



Collective Worship Policy

June 2016

Version	Date	Author	Status	Summary
1.0	June 2016	W. Southgate	Approved	Additional detail on the requirements of the 1998 Education Reform Act.

Last Reviewed By: W. Southgate

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Collective Worship in Schools - Legal Position

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils” (1998 Education Reform Act).

The headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the headteacher. The school has the responsibility to ensure that the children withdrawn are safe and supervised. The school is not required to provide alternative collective worship, but parents may provide an alternative if they wish. Parents can take their children off the school premises for alternative worship as long as it does not interfere with the child’s education provision. Teachers may also withdraw from worship.

Rationale for Collective Worship at Southwood Infant School

Children attending Southwood Infant School come from a range of religious and non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in asking our children to worship, we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.

We aim for collective worship to be an integral part of the curriculum, reflecting the ethos of the school and making cross-curricular links. Our worship is planned around themes which are based on values which are broadly Christian in character. Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all faiths. It is important to concentrate on these characteristics as well as those specific to Christianity so, for example, we will explore themes such as honesty, tolerance, respect for others, perseverance, in our collective worship.

The themes explored aim to contribute to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and will link to current events and learning in the classroom.

Defining Collective worship

Worship from 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 1988 Education Reform Act states that collective worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.” This means that over half (51% or more) of the assemblies provided over an entire year should reflect the broad traditions of a Christian belief. Therefore, at Southwood the majority of acts of worship will be of a “broadly Christian character” and will reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Assemblies over the year will include some of the following:

- stories from the bible, both Old and New Testament
- stories about notable Christians
- information about Christian practice, such as prayer and charity
- Christian festivals
- secular and religious stories with a Christian moral message
- Christian artefacts and images

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.

Therefore, children are invited to join in with worship should they choose to do so or alternatively, to take a moment for reflection if they do not wish to take part in our prayer.

Aims of Collective Worship

At Southwood Infant School we believe 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 daily collective worship, we aim to instil in children a sense of enthusiasm for caring and sharing; a strong sense of community; a sense of awe and wonder; an opportunity to experience stillness and calmness during which they can reflect on our themes; and an opportunity to celebrate and worship.

Furthermore we aim:

- To develop knowledge of the values, beliefs, traditions and patterns of worship of the Christian faith.
- To develop awareness of others' beliefs, cultures, patterns of worship, ceremonies and festivals.
- To develop spiritual awareness and to provide space and time to pause for reflection and stillness.
- To provide a focus for the school community each day involving its members as fully as possible.
- To develop a sense of belonging to our broader community by marking and celebrating special events and achievements and to provide opportunities for parents, other family members and governors to be invited to participate.
- To encourage children to raise questions and develop their thinking about their place in the world, their relationships with others and the needs of others.
- To enable children to reflect upon social and moral values.
- To make children aware of the wonder and beauty of the world.
- To give children an opportunity to respond in a positive manner personally or collectively, in thought, word or silence, by exploration, appreciation, or observation, or through performances such as music, drama or dance.
- To provide an opportunity to appreciate the symbolism, language and actions of religious worship through observation or participation.

Organisation

At Southwood Infant School, we regard collective worship as a special time and encourage children to listen carefully and respond thoughtfully to the theme of the day. We provide opportunities for children to participate in prayer and hymns and create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and sometimes candles or other objects as a focal point for the attention of the children.

Monday	Whole school Assembly led by Headteacher
Tuesday	Whole school Assembly led by Clergy or Senior Leadership
Wednesday	Class Assembly led by teachers
Thursday	Whole school singing Assembly led by teachers
Friday	Whole school celebration Assembly Headteacher

Every effort will be made to involve visitors from charitable organisations, other denominations and the wider community.

The school will come together each Friday to celebrate the achievements of the children. Staff will nominate children for their achievements in behaviour and work.

We take the themes of our assemblies from a variety of sources, including the traditions of the Christian faith and we often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies reflect on the teachings of other faiths and also build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum.

Our assemblies also reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies by showing their work to the other children and raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised.

Responsibilities of staff leading assemblies:

- To plan assemblies following the weekly theme, making them clearly structured and including a variety of music, talk, story, children's activity, a hymn, a visual focus or illustration, a prayer or reflection and a conclusion.
- To conduct assemblies in a calm and peaceful atmosphere with a sense of reverence.
- To make children aware of the wonder and beauty of the world.
- To raise questions and develop children's thinking about their place in the world, their relationships with others and the needs of others.
- To help children understand that people have different beliefs which they express in a variety of ceremonies, celebrations and festivals.

Responsibilities of the Collective Worship Leader:

- To plan for Collective Worship at the end of each term in readiness for the following term
- To adapt the plan in response to local, national or world events
- To keep up-to-date with recent publications and developments in the thinking on Collective Worship
- To liaise with the Clergy

Responsibilities of the Headteacher:

To ensure that the legal requirements of the 1998 Education Reform Act are met and that time and resources are available, enabling implementation of this policy.

Reviewed: June 2016

Next review date June 2019

