

Collective Worship Policy

Belonging, Believing, Building a future

It is our mission for everyone to experience the joy of God's love in their lives as part of St Peter's family through trust and friendships. We aim for everyone to be nurtured and to grow in peace, hope and understanding of God, themselves and one another in order to achieve and live fulfilled lives.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13)

ODST schools are inclusive, creative communities that build understanding, respect and empathy in young people. Pupils, staff and parents of all faiths (or none) are welcome. Our schools are faith communities that celebrate religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and encourage dialogue and understanding. We believe that we can all learn from each other and that collective worship is an educational entitlement for all. In worship we create the opportunity to explore the place of faith in each of our lives, and in the communities in which we live. This worship can occur at various times of day and with a mixture of grouping of pupils. In regular acts of formal worship the school community has the opportunity of offering thanksgiving and praise to God through a range of liturgical patterns which may include the Eucharist.

Legal Requirements

"Worship will be - appropriate to the age, aptitude and family backgrounds of pupils, - provided in a variety of settings, groupings and timings, with a variety of leaders." (DFES)

Our daily act of Collective Worship is in accordance with the religious character of our school as part of the ODST Corporation of Schools.

Aims of Collective Worship

There are three fundamental principles underlying the provision of our acts of Collective Worship. These principles are:

1. Collective worship contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
2. Collective worship is inclusive in nature;
3. Collective worship is educational.

Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural

Acts of Collective Worship will aim to:

- nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in human beings through working for social justice and encouraging pupils to consider the needs of others through charitable service;
- nurture reflection, meditation and prayer;
- provide pupils with opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of their lives through music, images and words;
- provide a sense of occasion that separates them from the rest of the school day;
- foster an appreciation of the natural created world and our shared responsibilities for maintaining it;
- develop clear partnerships between worship in the school and the wider community.

Inclusive

Our understanding of Christianity is that it is an inclusive faith which mirrors the attitude of Christ in the Gospels. The ODST thus welcomes pupils and staff of all faiths. Through their Christian character our acts of Collective Worship will:

- recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, life styles and faiths which exist in our school and local community;
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for every pupil to attend ;
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils;
- foster active roles of pupils and members of the local community – in preparation, participation and leadership.

Educational

Our acts of Collective Worship will aim to provide wider opportunities to:

- reflect the aims of the school, and foster wide ownership of our core values;
- assist pupils to have increased awareness and to reflect upon fundamental issues about life;
- enhance, complement and extend curricular work;
- develop pupils understanding of the Christian faith and Anglican practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical content;
- identify opportunities for Christian celebration which can be associated with other main school events;
 - this will include scope to celebrate the academic, social, personal and wider achievements of pupils.

Specific matters that will be dealt with at individual school level will include:

- Personnel responsible for worship;
- Personnel involved in leading worship, including pupils;
- Timetabling of acts of worship, including use of local church and groupings of pupils;
- Planning of worship, including its relationship to any core values;
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures;
- Taking account of SIAMS requirements as applicable to the specific situation;
- Opportunities for worship/prayer throughout the day.

This list is not exhaustive and other aspects may be included at local level.

Rights of withdrawal

The right of withdrawal was established in the Education Act 1944, re-enacted in the Education Reform Act 1988.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Parents are asked to discuss the matter with the Headteacher in the first instance.

If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. The school remains responsible for the supervision of any pupil withdrawn from collective worship, unless the pupil is lawfully taking part in collective worship elsewhere.

Appendix 1 – Guidelines on Implementation

Overview

Our assemblies are of a clearly Christian character, recognising the diversity of the school community, and provide occasions when pupils meet together in larger, more formal settings where a positive tone and focus for the day can be established. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on relevant Christian, moral and spiritual issues, drawn from a variety of sources, thereby enriching their experience of life.

Staff will have a key role in the delivery of Assemblies and Collective Worship in the school. Both the Rector and Worship Co-ordinator will have a key role in providing a lead in this area, ensuring that Acts of Collective Worship in the school are of high quality, well co-ordinated and delivered effectively, in line with these overall policy guidelines.

Assemblies are also an essential means of recognising and celebrating school values and achievements in their broadest sense. Within Celebration Assemblies pupils are recognised for their personal achievement, both school based and in the community and groups of pupils are also commended for their corporate achievements. Pupils are awarded, in Celebration Assemblies, with certificates for their achievements.

Pupils are encouraged to play an active role in preparing, presenting and responding to assemblies, thereby giving them a platform for positively contributing to the ethos of the school and for providing role models for other pupils. The involvement of pupils in assemblies, irrespective of race, gender, age or ability, is an effective vehicle for developing their self-confidence and for encouraging co-operation, respect and tolerance amongst all pupils.

- (i) Collective worship will:
 - have a clear message;
 - be acceptable to the whole community, staff and students;
 - include a variety of elements at different times;
 - involve the students;
 - have a dedicated focus which signifies what is being reflected upon;
 - provide a dedicated opportunity for students to reflect/respond to the input.

- (ii) In achieving a meaningful act of worship it is important to distinguish between worship and ritual. Rituals are a means of enabling worship and include:
 - stories and readings
 - songs, hymns and music
 - drama
 - prayer, meditations
 - creative silence
 - sacred/secular readings
 - artifacts and natural materials
 - pupils' contributions

The school will be aware of the timing of religious festivals and any specific requirements relating to them.

- (iii) It can be helpful to consider three aspects:
 - Experiences that have the character of pre-worship e.g. joy;
 - The essence of worship – attending to the divine;
 - Consequences of worship – e.g. moral and ethical values renewed and directed e.g. courage.

As part of our collective worship pupils will have the opportunity to be quiet and reflect on what has been shared. Pupils will sometimes lead the prayer session.

- (iv) It is not appropriate to
 - make students repeat a prayer if they do not wish
 - join their hands if they do not wish
 - say 'Amen' if they do not wish

- (v) We expect pupils to
 - be respectful
 - act in an appropriate manner
 - have the daily opportunity for a sense of togetherness which engenders a sense of belonging
 - have an understanding that worship is not done for pupils but is an experience for all who attend

- (vi) We expect staff to
 - lead where applicable in the agreed manner,
 - respond to collective worship in an appropriate manner

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.