



HARTSBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mission Statement: 'Valuing Potential, Creating Opportunities'

Collective Worship Policy in a Community School (without a religious character)

This policy to be read in conjunction with Assessment Policy, Inclusion Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Teaching & Learning Policy, RE Policy

POLICY REVIEW

This procedure has been agreed by the staff and Governors and will be reviewed in line with the school's cycle of review.

DATE OF POLICY	September 2023	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	September 2026
MONITORED BY	SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE		

VISION

We aim to be a school where the children are at the centre of everything that we do. Decisions that we make around the curriculum and school life are carefully considered to reflect the current needs of the children. Mental health is balanced with their academic needs to nurture the whole child.

CONTEXT TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT OUR SCHOOL (RATIONALE)

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".

The most represented religion in our school community is Judaism, with 45% of our families identifying as Jewish (this is over twice as many as the next largest group). In total, there are 6 religious groups represented at Hartsbourne, as well as one group identifying as 'No Religion' and another group who refused to provide the information. We recognise that in asking children to worship we have to consider the background that they come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or show bias toward one religion over another. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times.

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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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. Teachers may also withdraw from worship.

DEFINITIONS

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 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. 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. Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all faiths. It is important to concentrate on these similarities as well as those specific to Christianity.

VALUES AND AIMS

We believe at this school 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 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 the 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 school worship is an educational opportunity and we use this time to encourage 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, 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, service to God and other people.

PLANNING

In this school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. The school community meets together three times a week with one day allocated to a class assembly and another allocated to music assemblies within specific key stages. In deference to their age and type of educational provision, children in Reception and Year 1 will not join whole-school assemblies from the start of the year, but start to attend at a time deemed suitable by class teachers and senior leaders. Daily collective worship for children in these classes will be managed by respective class teachers.

The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher usually lead the whole school worship once a week, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days. Assemblies throughout the year encompass topical news stories, religious festivals, known national or international events, the school 'learning gems' as a vehicle to promote positive learning behaviour), pupil achievement, both individually and collectively, British Values and aspects taken from the school calendar.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

VALUING DIVERSITY

Music

Music and singing are powerful means of creating the right atmosphere to unify and uplift the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Music and songs will be chosen carefully to ensure that no offense is caused to any individual or group.

Prayer

We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We do not lead a religious prayer during collective worship. Instead we will often ask children to sit quietly for 'A



moment of reflection'. It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. Visitors will be directed to our policies available on the school website. We aim to invite visitors to school from a wide range of religions.