

Collective Worship Policy



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Why we include Collective Worship at our school

According to section 9 of the 1988 Education Reform Act: “ All pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship”.

The law requires that most acts of worship in school are of a “broadly Christian Character”. At Whiteley Primary School, we interpret this as collective worship which is based on the broad principles and values of Christianity and which is appropriate to pupils whatever their background or personal beliefs.

What is collective worship?

- Allows a pause for reflection and stillness in the midst of the pressure of the school day;
- Provides a rhythm to the life of the school by marking and celebrating special occasions and achievements;
- Facilitates the development of a sense of community - of belonging and sharing;
- Encourages pupils to learn how to be part of large and small gatherings, as well as offering opportunities to perform and respond to a presentation of readings, dance, drama or prayer.

“Worship isa growing ability to celebrate and reflect on things held to be of worth”

Taken from, “Collective Worship in County Schools”, Hants County Council

Aims of Collective Worship in our school

Collective Worship is a time of togetherness and sharing for the whole school community. It provides time for children:

- To recognise the importance of Collective Worship time within the school day.
- To reaffirm, interpret and put into practice the values of our school community.
- To worship through prayer and reflection.
- To reflect upon spiritual and moral issues.
- To value and respect the importance of religious beliefs to those who hold them.
- To participate and respond in various ways.
- To explore feelings such as awe, wonder, mystery and joy.
- To celebrate achievements of others in our school community.

Pattern and Organisation

The majority of acts of worship are broadly Christian, although pupils are introduced to aspects of other world religions.

It is a legal requirement that all children attend Collective Worship unless their parents have exercised their right to withdraw their children from all or parts of worship under the 1988 Education Reform Act. In the event of this occurring, children are suitably occupied under the supervision of an adult.

Due to the large number of pupils on roll at Whiteley Primary School, it is necessary to split the children into smaller groups and each day a number of Acts of Worship take place during school assemblies:

Monday	Bible stories – mixed year groups
Tuesday or Wednesday	Singing Assembly or theme of the week - mixed year groups
Thursday	Class assemblies - theme of the week - class or year group (<i>Half termly house assemblies</i>)
Friday	Sharing assembly - separate Key Stages

Staff take responsibility for assemblies on different days of the week. All staff attend the weekly sharing assemblies.

Staff leading the Collective Worship during the assembly will light a candle or have some other object to act as a focus for the children's thoughts. When children are given the opportunity to reflect or pray during Collective Worship, staff will indicate this by saying words to the effect of:

“ Now is our time to talk to God or have our own private thoughts”.

On occasions, visitors may be invited to lead the collective worship (for example, the minister from Whiteley Church). The themes for these assemblies are agreed in advance with the Headteacher, and the visitor is always supported by a member of staff.

Why have classroom assemblies?

- To allow for greater participation from the children and therefore foster a more positive attitude to collective worship
- To enable a greater variety of activities to take place, particularly those not possible with larger groups of children
- To allow staff to follow up weekly themes when appropriate, making them relevant to the class
- To enable staff to pitch assemblies at an appropriate level for the children
- To allow time for class teachers to choose an assembly focus relevant to their children / topic and to celebrate special occasions / achievements of the class
- To provide the opportunity, within a smaller group, for appropriate assembly behaviour to be modelled (particularly useful for younger children)

Who leads the class assemblies?

The classroom teacher will generally lead assemblies, but teachers may organise year group assemblies instead when appropriate. Teaching assistants should be involved in classroom assemblies whenever possible.

Classroom assemblies provide the opportunity for children to become more actively involved in assemblies, and children should build up skills so that as they become older they can take a part in leading them.

What must be included in Collective Worship

Each assembly must contain an opportunity for pupils to worship. There should be a time to **reflect, respond and revere**.

Reflection – a candle, music, poem or stillness may be used to focus attention. The aim is to identify a time which is respected by all present and enables the children to reflect on a particular issue.

Response – children should be given the opportunity to respond, either through silent thoughts, singing together or more overtly by listening to a prayer. Other types of response may include repeating or reciting a response, meditation, movement or dance.

Revere – We should be aiming to cultivate a sense of awe and wonder.

What could be included in Collective Worship

Assemblies provide opportunities for a variety of presentations, which help to maintain pupils' interest. The following are suggestions of things to include to help vary the format of assemblies:

dance	drama and role play
music and singing	posters
videos	readings (biography, story, poetry)
story-telling	discussion
artefacts	remembering or valuing exercises
pupils work	use of the school grounds
newspaper articles	Use of ICT presentations

Classes may develop their own routines for class assemblies such as celebrating class achievements, birthdays, class 'thoughts'/ prayers, use of certain music etc.