



Collective Worship Policy

Last reviewed: December 2016

Next review: December 2019

Linked Governor: Craig Lambourne

SLT Member: Rich Peters

PRINCIPLES:

Ashlyns School believes 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.

It is a legal requirement that all registered students of school age 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 students”.

Families who send their children to this school are in the main ‘nominally’ Christian. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to 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 in our care. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.

AIMS:

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supportive 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 other people in every day 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
- Provide opportunities in form time and assemblies for personal reflection

PRACTICE:

At Ashlyns School we combine our acts of worship with assembly and form tutor reflection time, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. There is one assembly each week for every student in the school. In addition form tutors lead tutor groups through reflections during tutor time on the four remaining mornings per week.

The Head Teacher, members of the SLT or other appropriate staff lead the whole school worship each week, whilst Heads of Year and / or Form Tutors may lead the Year Group assemblies each week. Students are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership at certain times of the year, through student led discussion groups which run within the house system.

Assemblies are sometimes discussed at School Council meetings and they are invited to submit ideas and get other children involved.

The school year has been divided into weekly themes, which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up. (see appendix 1 on page 4 regarding Assemblies)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 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
- The Assistant Head Teacher is responsible for planning the calendar of themes and “Thought for the Day” activities on a termly basis. This is discussed by the Pastoral Team which also provides an opportunity for Heads of Year to give feedback from Year Teams about assemblies
- All Form Tutors follow the reflection programme in tutor time
- All Teaching Staff are required to attend assemblies unless they have formally withdrawn from them by putting their request in writing and met with the Head Teacher
- Parents of a student 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 Head Teacher
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006 makes provision for students in post-16 education to exercise the right to withdraw themselves from the daily act of collective worship, but not from assembly
- The Deputy Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring parents/carers are informed of updated policy documents on the school’s website via the school’s e-Bulletin.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The CTC Committee review this policy on a bi-annual basis.

Compliance with the policy is monitored by Heads of Year on a termly basis and the programme is reviewed every term through SLT and the Pastoral Team.

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON PLANNING AND CONDUCTING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

In planning our assemblies, we choose from a range of methods, including:

- Contributions from students
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance / drama
- Reflection / meditation / songs / music
- Artefacts / natural materials
- Visual aids / focal points
- Dialogue / creative silence
- Visitors

SONG / MUSIC

Song / music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. Music from a variety of cultures and types is used on occasions. Music is carefully selected to match the theme.

REFLECTION

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. We feel that, whilst prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. Various forms of introduction to our prayers can be used to distance children, whilst giving them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian/Hindu/Muslim prayer/poem/reading...' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

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