

Ashleigh Primary School and Nursery, Wymondham

"We are all stars, Ashleigh makes us shine"

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Persons Responsible - Headteacher

Date of Policy: January 2016

Next Review Due: January 2019

Adopted by Full Governing Body

Signed

Date

Chair of Governors

Review completed

Review completed

Review completed

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Collective Worship Definition

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. The term "collective" when used in relation to worship in schools refers to the gathering together of a school group or groups for worship; it does not in any way suggest an act of worship which involves a group meeting to subscribe to any particular faith or denomination of a faith.

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.

Legal Requirements

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 head teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body.

Parents or carers of pupils at Ashleigh Primary School have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from collective worship.

School context

Some children at Ashleigh Primary School are from practising Christian families, some from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we must 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.

Ashleigh's Aims

We believe at this school that collective worship supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. It reflects our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually. 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:

- Develop a sense of belonging which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth
- 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 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
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge and respect diversity whether it be religious or not
- Understand the importance of reflection

Collective Worship at Ashleigh Primary School

Values

Collective worship at Ashleigh Primary School is focused around 18 values which may be addressed through lessons and assemblies but also permeate the whole curriculum. They are the basis for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole class. We encourage children to consider these values and thereby to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to develop as reflective learners and grow to be stable, educated and civil adults.

British Values

Within the 18 values covered, the following are inspired by the promotion of British Values: Respect, Individual Liberty, Tolerance, Democracy, Rule of Law and Justice.

When does collective worship take place?

Our current weekly programme for KS1 and KS2 involves:

Monday: Values based assembly (current affairs)

Tuesday: Values based assembly (religious focus)

Wednesday: Achievement / celebration assembly

Thursday: Singing assembly

Friday: Circle time in class

Further acts of collective worship may take place in class throughout the day (see reflection time).

In Reception, collective worship will take place in class as the children do not attend assembly until the summer term. The children will learn to 'Gather' for collective worship with the sound of a bell or a special piece of music. Music, PATHS, stories that link to the school value including Bible stories will form the focus of daily collective worship. Children will be taught to reflect at the end of each session and a candle may be lit to provide the appropriate atmosphere.

Music

Music and songs are chosen carefully to link to the focus value for the half term. All children at Ashleigh Primary take part in weekly singing practice which takes the place of that day's collective worship. The words of the hymn/song form the focus and should be reflected upon before or after singing, thereby making the time more clearly reflective.

Reflection Time

Quiet reflection time is offered at the end of each session of collective worship. A candle is lit to give the children a focal point and create an appropriate atmosphere. Reflection time may also be offered during the day in class e.g. after compliments are given to the special person of the day.

Prayer

Prayer may be used as an alternative to or as well as reflection time. The staff at Ashleigh ensure that they are sensitive when using prayers from different faiths and use ideas from the Redbridge handbook on school worship such as:

- "And now, in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well-known prayer..."
- Or, if the leader has a faith commitment, "And now, in a moment of quietness, I want you to listen whilst I say a prayer which, as a Christian (Muslim, Sikh, Jew...) is very special to me. Those of you who know the prayer and want to, might like to say the words with me..."
- Or, again, "I am going to read you the words of a Christian (Hindu, Buddhist...) prayer that was written 400 years ago. I want you to think about the words carefully. Some of you might want to make the words your own."

Visitors of faiths and beliefs

Good relations within our multi-cultural and multi-faith community are paramount. Wherever possible we should seek to develop, promote and respect the integrity of the beliefs, cultures and traditions of our neighbours. Inviting visitors into our school can significantly contribute to pupils learning, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and help them to prepare for the multifaceted, complicated world in which we live.

When inviting visitors into our schools they should be made aware that they will encounter a full range and diversity of beliefs, cultural identities, views, experience and knowledge from the pupils. (See Appendix 1 Code of Conduct for visitors who represent a faith or belief community)

Appendix 1

Code of conduct for visitors who represent a faith or belief community (including those from other world views)

Visitors who are invited to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of pupils in RE, collective worship, school celebrations, commemorations and festival etc. should:

1. be confident in sharing their own experiences, insights, beliefs and views, but avoid proselytising or criticising the ethnicity and beliefs of others.
2. be familiar with the school's policy, agenda and ethos and discuss, with the class teacher, the aims and objectives of the session, pupils previous knowledge and how it fits in with the teaching curriculum.
3. discuss the tone and content, with the teacher in advance, to ensure it is age appropriate and differentiated for the ability range in the classroom/assembly.
4. clearly identify their role, who and what they represent and when using the pronoun 'we' ensure pupils understand that there is diversity and variety and different levels of observation in all faiths.
5. be receptive and accepting of the faiths, beliefs, sensitivities and rights of young children whose response may challenge or conflict with their own.
6. foster ways of communicating with children honestly and avoid ambiguity or subtext.

Appropriate language for visitors

| <u>Do's:</u> | <u>Don'ts:</u> |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ introduce yourself and your beliefs in the context of your faith group, e.g. "As a Christian, I believe..."□ use the terms 'some', 'most', 'many' when referring to faith believers, e.g. "some Buddhists believe that..." to ensure pupils understand that there is diversity and variety in all faiths.□ provide a personal perspective on your faith and belief and how it impacts your life, e.g. "My sacred text is the Quran and it instructs me to..."□ help children embrace specialist language used by believers to give them greater understanding of their faith and beliefs in practice, e.g. "in this story the Buddha is described as 'awake', what do these words tell Buddhists about how to live their lives?"□ model how you show respect to your God/gods, e.g. "when some Muslims say the name of the Prophet Muhammad they say, 'peace be upon him.'"□ try to make connections with other faiths that may practice similar customs e.g. "this is similar to some Jews who show respect by not writing the name of God in full."□ share a customary greeting, e.g. "when some Hindu's greet each other they say, 'Namaste, which means I bow to you.'" | <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ use the collective pronoun, 'we' which doesn't accommodate the different beliefs and sensitivities of the pupils, e.g. "when we go to church what do we all do?"□ ask children to use a faith vocabulary which is customary for you to use e.g. 'Lord Vishnu' or 'Jesus Christ'.□ ask pupils to reveal their faith group in a collective setting, e.g. "how many of you are Christians?"□ respond to a question with an outright 'no, that's wrong' response. Support children with a gentle correction e.g. 'that's an interesting response but I wonder if someone else can help to make it clearer.'□ ask pupils to take part in religious practices, ritual or replication of worship e.g. religious prayer, genuflection, meditation or salat movements.□ use inaccessible or spiritual language to demonstrate examples of your faith - make your learning, engaging, age and content appropriate.□ try to cover too much ground about your faith - focus on one or two specific areas. |