

Greenhaugh First School

Collective Worship Policy

Introduction

The Collective Worship Policy at Greenhaugh First School pays due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken account of the guidance offered by the LEA through its Standing Advisory Council on religious Education (SACRE).

Policy Statement

This worship policy:

- reflects the law
- strengthens the community ethos of the school.

Collective Worship will take place daily and will be appropriate to all pupils of any religion or none, to enable them to be present and take part as appropriate. It is an opportunity for pupils to celebrate their own achievements, as well as those of the school and the community. All present should feel valued whatever their faith or personal beliefs. Under no circumstances will pupils be asked to accept beliefs that are contrary to their family background.

- Acts of Collective Worship will take place at clearly designated times of day and will take place daily, sometimes as a whole school, or as a key stage, year group or class.
- They will reflect the beliefs and backgrounds of individual pupils and encourage a voluntary response from pupils
- School worship should acknowledge and respect the responses of individual pupils and provide opportunities for them to express their feelings such as delight at life, wonder, joy, rejoicing and sorrow
- Acts of worship will encourage pupils to consider their own place in the community; help understand the importance of British Values and how they shape us in terms of being responsible citizens.

The Legal Requirements

All maintained schools must provide Collective Worship for all pupils.

- Collective Worship must be offered daily, but may be offered at any time during the school day
- It can be a single act for all pupils, or separate acts for any normal grouping of pupils e.g. a class, key stage, or a year
- The Headteacher, in consultation with the governing body, has the responsibility for making arrangements for worship
- Most of the acts of worship in any one term must be of a wholly, or mainly, of a broadly Christian character
- The way in which this 'Christian character' is defined must be decided by each individual school, with regard to the pupils' family background, ages and aptitudes. Greenhaugh First School includes pupils from a range of faith backgrounds including Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism as well as pupils with no religious beliefs.
- No act of worship should be distinctive of any particular (Christian) denomination e.g. it should not have a strong Church of England content, or Catholic content - it should be 'ecumenical'
- Acts of worship can include worship which is of a broadly Christian character; which is broadly in the tradition of another religion (as long as this is only a minority of acts of worship in any one school term); which contain elements drawn from a number of faiths

Parents may withdraw their children from Collective Worship on grounds of conscience, should they wish to do so, but we believe that Collective Worship is inclusive and beneficial for all pupils. It is hoped that no child will have to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. If parents/carers wish to withdraw their child they should discuss this with the Headteacher. Where a decision is made to withdraw, arrangements will be made for the child to be supervised elsewhere during the act of worship.

Definition of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is a time when the whole school, regardless of their race, gender, age or abilities, meet together in order to consider and reflect on common interests, issues and concerns, this usually set within the context of ‘assemblies’ which may also contain other features beside those required for Collective Worship. It offers all pupils an opportunity to worship in their own way through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupil’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Daily collective worship is mainly of a broadly Christian character.

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 worth. Whilst recognising our statutory duty our assemblies reflect this diversity. Our prayers and forms of worship are inclusive and broadly non-denominational.

Aims of Collective Worship

Through our acts of Collective Worship, we aim to:

- Bring staff and children together in an act of fellowship, where we share values and can reinforce positive attitudes.
- Create an atmosphere where those who wish to worship may do so.
- Encourage those present to have confidence in their own beliefs and traditions, and to value those of other people.
- Provide opportunities for reflection and encourage pupils to be reflective.
- Increase awareness of the existence of a deeper meaning to life.
- Offer a range of different forms of worship that generations the world over have found helpful in their spiritual development e.g. prayer, praise, reflection, a sense of awe and wonder, the ‘tingle-factor’.
- Celebrate all that is good about life, such as beauty (especially in nature and our surroundings), causes for joy (birthdays and other excitements), achievements etc.
- Ensure as far as possible, that the experiences provided are relevant to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the children.
- Provide adequate resources: literature, music, artefacts and other visual stimuli, and guest speakers.

Our Collective Worship is conducted in a manner which is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school community.

The Contribution of Collective Worship to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

One of the key aims of Collective Worship is to offer pupils opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Spiritual Development is promoted by:

- guided reflection
- consideration of a variety of beliefs, values and feelings
- appreciation of aspects of life which have special meaning and which
- contribute to a sense of awe and wonder

Moral Development is promoted by:

- consideration of moral codes found in school, in religions and in society
- consideration of relationships
- encouraging empathy by the consideration of moral issues from different perspectives

Social Development is promoted by:

- coming together as a school / class group
- the celebration of special achievements
- bringing visitors into school from the community
- sharing values and matters of concern

Cultural Development is promoted by:

- using music, art, drama, story and artefacts from a range of cultural backgrounds
- exploring and celebrating aspects of religion and culture

Organisation

We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. The children understand 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. These assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements and to celebrate them together. They also play an important part promoting the climate of consideration for others and encouraging good behaviour, values held highly at Greenhaugh First School.

Collective Worship takes place in either of the classrooms, or in the school hall. In suitable weather, the outdoor environment is used including the outdoor classroom, and on occasion St Aidan's Church at Thorneyburn. Usually the children will all be together, but year groups may sometimes be split according to the appropriateness of the content. Each member of the teaching staff takes it in turns to deliver the act of collective worship, ensuring a range of styles throughout the week. The act of Collective Worship usually lasts for approximately fifteen minutes and is within the school day; however the time of day and duration can be varied when it is appropriate.

Planning, recording and evaluating

The themes for Collective Worship are often taken from the Christian faith and frequently reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar such as Harvest Festival, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc. Important festivals, events and traditions from other main religions within the UK (Islam, Judaism, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist), Saint days and other local and world events, will also form the focus for acts of Collective Worship and give education in awareness and understanding as they occur throughout the year.

A calendar will be used to plan for multi faith events. This may be subject to change due to unforeseen events. Resources will take the form of books, stories, poems etc. signposted in a Collective Worship File (kept in the Hall). We will also use the interactive white boards and projectors where appropriate, drama, art equipment, music, dance, the school grounds and food. Religious pictures and artefacts will provide a visual stimulus, and will be linked to the visual display table in the hall.

So that we can record and evaluate, teachers will listen when children try to express themselves, and will provide opportunities for feedback such as class council/circle times.

Monitoring

All members of staff and Governors are responsible for the monitoring of Collective Worship across the whole school.