



The Weatheralls Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

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Introduction

Worship has a wide range of meanings and forms of expression. For some people this might be devotion to a divine being, power or personal God; for others it might mean reflection on and understanding of those elements of life which are of value and worthwhile. Topics linked to other faiths will also be covered. Our prayers and forms of worship are inclusive and broadly non-denominational.

Aims and Philosophy

Collective worship at The Weatheralls Primary School has many aims which fit in with the ethos of our school and our diverse curriculum. It supports and enriches the pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Our aim is to allow the children experiences of the wider world so that they may accept and respect others and be aware of the wonders of the world around them.

Aims concerning reflection

- to provide an opportunity for pupils to experience worship
- to foster feelings such as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy
- to give memorable and enjoyable experiences
- to respond to the aesthetic - music, poetry, art, literature
- to explore a sense of the sacred
- to enable pupils to encounter the vocabulary of prayer

Aims concerning personal development

- to help pupils discover their place in the world
- to highlight and nurture spiritual development through experiencing worship
- to heighten awareness of the ultimate questions/realities of life and to provide the opportunity to reflect upon these
- to support the search for meaning
- to enable pupils to make effective use of silence in opportunities for reflection, contemplation, meditation and (where appropriate) prayer
- to enable pupils to experience ritual and the vocabulary of worship

Aims concerning community

- to reflect the range of beliefs held in school and in the wider community
- to reflect the school's nature as an inclusive community
- to promote a feeling of community in the school through a sharing of experiences and feelings
- to develop personal relationships and to encourage social and moral development
- to provide an opportunity to empathise with the needs of others
- to provide an opportunity for pupils to become acquainted with people from the local and wider community, including the local churches
- to encourage respect and care for the world by nurturing a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues

- to provide an opportunity to celebrate Christian and other festivals
- to enable pupils to appreciate their worth and value to the community and, for religious believers, to God
- to celebrate gifts, talents and achievements
- to establish and reinforce the shared values of the school community.

Legal Requirements

There is no legal requirement to have a Collective Worship Policy, however, this policy will set out the basis on which The Weatheralls Primary School will offer collective worship.

The headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the Advisory Body.

Pupils may be withdrawn from collective worship by their parents on religious grounds. Parents who wish to withdraw their child from collective worship are requested to meet with or write to the headteacher in order to do this. Teachers also may withdraw from collective worship.

The main requirements are:

- (a) worship should be held daily but may be at any time of day;
- (b) it may be for different age groups or in different school groups and need not be for the whole school together;
- (c) it shall be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character (See Appendix 1)”. However, it should still be non-denominational. A broadly Christian act of worship may include material from another faith;
- (d) worship shall be appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils;
- (e) where there are substantial numbers of pupils of another faith, the school may apply for a determination from the SACRE - that the requirement for worship to be mainly Christian need not apply;
- (f) until 1998 collective worship had to take place on the school premises; now acts of worship in other venues such as churches and other places of worship are accepted (School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Schedule 20:2 (6) and (7)).

Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective worship involves members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly every day. These assemblies normally involve all of the pupils in the school. Assemblies will usually last about 20 minutes. We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate manner. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully.

Our assemblies also reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage children to participate by holding Celebration Assemblies. These assemblies also provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school and to celebrate them together. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school - that all children and their achievements are valued and that we strive to achieve our 'Personal Best'.

Assemblies are conducted by members of teaching staff and twice every half-term by a visiting member of the local clergy. Sometimes they are led by visitors to the school e.g. the GenR8 team from local churches or charities. Children will also be encouraged to lead assemblies or join in demonstrations or role plays.

Assemblies are planned around themes. Themes are values based which allow for flexibility and variety of delivery and will also include the major religious and cultural festivals. Each assembly will start with a brief introduction focusing on an area of Cultural Capital (for example music, art, drama, etc.). Some assemblies may focus on a British Value whilst others may have a safeguarding theme (e.g. road or online safety). In addition, an assembly may have a focus on a particular learning skill or attitude such as perseverance or teamwork (in line with our Class Dojo metacognition points).

For Harvest Festival, Christingle and Easter the assemblies are held in school at The Weatheralls. Parents and carers are invited to attend a class assembly once a year. A member of staff from each age phase will attend the fortnightly assembly led by the visiting clergy and those held in the Parish Church.

Where possible, collective worship will use multimedia to include images, videos and songs to provide an immersive experience. Organisers may use artefacts or props to bring a subject to life.

Visitors may attend and/or lead assemblies. The Collective Worship Coordinator will take the lead in briefing such visitors and coordinating their visit in accordance with the guidance found in Cambridgeshire County Council Guidance for Schools on Collective Worship and the Trust's Visiting Speakers policy. Visitors should not be expected to attend an assembly without adequate staff support in advance of and during the assembly.

The Senior Management Team will develop a Long-Term Plan for Collective Worship in the form of a timetable. This will show the themes to be covered during Collective Worship. The timetable and electronic resources used during the assembly, for example slides, will be kept in the school shared files.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

It is the role of the Advisory Body to monitor and review the policy and practice of collective worship in the school. The school will review this policy every three years and report annually to the Advisory Body on its implementation and effectiveness.

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Appendix 1

Wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character ...

1. 'Wholly or mainly' suggests that whilst all acts of worship may be of a 'broadly Christian' character, they do not all have to be. Circular 1/94 says that 'mainly' refers to a majority of acts of worship in one term. If this is considered on a weekly basis, three out of five acts of worship can be broadly Christian, whilst two a week need not try to meet this requirement. For example, in a school where once each week there is a presentation by a class based on work done, teachers could be released from having to ensure that this was broadly Christian (though in fact it may turn out to be so). Or a school with a number of pupils from another faith could each week have an act of worship for all pupils which was broadly of that faith.
2. 'Broadly Christian' refers to the broad traditions of Christian belief, and should be interpreted in connection with the requirement for the worship to be appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils. It does not require that inappropriate materials be used just because they are Christian.

References

Cambridgeshire County Council Guidance for Schools on Collective Worship