

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

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Policy Aims and Ethos

Aim of Collective Worship

The word worship comes from the Anglo Saxon word ‘weorthscipe’ and can be defined as either ‘the adoration of God or a Supreme Being’ or ‘to honour, value and praise someone or something of worth’. In the context of worship in school, the aim is to provide experiences which deepen the inner senses and engender feelings of self worth and the uniqueness of the individual. Giving pupils a purpose and meaning to life, awe and wonder of the natural world, reverence and respect and a sense of belonging to the community.

The aim is to create an atmosphere in which genuine worship may take place and where pupils’ own beliefs are valued and each one has the opportunity to respond in their own way.

Children should be encouraged to reflect on the ways in which worship affects the values, attitudes and spiritual dimensions of themselves, the learning community and society. It should be a celebration and a time for reflecting on things that have worth and meaning to the community.

Links to Legislation

The Law on Collective Worship

The Education Reform Act of 1988 sets out the law regarding collective worship and Circular 1/94 provides further guidance.

The law states that collective worship in schools should aim to:

- provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God
- consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs
- encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of the worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered
- develop a community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.

Collective worship is intended to be appropriate for, and to include, all pupils attending a school, regardless of their own personal faith. Collective worship in schools differs from the corporate worship of believers of a particular faith.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from collective worship on the grounds of religious conscience. The child should attend the ‘assembly’ part of the proceedings, i.e. the general school notices and information, but can then withdraw from the worship. Parents might wish to provide some material from their own faith for the child to study. Teachers also have the right of withdrawal on grounds of religious conscience, but not on grounds of needing some free time.

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Definitions

Collective

The 'collective' part can take on different meanings depending on the setting. Ideally the whole school, all pupils and staff would be involved. However, it is often not possible to gather all at once and so there are variations in numbers, from small tutor groups to a class to a year group up to the whole learning community. The 1988 Education Act defines a school group as any group or combination of groups in which pupils are taught or take part in other school activities: this is not a group reflecting particular religious beliefs. The main point being that all members should be involved in some way in a daily act of worship, unless withdrawn by parents for reasons of conscience.

Worship

The Trust believe that the idea of collective worship is important but that the idea of collectively coming together can be interpreted as openly as possible so as to include all members of the learning community whether they have a faith or not. Each school within the Trust will use the guidance set in this policy and the suggestions in appendix 2 to ensure that each individual school caters for it's individual school community.

The Trust also believe that taking part in the collective worship process is more than passively attending; the content of the worship should elicit some response from the students.

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Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural

Ofsted reports on collective worship within the context of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors assess the extent of the support and enhancement of the corporate life of the school and the importance of celebrating that which is worthy and good within the school.

The following accounts of what is involved in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are offered as suggestions for schools to adapt as they wish.

To promote pupils' spiritual development is actively to encourage:

- the growth of pupils' inner life, their capacity to relate to others and their non-material well-being; for example, their self-respect, their creativity, their will to achieve their full potential and their ability to ask, and try to find answers to, life's major questions, including questions about the existence and nature of God;
- pupils' acquisition of the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and qualities they need to foster their own inner lives and non-material well-being throughout life.

To promote pupils' moral development is actively to encourage:

- pupils' understanding of the difference between right and wrong, the will to do what is right and their willingness to consider others with concern and compassion;
- pupils' acquisition of the knowledge, understanding, skills, qualities and attitudes they need to do what is right and to cope with moral conflict.

To promote pupils' social development is actively to encourage:

- pupils' understanding of the responsibilities and rights of being a member of families and various communities, local, national and global;
- pupils' acquisition of the knowledge, understanding, skills, qualities and attitudes they need to live up to these responsibilities and exercise these rights.

To promote pupils' cultural development is actively to encourage:

- pupils' understanding of the cultural influences that affect them and others, a sense of belonging to local, regional, national, global cultures, and their appreciation and response to a range of aesthetic experiences;
- pupils' acquisition of the knowledge, understanding, skills, qualities and attitudes they need to understand, appreciate and contribute to their own and different cultures.

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Appendix 1 – Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Headteacher / Headteacher of each school will determine the policy of the school and ensure compliance with legislation.

The Executive Headteacher / Headteacher of each school will nominate a member of the school staff to lead on the provision for collective worship and ensure that they understand and follow the guidance as set in this policy.

School	Nominated School Lead
Royal Greenwich Trust School	
St Paul's Way Trust School	

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Appendix 2 – Procedures and Processes

Guidance on a Collective Worship Policy

Each School within the Trust will implement their own method of Collective Worship based upon the principles contained within this policy. Areas that each school may wish to consider as part of that include;

- A philosophical statement
- The legal requirements, including the right of withdrawal by parents and teachers
- Time: at what time each day will collective worship take place and for how long *
- Content of each day and approach i.e. praise through song, visitor, teacher led, praise, class presentation etc.
- Planning: who plans the worship, is there a specific co-ordinator, what are the themes used and what resources and books will be used?
- How staff, pupils and visitors contribute to collective worship
- Music: planning and what type? Live music, selection of CDs classical, modern, jazz, religious etc
- How a record of the themes and content will be kept
- Information for parents on the right to withdraw their child from collective worship, what provision the school is able to make and what the parent might provide for the withdrawn child
- Information on the staff right of withdrawal
- Future plans and date of review
- Not essential, but helpful as an appendix, is a planning pro-forma for members of staff so that planning and delivery are consistent.

* There is no nationally agreed length of time for collective. Collective Worship can be held at any time during the school day.

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Approval Signature

Signature of Chair _____

Date _____

Print name _____

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