

# Simmondley Primary School

## Policy on Collective Worship

### Guidance - Collective worship in Derbyshire Schools

#### The Legal Requirements

1. By law, all pupils (5 - 18) are required to take part in an act of Collective Worship on each school day. Pupils in special schools should take part in an act of Collective Worship as far as it is practicable.
2. Collective Worship may be held at any time during the school day.
3. Separate acts of Collective Worship may be arranged for different age or school groupings.
4. Collective Worship must take place on school premises, but governors of aided and religious foundation schools may on special occasions arrange Collective Worship elsewhere.
5. Most acts of Collective Worship taking place in any one term in a community or voluntary controlled or a non-religious foundation school must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. That is, the worship must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief and community life without being distinctive of any one Christian denomination.
6. Collective Worship must be appropriate, having regard to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the pupils.
7. Where worship which is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character is inappropriate (e.g. in a foundations stage class where the majority of pupils are from Humanist or Muslim families), the head teacher and governors may apply to the local SACRE for permission to arrange worship for all or some of the pupils which is not wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. ('Determinations' can be granted by SACRE to a school, determining that there are good grounds for other than the normal legal practice. School will need to present a case for this to SACRE)
8. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship.
9. Teachers cannot be compelled to lead or participate in Collective Worship, but it is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that it takes place.

#### The nature of Collective Worship

##### a) What is Collective Worship?

'Corporate worship' is the term applied to worship activities within a faith community, where all the adherents share belief, are committed to their faith and worship in the same fashion. This is

impossible in a school setting, which is an educational institution, not a faith community. Even within schools of a religious character, there may be pupils of varying beliefs and none. It is impossible therefore, to expect all pupils to 'worship'. Hence the term 'collective', whereby those with or without a faith commitment are gathered together, and given the opportunity of making a reflective response, which for those of faith could be considered to be 'worship'. DFE Circular 1/94, section 50 says:

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

The term 'worship' is not defined by the legislation governing Collective Worship in schools but circular 1/94 talks of 'participation and response'. This cannot be compelled and the individual must feel sufficiently motivated to make a response. However, **the law does not demand that our pupils are 'compelled' to worship, but that they are given the opportunity to do so.**

### **b) “Wholly, Mainly, Broadly Christian”**

**In any one term, the acts of worship should be in the main of a 'wholly, mainly or broadly' Christian character. It is character, not content that is the requirement, and the teachings, beliefs and stories of Christianity, like those from other major faiths, present themes which will be of interest or concern and relevance to all. In selecting 'wholly' Christian material or 'mainly' Christian material or any other material, it is important that schools ensure that acts of worship are 'inclusive'. It must be remembered that it is not the role of the school to nurture religious faith.**

### **c) Inclusion**

**All pupils should be given the 'opportunity' to worship and Collective Worship must be appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils.** Irrespective of the focus which may be a 'wholly, mainly or broadly' Christian theme, a secular issue or teachings from non-Christian faiths or beliefs, this can be achieved. In order to achieve 'inclusive Collective Worship', it is important to ensure that:

the focus relates to the experiences, concerns or interest of all pupils present

difference and diversity are explored and celebrated

prayers, hymns and songs are carefully selected

**pupils are not coerced into saying prayers or singing hymns or religious songs, or towards any particular beliefs**

**pupils are invited to listen to the words of a prayer and reflect on it. If they agree with what is being said, they may join in or say 'Amen'.**

at times, the focus will centre on the traditions, practices and celebrations of faiths and beliefs represented in the school or local community pupils are affirmed in their faith or non-faith stance

pupils' needs are taken into account in the planning and delivery  
collective worship uses inclusive language  
pupils should not be withdrawn from Collective Worship for any reason other than that it is the expressed wish of their parents.

#### **d) Assembly v Collective Worship**

Schools may assemble for a number of reasons, other than to hold an act of Collective Worship. It is understood however, that the term 'assembly' is commonly used to indicate the occasion of an act of Collective Worship. Whichever terminology is used, it is important here to clarify the differences and indicate good practice:

1. Schools will often use assembly time for administrative purposes as well as providing an act of Collective Worship. If this must be done, then **ensure that there is a clear division between the giving out of notices or certificates and the act of worship.**
2. **It is a good idea to deal with administrative affairs before the act of worship rather than at the end. In this way, pupils leave the assembly with the Collective Worship fresh in their minds, allowing more reflection time before their lessons begin.**
3. Separate the administrative affairs and the worship by, for example:
  - i. playing some music
  - ii. lighting a candle
  - iii. changing the lighting
  - iv. changing personnel
  - v. sharing a moment of silence
  - vi. revealing or setting up a focal point
  - vii. singing a song / hymn
4. Avoid complaints and reprimands which will destroy what you are trying to achieve in Collective Worship. Discipline is important, but good pastoral structure deals with these issues at some other time, even if it means assembling the school twice in one day.
5. 'Hymn practice' does not necessarily constitute an act of Collective Worship. To combine the two, select an aspect of the hymn or song to expand and explore, remembering to identify its relevance to pupils. This does not have to take more than a few minutes. Offer some time for reflection.
6. Achievement assemblies where pupils receive their awards or certificates do not necessarily constitute an act of Collective Worship. To combine the two, select a quality or value which has been necessary for a pupil/s to achieve their award. Explore this and relate it to all pupils, and offer some time for reflection.

Our SIMMONDLEY SCHOOL POLICY takes into consideration the guidance above.

## Aims

At Simmondley School :-

1. Collective worship aims to promote moral values, which are Christian but can also apply to other faiths and to non-believers.
2. Collective worship aims to provide opportunities for pupils to learn from stories, from the experiences of others, through provision of time for pupils to reflect. Stories may be from the Bible, from other religions, about admirable people in history or in current times, and from other secular sources but the choice will be aimed at developing pupil's moral understanding.
3. Collective worship aims to use sources which inform children of their cultural heritage. As a broadly Christian country with a large majority of white British children in school, we aim to ensure that children learn about their Christian heritage
4. Collective worship aims to allow pupils the opportunity to gain insight into the nature of "faith" and "belief" and "spirituality" and the impact that it can have on the lives of believers.
5. At no time will children be subject to indoctrination during collective worship. Phrases such as Christians believe ... or Muslims believe ... will be used. Pupils will be asked to think and to reflect on their own. Where specific prayers are said, pupils will be asked to listen carefully and think about what is being said and say "Amen" at the end if they agree.
6. Dedicated collective worship times may be short but must allow time for reflection and be a valuable and important part of the school day.
7. Collective worship and times for reflection or prayer, will be signaled by the lighting of a candle or by the use of one of the other suggested symbols.

## Arrangements for collective worship

A variety of opportunities for collective worship are provided to meet the needs of a wide range of learners from 4 – 11 years old. Sometimes collective worship is a stand alone session and sometimes it is part of an assembly. Where it is part of a whole school assembly the lighting of a candle, or alternative, indicates when the collective worship element of the assembly is about to take place. This will be at the end of the assembly.

Currently arrangements are as follows:-

Monday Whole school assembly	Assembly is taken by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and a Strength is determined for the week. For example; Tolerance, Respect, Courage, Teamwork, Self Control., Humour. Teachers and children 'Strength Spot' through the week and certificates are presented in Friday Celebration Assembly.
Tuesday Key Stage Assemblies	Assemblies are taken by each teacher on a rota basis and are Faith led. For example; Broadly Christian and reflecting Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism
Wednesday Key Stage Assemblies	Singing assembly during which children learn new songs and hymns and practice ones with which they are already familiar.
Thursday Whole School Friday Whole School Celebrations Assembly	Assemblies are taken by each teacher on rota basis and PSHE led covering Personal, Social, Health Education focus and SEAL. Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning  Friday assembly is led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and celebrates the Strength of the week and achievements in and out of school.

Some assemblies feature class assemblies on a topic of work to which parents are invited.

The majority of meetings last for 15 to 20 minutes.

Some collective worship meetings are led by visiting clergy or speakers..

This policy reflects current practice at Simmondley School January 2014 and will be subject to annual review.

Policy reviewed and current practice updated January 2014

This policy was reviewed by governors January 2017.

Next review January 2019 or before if required.

