

POLICY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP 2020 - 2023



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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy was written by a working party including staff and governors with reference to Norfolk Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) guidance. It explains the policy for collective worship at this school and how we interpret the legislation set out by the government.

2. THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2.1 The 1988 Education Reform Act states that in a community school:

- 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 (Acts of collective worship may be held off the school premises on special occasions, provided that these are in addition to the daily statutory act of collective worship on school premises)
- the head teacher is responsible for ensuring the legal requirements for Collective Worship are met
- 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.

2.2 The DFEE circular 1/94 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 add to the legal requirements of the Education Act although these are not an authoritative legal interpretation.

3. THE AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT AVENUE JUNIOR SCHOOL

3.1 The government requires all schools to provide an act of collective worship. At Avenue Junior School, we aim to:

- encourage children to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs
- develop a community spirit, celebrate together, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes
- encourage children to develop a reflective approach to living and give them time to worship God or reflect on human values
- feel safe and affirmed in doing any of the above

3.2 The majority of acts of worship over a term are wholly or mainly of a Christian character (character not content), reflecting the broad tradition of Christian belief and

not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. It is not necessary for every act of worship to be wholly or broadly Christian. During a term we may have acts of worship which include elements that are broadly Christian, those that are broadly in the tradition of another faith, for instance when celebrating a festival such as Eid or Divali, and some where elements are drawn from a number of different faiths.

3.3 Our Collective Worship helps children understand some of the features of worship in a believing Christian community. These include:

- praise
- reflection
- celebration
- thanks
- saying sorry
- sharing
- helping others.

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.

3.4 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.

4. THE APPROACH TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT AVENUE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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
- pictures and photos
- video clips
- artefacts
- stillness and silence
- celebrations

5. THE ORGANISATION OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT AVENUE JUNIOR SCHOOL

5.1 An act of Collective Worship takes place every day. These are led by the Head of School, Deputy Head of School, Year Leaders or teachers. On days when the whole school does not come together for Collective Worship, time is made by class teachers for worship to take place in the classroom.

5.2 The acts of worship follow themes designed by staff which support the aims of the school. The current year's themes are displayed on the staff noticeboard. While staff are encouraged to follow these, allowances are made for marking festivals or other newsworthy events. We also make regular links to our school values of Respect, Resilience and Aspiration.

5.3 Acts of worship are occasionally held in the Parish church in addition to the daily act of worship, e.g. at Christmas.

5.4 All parents are advised in the school prospectus of their right to withdraw their children from the collective worship provided.

6. RESOURCES FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We use a variety of resources drawn from sources such as books and the internet. We may also include the use of music, videos and artefacts.

7. WITHDRAWAL

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory. Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship and staff are also free to withdraw from involvement in this aspect of school life. We request that those who wish to exercise this right inform the headteacher in writing so that school records are accurate. We also appreciate opportunities to speak with parents and staff who have concerns about collective worship, always keen to develop our understanding of sensitivities and to overcome difficulties where possible. Those pupils who are withdrawn from worship are cared for by a member of the school's staff; parents may provide suitable activities for children so withdrawn.

8. OFSTED

Collective Worship must be inspected on a regular basis. This is part of the normal school inspection for Community schools.

9. REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed in three years unless new government guidance is issued which requires changes.