



Lakeside
School
Learning for life

Collective Worship Policy

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

BACKGROUND

All our pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and so the collective worship has to be appropriate for the 'aptitudes' of these pupils.

The head teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Parents have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school will comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the headteacher. Teaching staff may also withdraw from collective worship.

Collective worship

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring "collective" not "corporate" worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. 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. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their 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 at this school 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 supporting 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 every day 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 it be religious or not

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. 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 the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school

- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, 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

In planning for collective worship the needs of our pupils must be placed at the heart of the process.

Classes are brought together for a time of quiet reflection, with the use of candles music and images.

We continue to have one whole school assembly a week when we hope that as many pupils as possible will be able to join for at least part of the time, enabling them to see the school community coming together, and help to gain a sense of identity with that community.

One teacher has the responsibility of planning the assemblies and ensures that all key festivals from all major faiths are explored and celebrated. Classes are able to show work they have been undertaking and themes which are relevant to the pupils such as family, kindness, friendship are explored.

We use a range of methods, including:

- Pupils' contributions
- Sacred and secular stories
- Dance/drama
- Music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points

Prayer

Prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We believe that our simple school prayer is suitable for people of all faiths enabling them to pray to their own God, and is concrete enough in substance to enable our pupils to understand the concept. The same prayer is used as our pupils thrive on routine and order.

Dear God,
Bless our school and everyone in it
that working together
and playing together
we may make our school a happy place

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupil
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
- A sense of occasion
- Good order
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil's experience

See SACRE Guidance and Protocols on Faith Visits and Visitors.

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/re/sacre/#visits>

See Hertfordshire Faith Communities Directory 2015

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/re/general/index.shtml#Faith>