

Draft Collective Worship Policy

This policy relates to community/county schools but may also be useful for Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled Schools.

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1) Aims and benefits of Collective Worship

i. Collective worship promotes spiritual development by:

- providing a special time separate from ordinary school activities;
- supporting learner-centred experiences, and enable learners to develop a sense of their position within the universal picture;
- developing learners' ability to reflect on their own feelings, values and attitudes;
- developing learners' awareness of the inner life and the spiritual dimension of each person;
- exploring and encouraging responses to fundamental questions about the meaning of life, change and death.

ii. Collective worship contributes to personal development by:

- contributing to health and wholeness, and emotional intelligence;
- encouraging reflection on inner feelings and beliefs;
- developing beliefs and values, both personal and communal;
- encouraging an understanding of the beliefs and values of others;
- increasing self-esteem and purpose in life;
- nurturing the human ability to make moral choices for right and wrong, through thinking about 'moral codes, relationships, responsibility, respect for diversity, temptation, the power of self, sacrifice and love'.

iii. Collective worship benefits the whole school community by:

- encouraging shared values, meaning and purpose;
- contributing to the experience of belonging to a community;
- providing opportunities to celebrate the school's achievements and the contribution of individuals to those achievements;

- developing understanding and appreciation of the beliefs and values of others within the school community;
 - providing opportunities to reflect on and to share in the 'happy' and 'sad' events and experiences which effect the school community;
 - contributing to a school ethos which supports the educational attainment of all learners, regardless of background, through developing self-esteem and a sense of purpose in life.
- iv. Collective worship links the school community and the wider local community by:**
- drawing on a range of carefully selected and appropriate representatives within the local community to contribute to collective worship;
 - contributing to the experience of belonging to a wider local community;
 - providing opportunities to celebrate the local community's achievements and the contribution of groups and individuals to those achievements;
 - developing understanding and appreciation of the beliefs and values of others within the local community;
 - support shared understanding of how individual learners and a school may contribute positively to the wider community;
 - provide opportunities to reflect on and to share in the 'happy' and 'sad' events and experiences which effect the local community.
 - *See appendix – code of conduct for visitors and visit.*
- v. Collective worship enhances awareness of global citizenship by:**
- drawing on a range of carefully selected material to promote global awareness;
 - contributing to the experience of belonging to a global community;
 - providing opportunities to celebrate global events and human achievements;
 - developing an understanding of global diversity and inequality;
 - offering opportunities to reflect on and share in global crises and human suffering.

2) What is collective worship?

Worship is not defined in legislation. Worship in schools will be different from worship amongst a group of people with beliefs in common. This is acknowledged in legislation through the reference to 'collective' worship rather than 'corporate' worship. It must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.

i. Our working definition:

A time for the school body (as a whole or in smaller groups) to meet and reflect on the values that the school considers important. Many of these values will be based on (but not exclusively) the Christian tradition.

3) What are the legal requirements for collective worship?

The Education Reform Act 1988 and the Welsh Office Circular 10/94 set out the legal requirements for collective worship in schools in Wales. These requirements apply to pupils in maintained schools.

The Education (Special Schools) Regulations 1994 set out the requirements for collective worship in special schools.

The requirements are:

- schools must provide collective worship daily for all registered pupils,
- the majority acts of collective worship in each term should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. This means that they should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination,
- collective worship can take place at any time during the school day,
- collective worship can be provided to pupils in any sized group, for example, as a class, a year group, a phase group or a whole-school community, and
- collective worship be inclusive. It should take account of the beliefs, family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the pupils involved.

There is no legal requirement to provide collective worship for pupils aged under five.

4) Right of Withdrawal from Collective Worship

A parent can request that their child is excused from collective worship. Parents do not have to give reasons. Pupils who are excused must be supervised by the school. The school may, in agreement with parents, provide alternative arrangements for worship for one or more pupils that are excused, but the school is not obliged to do so.

The Education and Inspections Bill 2006 gives pupils in sixth forms the right to excuse themselves from collective worship. This legislation was brought into force in Wales in February 2009.

Teachers have the right to withdraw from collective worship. However, the school will ensure that collective worship is still provided daily for all pupils.

In cases where a parent requests that their child is excused from collective worship, the school will encourage the parents to not withdraw the child from all assemblies. The school will invite the parents to discuss their specific concerns and share the long term themes and planning.

5) How we provide Collective Worship

There is no time requirement for CW.

An act of collective worship is distinct from an assembly. For example, a visitor may be invited to explore the dangers of bullying in an whole school gathering (assembly), this would not be considered as act of collective worship. The difference between the two should be clear. Collective worship in schools can take a number of forms. Pupils may take some or all of the lead. Pupils may discuss a stimulus during collective worship, but discussion on its own must not be considered as worship. Equally, collective worship does not have to include the opportunity for discussion.

Some of the appropriate components of collective worship are outlined in the box below, but this should not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

An act of collective worship may incorporate one or more of these components.

- **Reflection** – pupils may be encouraged to listen to, watch or reflect on an appropriate stimulus, such as a reading from the Bible, other religious or culturally significant writing, a drama sketch, a dance, a video, a song, a piece of music, an artefact, a poem, a story, a news article, a photograph, a picture, a prayer (see below), a question, a ritual or a presentation or a talk from a member of staff or visiting speaker.
- **Prayer** – pupils may be offered the opportunity to say a prayer aloud together or to pray individually in silence. This should be offered on a voluntary basis. Learners will be offered the opportunity to take part or abstain from participating in prayer.
- **Song** – pupils may be offered the opportunity to sing a hymn or other worship song together.
- **Reading** – pupils may be encouraged to read an extract from the Bible other religious or culturally significant writing, or a ‘thought for the day’.

6) Possible Appendices

i. Organisation (Example)

	Organisation
Monday	Whole school (20 mins)
Tuesday	Individual class thoughts for the day
Wednesday	Year group / Lower school / upper school / infants / juniors
Thursday	Individual class thoughts for the day
Friday	Celebration assembly / Visiting speaker / Open the book

ii. Planning / Themes

List of the weekly themes including reference to religious festivals, cultural celebrations, national observances and United Nations International Days.

iii. Protocol for Visits and Visitors – [Click for external link](#)

7) References:

- School Standards Framework 1998, section 70.
- Religious Education and Collective Worship (Circular 10/94).
- WASACRE GUIDANCE ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF PUPILS FROM COLLECTIVE WORSHIP, October 2021.
- The Education and Inspections Bill, 2006.
- WASACRE Guidance on Collective Worship, June 2012.
- Estyn Supplementary Guidance on Collective Worship, 2017.