

Collective Worship Policy

West Hill Primary School



Approved by:

Date:

Last reviewed on: March 2022

Next review due by: March 2024

Introduction

The Collective Worship Policy at West Hill Primary School pays due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken account of the guidance offered by Wandsworth Borough Local Authority through its SACRE.

Legal Requirements

The legal requirements for collective worship are set out in the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) and the Department for Education Guidance of 1994, pages 20 – 25
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collective-worship-in-schools>

The law requires that:

- All pupils of the age of five and over who attend a maintained school should take part in a daily act of collective worship;
- Collective worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character;” • It should be appropriate to the age, aptitude and family backgrounds of pupils.

The co-headteachers and governors have the shared statutory responsibility for the provision of collective worship.

Aims

- To make collective worship inclusive and accessible to all
- To promote a ‘sense of occasion’ which sets collective worship apart from other school activities
- To develop a sense of belonging and community spirit
- To create an atmosphere where all pupils feel they can contribute
- To create an atmosphere where everyone feels valued as a person, whatever their belief or life style
- To allow opportunities for children to explore their own beliefs and listen to and learn from the beliefs of others
- To provide all pupils with the opportunity to develop themselves as people, reflecting on the spiritual side of their nature
- To express and celebrate the identity, aims and values of the school as a whole
- To promote the general ethos of the school
- To allow pupils time for their own quiet reflection
- To select appropriate topics and subjects for consideration, that reflect issues of spiritual, moral, social and cultural concern

Practice

Collective worship takes place during a daily assembly. We recognise the distinction made between the two. Whilst the term ‘assembly’ represents the gathering of the school community, ‘collective worship’ reflects something special and separate from ordinary school activities.

Collective worship at West Hill represents good practice within the school and:

- provides a time of quiet and stillness from the pressures of the school day, reflecting something important within the life of our school community
- provides opportunities to respond to shared and individual concerns
- celebrates the achievements of individuals, classes and groups of pupils and staff
- celebrates achievements in the local and wider community
- takes account of current issues in world affairs about which the children may have questions
- promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The following very basic definitions try to encapsulate the importance of these dimensions of pupil development. Our collective worship programme, through the themes we focus on, seeks to help pupils address each of these important aspects of their development.

Spiritual	=	the non-physical side of human nature and identity, for some but not for all linked to belief in God (or Gods, the divine).
Moral	=	the knowledge of what is right and wrong and the will to put that knowledge into practice as a matter of principle.
Social	=	recognising and taking seriously the individual's place in society, developing skills of empathy and co-operation rights and responsibilities of being a good citizen.
Cultural	=	the recognition and celebration of one's own cultural identity and recognising and celebrating the diversity of culture in school, the local, national and international communities.

“Wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.”

At West Hill we recognise that pupils come from a variety of backgrounds including the various Christian denominations, other world faiths, non-religious and secular. We aim to reflect this and ensure an appropriate balance within the legal requirements. Where possible we select themes and stories that promote the underlying message of Christianity as well as the other major faiths represented in our school.

Organisation

Pupils may experience collective worship all together as a school or as a group in which they are taught or take part in other school activities. At West Hill, assemblies are organised as outlined below:

Monday

Whole school assembly, usually led by the Co-headteacher

Tuesday

Reception Class and Key Stage One

In class teachers read a story that promotes discussion about particular issues appropriate to the age of the children. This is followed by singing, led by a teacher.

Key Stage Two

The classes gather in the hall and assembly is led by a member of staff. This is followed by singing, led by a teacher.

Wednesday

Each key stage gathers separately

Thursday

Each key stage gathers separately

Friday

Whole school assembly, usually led by the co-headteacher

During each school year, festivals from some of the major world religions are celebrated. These include Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Eid-ul-Fitr and Diwali. Parents and friends of the school are also invited to share in these special assemblies. In some cases, the whole school contribute, in others they may be led by particular classes or a key stage. Other festivals and special occasions are addressed when planning the assembly timetable.

There are also occasions when visiting speakers address the children about different subjects and topics, either relating to special events or to things in which they might have a particular interest.

Planning

The RE Coordinator is in charge of planning and organising collective worship. She ensures that there is a systematic coverage of themes; continuity and progression; timely celebration of major world faith religious festivals; and the required balance between broadly Christian and other or non-faith worship.

Collective worship should not be denominational nor alienate pupils from different Christian denominations or non-Christian families. Collective worship is therefore broad rather than specific or exclusive, reflecting plurality. It is not about creating pretence of Christian worship. Through careful planning, collective worship is organised to promote a sense of occasion to lead to real learning experiences to promote the development of the pupils' own values. Our aim is to accommodate differing reflective responses from pupils who may or may not belong to a faith group. We **do not** aim to reproduce the worship of faith communities.

Each month the co-headteachers decide on a value for consideration. The Head Teacher's assemblies may or may not relate to the value, to take account of others issues that arise. The R.E. co-ordinator or teachers themselves plan their assemblies and collective worship according to the value. A timetable is drawn up to show what has been covered and to show which member of staff has led that particular assembly.

Resources

- The R.E. cupboard located in the lower hall contains assembly and collective worship resource books
- Teachers often draw upon their own ideas and personal experiences as well as their own collection of resource books
- Assembly websites on the internet also provide ideas and suggestions

The Right of Withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from attending collective worship. In such a case, we would ask parents to discuss the reasons for their request with the Co-headteachers. As a school we will stress the importance of the collective worship programme and the role it plays in our overall life and ethos. The school remains responsible for the health and safety of all pupils withdrawn from collective worship.