

Caister on Sea Infant, Nursery School and Children's Centre

Collective Worship Policy

INTRODUCTION

THIS DOCUMENT IS a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for Staff Development at Caister on Sea Infant, Nursery School and Children's Centre.

IT WAS DEVELOPED through a process of consultation with teaching staff and governors.

THIS POLICY WILL be reviewed on a regular basis

Person Responsible: Donna Walker

Definition of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is a time when the whole school, or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all pupils an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Worship is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning to attribute 'worth' or 'worship'. It has the same root as the word 'worthy'. The most obvious meaning of the word 'worship' may initially be that of paying homage to a divine power or being: religious communities 'worship' God in whatever form their tradition demands. However, worship can also refer to the celebration of, honour paid to, or service offered to, those individuals or things people consider worthy.

Worship may find expression in many different forms: in music, song, dance, drama, in words of praise, in prayers, readings and teachings, in listening, in thoughtful silence, in meditation, in contemplation of icons and symbols, in the service of others, in the passing of one's beliefs, in the lighting of a candle and other symbolic actions.

The government requires an act of Collective Worship for all registered pupils in maintained schools on a daily basis. It states:

Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs, to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.

Religious Education and Collective Worship Circular 1/94 (Paragraph 50)

The government's legislation provoked much debate as to the meaning of 'worship' in school contexts. Circular 1/94 (paragraph 57) commented on the meaning of Collective Worship as follows:

Worship is not defined in the legislation and in the absence of any such definition it should be taken to have its natural and ordinary meaning. That is, it must in some sense reflect something special or separate from school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power. However, worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common.

The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'Collective Worship' rather than 'Corporate Worship'.

Collective Worship is important because:

Collective Worship is intended to bring the school community together and foster its corporate life, not be diverse or exclusive in any way. Whilst recognising the statutory rights of withdrawal from Collective Worship relating to pupils and members of the staff, the school, therefore seeks to encourage the presence and participation of all. The school recognises that its pupils and staff represent a variety of faith backgrounds. This diversity is valued and means that differing responses to material presented during Collective Worship are perfectly natural and will be respected.

The 1988 Education Act states that:

- all pupils must take part in a collective act of worship every day
- the act of collective worship may be as a whole school or in different age groupings it may happen at any time of the school day
- it has to take place on school premises (In an aided school the Governors can make arrangements for worship elsewhere on special occasions e.g. the local church. In a controlled school acts of worship may take place off school premises but these should be in addition to the statutory acts of collective worship on the premises).
- the head teacher is responsible for ensuring the legal requirements for Collective Worship are met. the character and content of collective worship in these schools continues to be determined by governing bodies in accordance with their Trust Deeds.
- all staff, including the headteacher have the legal right to withdraw from the Act of Collective worship. The headteacher remains responsible for finding someone suitable to organise and lead the acts of worship.
- all parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship, wholly or partially. The school's responsibility for the child's health and safety is still paramount.

Daily Collective Worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

Documentation

- Non-statutory Guidance on RE
- Foundation Stage Guidance
- Norfolk Agreed Syllabus

- Every Child Matters
- Norfolk County Council Advice

Aims and Philosophy

Aims of Collective Worship

For the School:

Collective Worship contributes significantly to the ethos of our school and it is our aim that it is a time when the school community can:

- share common aims and values
- celebrate achievement and special times
- explore together the world in which we live
- develop a community spirit

For the Pupils:

We also intend that Collective Worship contributes to the development of the pupil as a ‘whole’ person by providing opportunities to:

- worship that which is considered worthy
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- develop their own spirituality
- reinforce positive attitudes
- participate and respond
- reflect on what it means to be human

We have chosen these elements because we believe they are also important features of our everyday life in school and are therefore appropriate responses for all pupils and staff in our community.

The law also requires us to provide pupils with an opportunity to worship God as part of our Collective Worship. We therefore try to provide an opportunity to respond in the form of a time of quiet reflection at some point in each act of collective worship. This time may involve spoken prayers but more often a time for each pupil and adult present to be quiet and think about what they have heard; this will provide opportunity for each to worship God if they should wish to do so.

The approach to Collective Worship at Caister on Sea Infant, Nursery School and Children’s Centre

The acts of collective worship are planned to give pupils a variety of experiences to enable them to reflect on, and respond to, things which we, as a school community, believe are important. These experiences will include:

- the telling of appropriate stories (Biblical, moral, multi-cultural)
- drama
- dance
- poetry
- music
- mime
- tv/video/radio programmes
- visitors

An opportunity for worship, for example through a song, prayer or quiet thought is planned in all assemblies.

The Contribution of Collective Worship to aspects of the Curriculum

Collective Worship time is distinct from curriculum time. Collective Worship will at times feature aspects of the curriculum, which will enhance the experiences of pupils by reflecting on the work done in classes. At times, Collective Worship will enrich classwork through its consideration of subject matter from different perspectives.

The provision of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is in line with school policy which informs our practice. To ensure Collective Worship provides opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development it will address a wide variety of themes and topics, use a range of stimuli and resources and provide pupils with the opportunity to 'respond' on their own level.

Planning and preparation

Whole school assembly takes place daily. Assembly is 15 minutes long. During the week we have an achievement assembly where we celebrate achievements from a year group on a rota basis.

The assemblies follow themes which are planned by the Collective Worship co-ordinator and linked to SEAL. The assembly plan is accessible to all, copies can be found on the staff notice board and in a folder in the staffroom. Staff use these ideas to plan and deliver their own assemblies.

The content of all acts of Collective Worship will be considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils. Half termly assembly planning will feature themes, special occasions and events, but will be flexible to allow the inclusion of current and topical issues.

We have class assemblies that parents, governors and other members of the community are invited to. These are an opportunity for children to share and celebrate work they have been doing in class and to perform to a real audience.

Class teachers and Teaching Assistants ensure that children arrive and leave assemblies in a calm manner and that children understand and know the expectations of behaviour in assembly.

Withdrawal

Parents may ask for their child to be totally or partially withdrawn from Collective Worship in accordance with the Education Act. They are advised of this right in the School brochure and asked to contact the headteacher to make arrangements. No reasons have to be given but discussion with parents over the issues concerning withdrawal are recommended in Circular 1/94. Staff also have the right to withdraw.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- There is a section for evaluation in the assembly folder, staff may record their feelings about an assembly they have taken or observed
- We seek the views of pupils regarding their thoughts on assemblies
- We provide parents and visitors with an evaluation sheet for class assemblies
- The Collective Worship Co-ordinator monitors assemblies according to the schools monitoring programme

Safeguarding

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Date agreed by staff: 05.05.15