

Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary Schools

Collective Worship Policy

November 2022

INTRODUCTION

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”.

Families who send their children to this school are from a range of faith 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.

The Executive Headteacher 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Head of School.

All teachers, including the Head of School, have the right of withdrawal from the Act of Collective Worship, but the Headteacher, should he or she wish exercise this right, maintains statutory accountability for Acts of Collective Worship in our schools.

This right of withdrawal does not extend to assemblies.

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. 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.

At our schools, we interpret this as collective worship which promotes values that Christians believe to be important. These may be, and often are, values held to be important by other faiths as well. It can mean incorporating elements that Christians might recognise from their worship, e.g. songs, music, stories, learning from the good example of others, readings from holy books.

VALUES AND AIMS

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.

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 everyday 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 believe that collective worship is important because it:

- Allows a pause for reflection and stillness in the midst of the pressure of the school day;
- Provides a rhythm to the life of the school by marking and celebrating special occasions and achievements;
- Facilitates the development of a sense of community - of belonging and sharing;
- Encourages pupils to learn how to be part of large and small gatherings, as well as offering opportunities to perform and respond to a presentation of readings, dance, drama or prayer.

We see school worship allows 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.

TIMETABLE

In this school we organise our acts of worship as follows:

- Monday morning: *Thought for the Week* is posted on the school blog
- Monday: KS1 and KS2 assemblies first thing in the morning.
- Friday: KS1 and KS2 assemblies first thing in the morning.
- All classes end the day with ten minutes of reflection.

The Leadership Team usually leads the assemblies, with a rota of other staff supporting this. The Head of School plans out the themes for each week in a termly assembly plan. These themes encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar.

When children are given the opportunity to reflect during Collective Worship, staff will indicate this by saying words to the effect of: "Now is the time for us to reflect".

On occasions, visitors may be invited to lead the collective worship (for example the local church). The themes for these assemblies are agreed in advance with the Head of School, and the visitor is always supported by a member of staff.

GOVERNORS

This collective worship policy has been shared with and agreed by the Governing Body who share responsibility for ensuring that the law is met with the Executive Headteacher.