

Acklington CE First School

Collective Worship Policy

Rationale

Collective Worship takes place daily in accordance with the provisions of the School Standards and framework Act, 1998. The content of all our acts of Collective Worship is in accordance with the Trust Deed of this Church of England School. This policy has been prepared by the Headteacher, the Collective Worship Co-ordinator and Revd. June Barras.

Collective Worship - a time in the day when the school gather to honour God. It acknowledges His transcendence and Holiness, His worth and value, and it is a loving response to His nature as revealed in Jesus Christ. Worship stems from personal experience; it is a central characteristic of faith communities which are in relationship with God. We can never make anyone worship because it is an attitude of the heart focused on God, so we provide a setting where any member of the school may worship God if they so wish.

Aims

- to provide an opportunity for children to reflect upon God and to give him honour
- help children discover their place in the world
- highlight and nurture the spiritual dimension through experiencing worship
- provide an opportunity to celebrate major, and some minor, Christian festivals
- heighten awareness of the ultimate question/realities of life and provide the opportunity to reflect upon these things
- support the search for meaning
- enable children to appreciate their worth and value to God, and to the community, and to respect the integrity of each individual as a child of God
- enable pupils to make effective use of silence in opportunities for reflection, contemplation, meditation and prayer
- celebrate gifts, talents and achievements
- establish, explore and reinforce the common Christian values of the school community such as love, peace, kindness, compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation
- foster a feeling of community and belonging in the school through a sharing of experiences and feelings
- develop a personal relationship and encourage a social development
- provide an opportunity to empathise with the needs of others
- provide an opportunity for children to become acquainted with people from the local wider community, particularly the local church
- encourage stewardship, respect and care for God's creation by a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues
- foster feelings such as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy
- give memorable and enjoyable experiences
- provide an opportunity to bring before God in prayer, personal needs and the needs of others
- share with the participants some of the central teachings of the Christian faith at an appropriate level and give them the encouragement to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God

Practicalities

Collective Worship takes place every day. Normally the whole school meets in the hall or classroom. The collective worship co-ordinator supports staff to enable collective worship to take place during educational visits or trips. We will ensure that all children have the opportunity to partake in worship. Children who cannot manage large group situations may have their own worship led by a support teacher, which is planned by the teacher delivering the worship to the whole school. These sessions should help children develop the skills needed to attend collective worship as quickly as possible. Teachers retain the right to withdraw from collective worship. However, there is an expectation that all staff respect and maintain the

character of the Foundation. Whenever possible, a candle is lit to mark the start of worship and is blown out to mark the end of worship. Songs, prayer and a story are regular features of worship, and children are invited to remain in silence and stillness at the end of worship for as long as they need after the candle is blown out. A timetable includes regular bible reading, a regular visitor led worship, and a celebration. Children are invited to take part in prayer daily. At least once every half-term, worship takes place in church and members of the school and village community are invited to this. Special occasions are celebrated by the whole school and there is an expectation that all staff and children attend.

Management

When implementing collective worship we consider:

- the broadly Christian character of worship without being distinctive of any particular denomination
- the family backgrounds of pupils as well as their ages and aptitudes
- the effective monitoring and evaluation of collective worship
- that worship must be distinctive from other aspects of school life
- that pupils are allowed to decide their own responses and attitudes
- parents have a right to withdraw their child from collective worship

When planning collective worship, we consider:

- the close link the school has with the Church of England
- the language used when conducting worship
- the freedom of pupils to respond to worship in a way that is appropriate to them
- the need for pupils to feel secure and confident enough to express personal convictions

Prayer

The school prayer is said regularly during collective worship and individual children are invited to lead this prayer. Grace is said before meals either collectively or privately. Children pray at the end of the school day collectively or privately. Children's own personal prayers are valued and shared in worship and staff regularly model praying.

Pupil Expectations

Collective Worship provides pupils with opportunities to:

- respond individually and take time to reflect
- listen respectfully and think about the world, themselves and others
- hear and use language that allows them to express feelings and beliefs and use religious symbolism
- share experiences of sadness, excitement, joy, thankfulness, togetherness and change
- partake in silence, stillness, meditation and prayer
- celebrate the shared values of the school

The Anglican Tradition

When planning collective worship we are aware of our Anglican foundation and we consider how we can contribute to the worship provision without reproducing something inappropriate to children's age and experience. A combination of Christian and distinctively Anglican elements feature in worship.

The following are used as shared Christian elements of collective worship:

- using the bible as a source book, or as an inspiration for themes and stories
- observing the cycle of the church year - advent, Christmas, lent, Easter, Pentecost, saints days
- learning and saying traditional prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the grace and simple responses
- using Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning e.g. cross, crucifix, bread and wine, colours
- a focus on trinity.

These may be more thought distinctively Anglican:

- using prayers from Common Worship
- using Anglican sentences and responses e.g. the Lord is here/His spirit is with us; peace be with you/and also with you
- encouraging links with the worship of the local Parish Church
- the Eucharist.

Diversity

The school community includes families with commitment to the Christian faith, families with a commitment to a faith other than Christianity and families with no particular commitment to any religion. Acts of collective worship take account of the family backgrounds of all pupils and diversity is seen as enriching the life of the school community. Diversity is embraced in positive and sensitive ways in collective worship through:

- building up positive relationships with families and local faith communities
- encouraging pupils to be present at acts of collective worship but ensuring that pupils from other faiths and their parents are aware that they are not required to say Christian prayers
- ensuring that when some leaders use Christian prayer in the time set aside for prayer, pupils will be encouraged to use their own private devotions by thinking of prayers they have learned in their own faith tradition
- provide opportunities for silent reflection to enable all pupils to make a personal response
- respecting the integrity of different faiths and life stances.

Diversity and Special Educational Needs

To be fully inclusive, planning must take account of those with special educational needs and should ensure that all pupils benefit from the experiences offered. For example, an over reliance on oral and linguistic presentation may be a barrier to those with a learning or hearing difficulties. Planning should ensure that acts of collective worship are sufficiently engaging for high achieving pupils.