



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Rooted in our local community, together we build a welcoming sanctuary where everyone is shown love, care and respect. Inspired by Jesus, we nurture the ethos 'not to be served, but to serve' (Matthew 20:28) and our work is reflected in our motto 'Feeding body, mind and soul'.

Introduction

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.

Collective worship does not pre-suppose shared beliefs and does not seek uniform responses from pupils. Collective Worship caters for a diversity of beliefs and points of view, allowing individuals to respond as individuals

Intent

Collective worship is central to the life of our school. It encourages a sense of unity and offers the pupils and others in our school an opportunity to reflect on our values in the context of our Christian vision and ethos. Collective worship is an expression of our vision and shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school. We warmly invite all members of our school community to join our worship.

In our school, collective worship reflects the Anglican foundation of the school whilst welcoming and respecting the individual beliefs of all children and their faith communities. Christian beliefs are always taught and used in ways that are inclusive.

Through worship, we aim to provide a place and a time for pupils and adults where, through quiet reflection and active celebration, their sense of awe and wonder can find expression and their spiritual development be encouraged. Collective worship provides an opportunity for members of the school community to pause from activity, to gather, to remind them of and to reflect upon the beliefs and values that bind our school community together. It also allows those with a religious commitment the possibility of entering into worship and those with no religious commitment to sense what worship is and to reflect deeply. In this way, we aim both to affirm and to protect the integrity of all members of our school community.

Our collective worship is:

- INVITATIONAL - using language such as *"I invite you to join me in a time of reflection."*
- INSPIRING - a spiritual encounter, not forced, which provides opportunities for reflection and spiritual development.
- INCLUSIVE - "all present to be present with integrity" and providing for people of any or no faith.
- INVOLVING - including staff and pupils in planning/participation/evaluation.
- INTERESTING - offering a variety of experiences that engages all the senses.
- INFORMATIVE - having sound educational purpose and content.

Worship will reflect aspects of the school curriculum and in particular can:

- Nurture spiritual growth
- Enable participants to consider moral questions in a Christian context
- Enhance social understanding and encourage responses to issues through courageous advocacy by championing causes which are special and meaningful to them
- Give participants a chance to reflect on the place and importance of faith in the lives of people today
- Encourage participants to explore beliefs drawn from their own cultural heritage
- Enable participants to experience the seasons, for example: Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Pentecost, through song and prayer

Implementation

Daily collective worship takes place in a variety of groupings: in the school hall, in classrooms and sometimes outside. On occasions, worship takes place in All Saints Church, Boyne Hill. We follow the seasons of the Church year and within these, significant festivals and other special days are observed. These always include Harvest, Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Pentecost. Other important days in the calendar such as Remembrance and the Leavers' Service also feature in collective worship.

Whenever worship takes place, it is planned to promote participants' thinking beyond the time given to worship itself. In each class, the pupils use a signal to show the beginning and the end of Collective Worship, (a singing bowl). This enables all participants to 'cross the threshold to worship and then to retire back again at the end.' Words of preparation are said, e.g., 'I can see we are ready on the outside, let's get ready on the inside'.

Leading worship

Worship has a variety of leaders from within school and from the local Church Community, in particular, Father Jeremy from All Saints Church. Pupils are given opportunities to lead worship throughout the year.

At Boyne Hill we are very proud of our multi-faith community and respect each other's individual faith. We regularly invite members of other faith communities to participate in our collective worship as this helps us to increase the pupils' awareness, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these faiths.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

Our acts of worship are planned to ensure a balance between content and experience and take account of the seasons, themes and school values. Leaders, including the pupils, plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme and the needs of the pupils. We are currently implementing aspects of the Space Makers contemplative practices of Stilling, Noticing, Dwelling, Mending and Blessing. These ancient practices, based on the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola, will give our pupils and staff the tools of resilience and protection for their mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing in the world of today; helping them to be able to dwell and reflect in the moment.

We use candles, stories, prayer, music, pictures, poetry, drama and a range of other media to support our worship. The opportunity to pray is a vital element of Collective Worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers reflect the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Pupils and staff who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

Our worship is periodically reviewed through discussions and sometimes surveys with participants, observation and reflection and our evaluations are fed into the planning for future worship.

Impact

In all Church of England Schools, collective worship is inspected and judged publicly through SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). The impact is therefore judged on the effect it has on those present and the extent to which it gives opportunities to all for spiritual growth.

The careful use of open-ended questions supports the reflection of the potential impact of the worship activities.

- How did it make you feel?
- What did it make you think about?
- What has it helped you understand about God?
- Have you learnt anything new about yourself?
- Do you think you will behave differently?
- Did it give you things to think about?
- Did it give you a chance to pray if you wanted?
- Do you want to ask anything about what you heard/saw/thought?
- Did you enjoy it? Why?

The expectation is that collective worship is for 'all pupils and adults' – to involve the whole school community; no-one should be excluded unless specifically requested by parents.

Collective Worship and SMSC

At Boyne Hill, collective worship contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) and intellectual development of pupils in the following ways:

The spiritual development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of things
- experience times of quiet inactivity to counterbalance the activity which generally marks the rest of the school day
- hear stories and words from religious and other literature which suggest that there is more to life than meets the eye

The moral development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- reflect on matters concerning right and wrong
- hear about incidents in which, and people in whom, goodness or right are exemplified
- learn about religious and other teachings concerning right and wrong

The social development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- gather with others for a common purpose
- share times of joy and times of sadness with others
- learn how to behave appropriately within a specific social setting

The cultural development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- hear music from a range of times, places and cultures
- reflect upon ideas concerning beauty and that which is pleasing to the eye and ear
- appreciate the range of talents and gifts found within the school community and beyond

The intellectual development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- learn and to engage with their minds
- have ideas and beliefs confirmed or challenged
- reflect upon the nature of learning and education

A legal note

By law, Collective Worship must:

- be provided for every child every day
- reflect the school's Trust Deed

Our policy sets out our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community, whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive and inspirational, reflecting in the moment and in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship. In the first instance, we ask parents who may wish to exercise this right, to visit school to speak with the Head Teacher. Members of staff also have the right to withdraw.

Responsibility for collective worship rests with the Head Teacher and Foundation Governor(s).

This policy will be reviewed biennially

Last reviewed: September 2024