguish this special time by (for example) lighting a candle/asking children to reflect quietly

- We also make 'space for the spirit' by using 'Diaries of Reflection' in some class assemblies. These also offer specific opportunities for reverence or veneration according to children's own beliefs and traditions.
- 'An act of worship which reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief need not contain only Christian material. It must, however, contain some elements which relate specifically to the traditions of Christian belief and which accord a special status to Jesus Christ' (**para 63, C1/94**).
- Material for assemblies comes from a wide variety of sources including Christian. Most assemblies in any term reflect traditions of Christian belief and the special status accorded to Jesus Christ.

Organisation of Collective Worship

It is for the school to decide how best, in its own context, pupils should take part in Collective Worship, e.g. in year groups, key stage groups, upper/lower school, tutor/class groups, whole school.

- 1. The Programme of acts of Collective Worship** is coordinated by ...
- 2. Year/House/Key Stage Assemblies are held once a fortnight.** These are taken by

Visitors have included

The assemblies generally follow themes that are aligned to the delivery of personal and social development programmes, although topical or other relevant issues may be picked up as appropriate. The content of these assemblies would be varied but include a significant Christian input within any term.

3. Tutor/Class Teacher-led Reflections, e.g., Diaries of Reflection

Each week pupils meet in tutor groups for this act of worship. Pupils reflect on statements, thoughts or ideas, provided or approved by tutors. Pupils may also contribute ideas for reflection.

A response may be made in diary form. Subject to usual conditions, these responses are confidential between the pupils and his/her tutor. Pupils who believe in God are invited to reflect that, through these thoughts, God may be helping them to discover the most important directions and values for their lives.

4. Whole School Assemblies

Once a week the School gathers for this assembly, in which achievements of pupils at the school are celebrated. Staff and pupils may contribute music, drama and dance. This assembly will normally provide opportunities for spiritual development.

5. Visitors

Visitors should understand the educational aims of Collective Worship at the school and the need to avoid any proselytising. Attempts to persuade pupils to adopt a

particular religious belief are not appropriate. In general the Headteacher is consulted before a visiting speaker is confirmed. Visitors should not speak about raising money for any particular cause(s) without the prior permission of the Headteacher.

6. Staff and Community Involvement in Collective Worship

Certain named individuals (names of staff, ministers, parents or friends of the school who are involved.....) are involved on a regular basis with the assembly programme. Other staff are given the opportunity of being involved in this programme every term.

Policy agreed by Board of Governors on (date)