

DUKE OF NORFOLK CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL POLICY ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

A DEFINITION OF SCHOOL COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

“School Collective Worship is the recognition, affirmation and celebration of certain realities and values held to be of central importance to the community where it occurs.

An Act of Collective Worship takes place in the context of a gathering of some or all of the school community which aims to foster the spiritual, moral and cultural development of all those present.

It gives individuals an opportunity to make a free response arising from their own religious or other convictions. Worship as such can therefore never be enforced.

Collective Worship celebrates diversity, yet contributes towards a sense of cohesion, stability and shared values in the school, society, and the wider world”
(from DCC SACRE Guidelines “A Sense of Occasion”).

Legal Framework

There must be a daily act of Collective Worship for all pupils which takes account of their age and aptitude (Education Reform Act 1988) Parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children. Since this is a church school, however, worship is central to its life and work and is regarded as a very important part of children's education.

In a church school, it can draw on the richness and variety of the traditions of Christian Worship.

Worship is an activity composed of many elements. The elements of worship include words, actions, thoughts and attitudes. (see appendix A for some of the suggested elements).

Other characteristics of worship are that worship:

- Is active not passive.
- Is directed towards someone/thing other. Worship must have an object. As this is a church school our worship will be directed towards God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Is an expression of the relationship between worshippers and worshipped.
- Is essentially personal.
- Can be expressed individually or within a group.
- Cannot be compelled or enforced. It is essentially a free response arising out of the commitment of the worshipper. It must be given voluntarily. It is not therefore possible for any person other than the worshipper to make the response.
- Cannot be guaranteed to take place simply through attendance at an act of worship.

Rationale

The worship at this school will be in accordance with the trust deed. School worship is an affirmation and celebration of the Christian ethos of the school and central to the life, values and purposes of our school. It is an inclusive act which encourages reflection among all present, of all religious traditions and none, on the key aspects and beliefs of the Christian tradition.

Through collective worship we will aim to provide an experience which will allow children to respond to God through a variety of means, including introducing them to Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church's year.

We follow these broad principles

That the collective worship will be an opportunity to relate to and respond to God through a variety of means

That the collective worship should try to be inclusive (see aims).

That collective worship should be educational

That collective worship should contribute to the curriculum

That where possible, collective worship should have a sense of occasion.

collective worship will foster the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the school.

AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1. Within our assemblies, we will try to promote:
 - Wonder in the presence of the marvels of the natural world.
 - Delight at being alive in the modern world, with all that this means and offers.
 - The exploration of, and expression of, emotions.
 - A sense of fellowship between people.
 - Sensitivity to the mysteries of life.
 - Awareness of the words and actions used in church worship.
- 2.. We will try to extend the child's ability to respond with:
 - Awe and wonder.
 - Sympathy for deprived and otherwise unfortunate people.
 - Compassion.
 - Admiration for human virtues of decency, honesty, self-sacrifice, courage etc.
 - Anger at the sight of cruelty, injustice, exploitation, etc.
 - Reverence in contemplating the virtues of beauty, truth and love.
 - Sorrow for human frailty and failure.
 - Joy in the beautiful.
 - Penitence, recognising when they have done wrong.
3. We will try to develop:
 - Reflection on the experience of life, and encourage pupils to adopt a reflective approach to living.
 - Concern for the values on which our society depends, e.g. respect for the rights of others, equality before the law, responsibility for making personal decisions, participating in community decision making.
4. We will try to introduce pupils to various aspects of worship:
 - Prayer (including traditional church prayers), hymns, songs, music, readings, poetry, drama, celebrations, stories, fellowship, religious texts (especially from the Bible), ritual, silence, a simple liturgy/responses, religious symbols, artefacts and pictures.
5. We will try to foster a prayerful atmosphere, of reverence where those who wish to worship may do so.
6. We will try to show children the world, not just as it is, but also as it might be.
7. We will try to respect the integrity of all pupils.

The very nature of worship means that schools can neither compel pupils to engage in acts of worship, or set out to involve pupils in acts of worship which implicitly assume their commitment to a particular set of doctrines and which thus deny them the freedom and responsibility of making their own choice.
8. We will TRY to respect the integrity of all adults (but of course they may withdraw).

9. We will try to respect the integrity of other faiths and life-stances so that:
- Information imparted is accurate and misrepresentation does not occur.
 - The stereotyping of faith-communities and all other groups is avoided.
 - Between faiths significant differences are recognised and appreciated.
 - Between faiths, genuine similarities are also recognised and appreciated.
10. It follows that we believe the school collective worship should be for all and an activity to which – in principle – all can contribute, and from which all can gain, no matter what their personal religious faith, or non-religious life stance.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPEMENT

The 1988 Education Reform Act states that the curriculum as a whole should promote the “spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils”. Collective worship will contribute to all these areas of development but has a particular contribution to make to spiritual, moral and cultural development. Collective worship also contributes to Duke of Norfolk School’s new (2019) curriculum, golden thread and attributes. **Resilience, morality/ social justice, critical thinking, healthy body and mind, confidence/communication, joy/hope.** Promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Fostering spiritual, moral and cultural sensitivities helps pupils develop their own ideas about the world, about themselves, and about the value and worth of other people.

Collective worship can sensitively seek to evoke those feelings and senses from which, it might be said, the spiritual moral and cultural areas of experience arise. We have a plan for Collective Worship which follow the above school attributes. These assemblies often involve: story, bible passages, song, prayer, reflection and discussions,

ORGANISATION AND PRESENTATION

Separate acts of worship may be arranged for different age or school groups. Some will be whole-school gatherings, some classroom based and some year group based. Worship can be held at different times during the school day, depending on circumstances.

A half-termly programme of weekly themes is planned. We incorporate the church’s calendar into the themes.

Each term some acts of worship will be led by children and some by visitors to school (particularly the parish priest) who will be informed of our policy and practices.

The school will try to give due regard to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitude of the pupils.

Occasionally our worship takes place in the Parish Church of All Saints, e.g. Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

We are able to offer an alternative meeting place within the school if there are sufficient numbers of children, and parents to take them, for such groups as Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Parents may withdraw their child wholly or partly from collective worship.

Teachers are encouraged to attend but may also withdraw.

Date of next review May 2026 .