



# Fox Hill Primary

## Collective Worship Policy

Responsibility	SLT / Our World CLT
Date of last review	September 2017
Date of next review	September 2018

## Introduction

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character" for the majority of the time. They must also be "appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils".

Families who send their children to this school are predominately either 'nominally' Christian or from non-religious backgrounds. Our school community does still serve a range of faiths including Hindu, Muslim, Jewish etc. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times.

The Principal is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Principal. Teachers and staff may also withdraw from collective worship.

## Mission statement / link to vision

We believe at this school that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. It links to our whole school vision by helping children to have respect both for themselves and for others of different faiths. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in every day situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth. It also provides time for children to reflect and think about key themes linked to our vision such as respect, belonging, caring and the other aspects of being a Fox Hill Learner.

### Aims/Objectives of Collective Worship

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- To share and strengthen understanding of our whole school vision of Ambition to achieve, respect leading to happiness and team work through belonging
- To share and reflect on aspects of our learner code – being a Fox Hill Learner.
- To link into our PSHE and SEAL curriculum allowing children to explore issues, thoughts and beliefs raised within the curriculum
- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn etc.
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

### Curriculum and planning arrangements

At Fox Hill Primary we undertake our acts of worship in a variety of ways. This includes taking part as a whole school during assembly, class briefing, special visitors and speakers into school and as a class act of worship during the school day. Children also take part in activities which link to collective worship such as whole school/class singing led either by the class teacher or our singing tutor. We also discuss themes from collective worship as part of our Philosophy for children sessions.

The themes for collective worship are loosely linked to our whole school SEAL topics and teachers and children explore key thoughts, quotes, poems, stories and prayers linked to these. We also link to elements of our vision statement and learner code.

Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership of collective worship and this forms part of our regular pupil breakfast meetings which take place between senior leaders and children.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

Methods used for collective worship include:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

#### Success Criteria

At Fox Hill Primary we evaluate our acts of worship against some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
- A sense of occasion
- Good order
- Staff affirmation
- A sense of challenge

- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil's experience

### Monitoring and evaluation

Senior leaders will observe and join in with acts of collective worship when appropriate as part of the normal monitoring and evaluation cycle in school e.g. learning walks.

### Definitions

Collective worship is defined as:

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring "collective" not "corporate" worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

Worship of a broadly Christian character is defined as:

The majority of acts of worship must be of a "broadly Christian character", and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

### Use of prayer, music and visitors

Song/music:

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise with the songs we sing. We are careful with our songs to recognise that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing. We have changed the words of some songs to make them more inclusive. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme. We listen to and sing "Proud" as part of our Friday assembly to help us think about what we are proud of and our achievements. We also learn songs throughout the year linked to our PSHE topics.

Classes sing as part of music lessons and also have time each year with our specialist singing tutor. During this we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

Prayer:

We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to our prayers which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian/ Hindu/ Muslim prayer/poem/reading...' or 'Please listen to the following prayer. If you agree, then you can say amen at the end'. In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Visitors:

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values and our school vision. This includes ensuring that all visitors actively promote acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. All visitors are issued with this policy and, unless otherwise agreed, will fit into the theme for the week.

We have made links with some people who visit us regularly to lead worship. This includes half termly assemblies led by John O'Brien, regular assemblies by our Chair of Governors and Father Martin.

### Equal Opportunities

Ensuring equality of opportunity does not mean that all learners are treated the same. At Fox Hill Primary, in accordance with the Learner's Act 1989, children are considered as individuals with particular needs and potentialities. Each child is given encouragement and the opportunity to join in with collective worship, with appropriate support provided as necessary, whatever their gender, race, religious belief, cultural background or disability.

### Responsibility of CL team in implementation of policy

The Our World Creative Learning team will assist the leadership team in the monitoring and implementation of this policy for collective worship. They will support staff and develop a bank of resources for the effective delivery.

### Responsibility of leadership and Governors in implementation of policy

- To ensure that the Leadership Team, all staff and Governors understand that the purpose of this policy is to ensure children participate in and benefit from collective worship.

- To ensure through observation and monitoring that staff model and support children in the acquisition of these skills.
- To ensure that time is given within the timetable to allow collective worship to be practised.

#### Communication of policy to others

This policy will be shared with all staff and stored in the policy file on staffshare. It is also uploaded to our website to make it available to our community.