

Northowram Primary School Collective Worship Policy

RATIONALE

Our school recognises, as with all areas of the curriculum, that collective worship is an important educational experience, and that, as set down in the 1988 Education Reform Act, the nature of the collective worship in our school is mainly of a broadly Christian character.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Our school sees the time set aside for Collective Worship as being a time for sharing and togetherness; a sharing of knowledge, feelings and experience. It is seen as a time when we foster a sense of belonging to the school, to the wider community of our school and to the society and world in which we live.

GUIDELINES

- Children will take part in Collective Worship every day.
- Members of staff will be given the opportunity to lead Collective Worship.
- Pupils will be involved in activities and in leading collective worship
- Members of appropriate organisations will be invited to share in Collective Worship. Themes used will sometimes relate to the cycle of the seasons, the wonders of the world, the deeds of man and the celebration of religious festivals.
- Other key themes will be linked to human and British values. There will be a key and repeating focus on diversity, equalities and citizenship
- Themes will relate to the children's interests – classroom activities, the interests of the community and values upheld by individuals and other communities.
- The themes will be explored in a variety of ways, e.g. through story, prose, poetry, drama, art, music, discussion.
- There will be opportunity to recognise the distinctiveness of the many faiths and world views shared in our community.
- Collective worship will include the singing of hymns and songs and opportunities are given, both to join in with and to listen to prayers.
- Time will also be provided for silence and reflection.
- The School will meet sometimes as a whole and sometimes in smaller groups.
- Parents will be allowed to withdraw their children from assemblies after consultation.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring occurs informally through staff discussion with valued feedback from pupils, parents and visitors. It is the role of the named school governor with responsibility for religious education and collective worship to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. The governor concerned liaises with the Headteacher before reporting to the governors on religious education and collective worship, and will review this policy on an agreed timetable.

Guidance

We at Northowram Primary School believe that Collective Worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our vision, which explains the value 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.

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.

The Contribution of Collective Worship to aspects of the Curriculum

Collective Worship time is distinct from curriculum time. However, at Northowram Primary School, Collective Worship will at times feature aspects of the curriculum, which will enhance the experiences of pupils by reflecting on the work done in classes. At times, Collective Worship will enrich class-work through its consideration of subject matter from different perspectives.

The provision of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is in line with school policy, which informs our practice. To ensure Collective Worship provides opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development our assemblies will address a wide variety of themes and topics, use diverse stimuli and resources and provide pupils with the opportunity to respond on their own level.

We see collective 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, 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
- 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.

The Management of Collective Worship

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.

The Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is organised to take place in the school hall, the Atrium and in classes. Acts of worship will usually last for approximately 15 minutes although it is recognised that this time will be shortened or lengthened when it is appropriate. Daily assemblies for collective worship take place

Monday to Thursday. On Friday, aspects of collective worship (including the opportunity for reflection) are provided through circle time in all classes (year 1-6)

Leadership

Members of the school leadership team and visitors will also be involved in leading acts of worship. On a day to day basis, our Collective Worship assemblies are led by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

The PSHCE subject leader liaises with the leadership team to plan content and themes for assemblies. The content of all acts of Collective Worship will be considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils. Termly planning sheets list themes, special occasions and events, but will be flexible to allow the inclusion of current and topical issues.

At Northowram Primary School we evaluate our acts of worship using some of the following criteria:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- 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
- Staff affirmation
- A sense of challenge
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil's experience

Song/music

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. A range of music will be used to enhance all acts of collective worship especially as children enter and leave assemblies.

Prayer and Reflection

We feel that 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 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, listen to the words of a well-known Christian prayer or if you would like to make this prayer your own you can join in with amen at the end" In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions. It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach, which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. All visitors are issued with this policy and, unless otherwise agreed, will fit into the theme for the week.

The Act of Collective Worship

A variety of teaching and learning styles and active and interactive methods are appropriate in acts of Collective Worship. Any and all of the methods employed in the classroom can be used effectively in acts of Collective Worship. Leaders will choose the style/method and resources, which are appropriate to the content, the age, aptitude and the background of the pupils.

The content and process must be sufficiently stimulating in order to evoke a response in the individual. This may not be visual, but opportunity must be given to express this response through reflection and prayer. If announcements are to be given at the same time as an act of worship then they will be of a positive nature, which at times may enhance the act of worship itself. Announcements will be made preceding the act of worship and a clearly defined break between them and the act of worship will be made. (A change of personnel, music, a moment of silence etc)

Withdrawal

Any parent who objects to their child attending an act or acts of Collective Worship may request that their child is withdrawn. Parents are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher.

Special Needs

Collective Worship is available to all our pupils, regardless of their ability. Learning opportunities are matched to the individual needs of children with learning difficulties. Activities and debates challenge our most able pupils to formulate personal views based on evidence they research and discuss.

Equal Opportunities

All children have an entitlement to access to Collective Worship. All children will have access to appropriate resources within the school. These will reflect a multi-cultural society, without stereotyping or discrimination. All children will be given the opportunity to participate in all activities regardless of gender, race or ability.

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy and guidance will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis by all stakeholders of the school including pupils, parents, staff and governors.