Camp School
Collective Worship Policy

Approved by Governing Body: January 2024 Next review: January 2027

[Based on Herts County Council Model Policy for Collective Worship in Community Schools (without a religious character)]

Introduction and Background

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. This may comprise of a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts of worship for pupils in different age or school groups.

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. 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 Head teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily act of collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Parents of pupils have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their children 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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 seeks to exercise this right should consult the Head Teacher. Teachers may also withdraw from worship.

The school is also required to provide Religious Education in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; this is the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023-2028 (https://thegrid.org.uk/assets/hertfordshire-agreed-syllabus-religious-education-2023-2028-v3.pdf). The agreed syllabus provides the statutory requirements for RE in Maintained schools and Voluntary Controlled schools, and is recommended for Voluntary Aided schools, Academies and Free Schools to ensure consistency and coherence in the entitlement of all Hertfordshire pupils.

Religious Education and the daily act of collective workshop are kept completely separate in the school.

Collective Worship

Worship from within 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, values 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 many faiths or of none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

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. If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according to a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

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.

Our 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 that 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 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 every day 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 feels involved. In particular, it helps develop the feeling of belonging to a community that is essential for personal development and growth.

Taking account of the religious backgrounds of the children at Camp School we base our collective worship on values that are of a broadly Christian character, but which are also central to Islam and other belief systems. The majority of our families describe themselves as non-religious (36%) or did not provide any information about their religious beliefs (18%); with 32% stating that they are Christian, 10% as Muslim and 4% as following other religions.

Objectives:

- To develop in the children an interest and concern for members of the school community through an understanding of each other's personal worth, uniqueness and identity.
- Show concern for daily changes and events in school, the local community and the wider world.
- Recognise and appreciate the achievement of others
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Teach respect for and explore the value systems, attitudes, beliefs and practices of different faith communities
- Reflect on and, when appropriate, empathise with the richness of life's experiences e.g. the wonderful, beautiful, humorous, heroic, tragic, sorrowful, hopeful and fearful
- Demonstrate that life involves us all in a process of choice making
- Engender a sense of awe, wonder and mystery to the known and unknown world around us
- Consider pattern, order, change, transience and purpose in the wider framework of life.

Content and Planning

Each half term we will focus on different values in assemblies, based upon the topics/themes the school's PSHCE+ (Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic education) curriculum. These values may be illustrated through stories, visitors, contributions from children, drama, dance, art, artefacts, music/songs and poetry.

The PSHCE+ themes are:

- Settle in to learn
- Showing kindness
- Learning to learn for the future
- Staying safe
- Being a caring citizen
- Health and relationships.

Singing/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of songs and music from which to draw from, and they are taken from a variety of cultures and types. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme and songs will be carefully chosen to avoid those that make a faith statement.

Prayers are usually silent thought or reflection about a theme that has been explored in an assembly.

We also aim to use some of our assemblies to celebrate some festivals from a variety of religions and cultures throughout the year. These may include: Christmas, Easter, Eid, Diwali, Harvest Festival and Chinese New Year.

Assemblies usually held each week are as follows:

Monday	Key Stage Assemblies
Tuesday	Key Stage Assemblies
Wednesday	Whole School Singing assembly
Thursday	Sharing Assembly – Classes take turns to celebrate something that they have done in class linked to a particular subject.
Friday	Whole School Celebration Assembly – to acknowledge children who have shown examples of the value in practice or have made a significant effort in their learning or behaviour.

The head teacher, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, usually leads the whole school assembly on a Friday, with a rota of other staff leading assemblies on other days. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in both the planning and leadership of some assemblies: e.g. School Council, Eco Committee, Sports Council and Junior Travel Ambassadors.

Children in Foundation Stage take part in a moment of reflection each day and join assemblies when appropriate.

Visitors and Visits

We appreciate the value visitors can bring to assemblies. All visitors are briefed about the school and the content of their input for a visit or an assembly is discussed in advance. We also aim to give children opportunities to visit places of worship through links that the school has established with the local community. Again, this is done sensitively to encourage the development of knowledge and understanding of diverse groups.

For further info/guidance:

Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE) 2023 – 2028

https://thegrid.org.uk/teaching-and-learning/religious-education-and-sacre/hertfordshire-agreed-syllabus-for-religious-education

Collective Worship Guidance - SACRE

https://thegrid.org.uk/assets/collective-worship-guidance-sacre.pdf

SACRE Guidance and Protocols on Faith Visits and Visitors

https://thegrid.org.uk/teaching-and-learning/religious-education-and-sacre/visits-and-visitors