

Mountfields Lodge Primary School



Collective Worship (Assemblies) Policy

Aim High, Reach for the Sky

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP (Assemblies) POLICY **for MOUNTFIELDS LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

INTRODUCTION:

Acts of Collective Worship offer an ideal opportunity to reinforce the ethos and aims of the School. Both learners and staff should leave the place of assembly feeling a sense of belonging to the School community.

We are a multi-faith school. Among the learners and staff at Mountfields Lodge, we have a broad spectrum of beliefs, including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, Jehovah's Witnesses and Brethren. We also have learners and staff who are humanists, agnostic and atheists.

If we believe that acts of Collective Worship are an opportunity to unite the whole School and create a harmonious atmosphere, we must ensure that, while complying with our statutory obligations, we reflect the pluralistic views of staff and learners. We understand that these obligations provide us with a degree of flexibility to ensure that our recognition and celebration of our pluralistic community can occur.

This policy is intended to ensure that the School meets its statutory obligations for Collective Worship. It is hoped that the policy will ensure high standards of content and organisation, with more learners becoming involved in the delivery of acts of worship, and a commitment by staff to the educational reasons for having such acts, and their usefulness in re-affirming the mission, vision and values of the School.

Collective Worship has considerable potential to bring together those elements of the broad and balanced curriculum required by Education Acts in respect of duty to promote 'the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of learners'.

The celebrating of the principal beliefs and values represented in 'the collective', which is the School and the society within which the School exists, can enrich the personal development of our learners and staff and give a positive challenge to the sense of direction common to all who share an understanding of life as a journey.

Our Collective Worship will provide an opportunity for all learners in the School to:

- celebrate the beauty of life and living
- develop their sense of awe and wonder at the world around us
- search for meaning in life
- encounter and reaffirm positive values
- explore right and wrong
- reflect on weighty concerns
- share the experiences of love, joy, hope, friendship, fear and sadness
- give thanks for that which is good and express regret for that which is not
- participate in the process of assigning worth
- experience a caring community
- encourage concern for others

1988 Education Reform Act.

The clauses on Collective Worship can be summarised as follows:

1. Collective Worship is seen as part of the School's balanced and broadly based curriculum.

2. The organisational requirements are that:
 - Collective Worship, or time to reflect, must be regular for all registered learners
 - it can be at any time of day
 - it can be in whatever grouping, or form, the School wishes
 - it should routinely take place on the School premises
3. The clauses relating to the style/content state that:
 - the majority of acts of Collective Worship each term should be mainly of a *broadly Christian* character, but many will be non-denominational
 - regard must be taken of the learners' ages, aptitudes and family background
 - parents retain the right to withdraw their children. Teachers' rights are also safeguarded.
4. It is the duty of the Head teacher – after consultation with the Governing body – to see that these arrangements are carried out.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP at Mountfields Lodge

Clarifying some terminology:

The terminology has been interpreted as follows:

- **collective** – recognises the pluralism (diversity) in the School reflecting the fact that our School has a collection of different individuals and beliefs.
- **worship** – is a word derived from the word 'worthship' and it includes that which the School community feels has worth or value or is worthwhile.
- the inclusion of the word **Christian** does not imply that the audience or leader has to be a Christian and the worship has to be Christian. The phrase 'broadly Christian' is intended to give learners of the School the opportunity of participating in a traditional and/or Christian part of this country's education system. Themes may therefore be non-Christian and non-religious.

THE AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Taking all this into consideration, the aims of Collective Worship at Mountfields Lodge are:

- to **unite the School** and **create a harmonious atmosphere** where the values of the School are emphasised and the ethos enhanced;
- to enable all learners to have the **opportunity to participate in different forms of worship**;
- to ensure that over any one academic year, **the majority of our Collective Worship is broadly Christian in their character** (*see 'terminology' above*), thereby enabling learners to examine and experience an important part of this country's heritage;
- to enable learners to participate in worship which **broadly represents other religious traditions**;
- to **address values and moral attitudes** common to all belief systems and to examine their relevance in the life of the child;
- to **contribute to the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of learners**;
- to **ensure that any act of worship is open** and does not assume belief by any participant and takes into account the age, aptitude and family background of those involved.

THE ORGANISATION OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- Acts of Collective Worship take place regularly throughout the week.
- All teachers are involved in Collective Worship at different times.

- Planning and the content of each act of Collective Worship is at the discretion of the HT, Departmental Leader or the CT
- It can include music, a song, a story or talk, a reading from a religious script, a period of reflection, a prayer...but does not have to comply with all of these elements
- Outside speakers who comply with our Collective Worship Policy will be welcomed.

Themes:

- Themes are related to, or relevant to, the school community and the community in which it exists.
- Themes may be related to the PSHE Curriculum or the wider whole-school Curriculum

Links with R.E. and the Curriculum are incorporated if possible and if relevant. Common themes may link R.E. and Collective Worship; the apt choice of story can link worship with current topic work e.g. 'Caring' = 'Florence Nightingale' = 'Victorians'. Assemblies can be followed up in the classroom by further discussion and emphasis throughout the day.

Times:

Monday

Age Gp or KS Assembly led by HT (or DHT).

Tuesday

Class-based Picture News/Global Assembly led by CT, prepared by HT

Wednesday

'Jigsaw' (PSHE/SMSC) Class-Based Reflection led by Class Teacher

Thursday

Age Gp or Yr Gp or Class-based Assembly led by CT (rotas prepared by Dept Leads)

Friday

Achievement Assembly (KS1 and KS2) led by DHT and/or AHT.

THE ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP

“There are times when worship will be quiet, contemplative and serene and others when laughter, music and dance will be the appropriate form of expression.”

Atmosphere is all-important in creating the right foundation for Collective Worship. Quiet, orderly behaviour and respectful attitudes on entering, leaving and throughout the assembly are expected. Staff enhance the atmosphere by their presence and participation.

Music is played at the beginning and end of the assembly. Pupils' attention may be drawn to it and a simple explanation given.

Stories and talks are carefully chosen to fulfill the objectives of Collective Worship. Stories of a religious or secular nature may be used whilst personal anecdote from pupils, teachers and visitors is effective in expressing that which is important in our own lives. Particular emphasis is laid upon helping children to understand themselves better, to develop empathy and to face up to moral issues.

Songs, if they are used, are chosen from a wide variety of traditional and modern hymns and choruses. Songs create the opportunity for children to express thoughts and feelings that are difficult to put into words; and they can provide a real source of pleasure.

Prayer and reflection: There must be a time of silent prayer OR reflection during the collective worship time for it to comply with legal requirements. Pupils must be allowed to respond in ways that are appropriate to them. In many areas there are children from a huge number of faiths; the leader of the collective worship must respect the variety of faiths and therefore mainly Christian based prayer is not suitable. We cannot pressurise children into praying, therefore we need to think of different strategies to introduce this part of the collective worship. The leader should make it clear when the time to be silent has come e.g.

- The leader can say 'I am going to say a prayer from the..... faith now and I want you to listen and think about what I am saying'
- 'I am going to say some words found in the inspirational writings of the..... community which I want you to think about quietly'
- The leader might light a candle to signify a time of silent reflection of may use an image or an artefact to for pupils to focus on.
- The leader might share an inspirational quote or saying and ask the pupils to reflect on that.

Different faith communities pray in different ways and in different positions, telling pupils to close their eyes and put their hands together is therefore *not* be suitable. It is be better to tell children to sit quietly and comfortably and to suggest that it may help to either close their eyes or focus on a visual aid you have chosen.

It should be remembered that it is the private response of each participant that constitutes the worship and not the repetition of prayers or the use of a particular deity's name. If each person has the opportunity to make their own response, then no one is excluded by their religious or non-religious attitudes.

Scripture sentences may be quoted from the Bible and, where appropriate, from sacred books and writings of other world faiths. Longer passages may be used as readings.

Presentation sets the tone within the act of worship. In keeping with the reverent atmosphere, use is also made of visual aids, artefacts, drama and demonstration.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All pupils have equal opportunity to take part in Collective Worship and to benefit from the experience. The school website (Key Information > Policies) informs parents of their right to withdraw pupils from Collective Worship. Such pupils are fully supervised in another part of the school.

MULTICULTURALISM

A variety of multicultural material is available throughout the school. Stories are shared and festivals celebrated and tolerance and understanding of other religions and beliefs is encouraged.

SPECIAL ASSEMBLIES AND VISITORS

Occasionally outside speakers, such as representatives from charitable organisations and faith communities will lead school assemblies.

RIGHTS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from collective worship on the grounds of religious conscience. The child should attend the 'assembly' part of the proceedings, i.e. the general school notices and information, but can then withdraw from the worship. Parents might wish to provide some material from their own faith for the child to study. Teachers also have the right of withdrawal on grounds of religious conscience. Should they wish to exercise their right – parents or teachers -

they must put their wishes in writing to the Head teacher. It is hoped, however, that our broad approach to the Act will be to the satisfaction of all concerned.

MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The Collective Worship Co-coordinator (the HT) has responsibility for managing the worship on a day-to-day basis, ensuring that all legal requirements are complied with. The co-coordinator also keeps in touch with national developments in school worship and acts in an advisory capacity, supporting colleagues.

The Coordinator should:

- write the school's policy for Collective Worship (in consultation with the head teacher if not the HT);
- ensure that all staff are aware of and use the policy document;
- review the policy as part of the School's Policy Review Schedule;
- promote delivery of an overall balanced programme of worship for the year.
- involve colleagues, pupils and visitors in worship;
- be responsible for ordering, maintaining and displaying any resources;
- manage any budget for Collective Worship;
- informally monitor and evaluate Collective Worship;
- arrange INSET for staff, as required

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Evaluation strategies used for assessing the outcomes of collective worship are:

- observation of children's attentiveness and level of interest shown during the session;
- feedback from children;
- observation of children's general behaviour in and around school and to one another