

Elkesley Primary & Nursery School



Collective Acts of Worship Policy (Policy Number 39)

Compiled by	Miss Price	May 2019
Agreed by	Staff	
Approved by	Governors	
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The Collective Worship Policy at Elkesley Primary and Nursery School pays due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken the guidance offered by the LA through its SACRE.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', and in recognition of the fact that the majority of our pupils are practising members of other faiths we base our assemblies on those aspects of Christian teaching that are shared with other faiths.

The Collective Worship Policy of Elkesley Primary and Nursery School is consistent with the philosophy and aims of the school as expressed in the school prospectus. Assemblies are conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faiths and beliefs of all members of the school.

What is collective worship?

Collective Worship is

- an educational activity which is inclusive, involving pupils of any faith and none as a school is a community of people holding different beliefs
- different from corporate worship, which is the shared experience of people belonging to a particular faith or denomination
- Collective worship is **not** the same as an assembly, though can take place in the same gathering. A school may hold any number of assemblies each week, but **must** have a daily act of collective worship. Collective worship could additionally be held in class or tutor groups for a shorter period of time.

Aims of collective worship

Through meeting together as a whole school, or as groups within the school, collective worship provides opportunities for pupils and staff in the school to reflect together on:

- What is important in life, such as common aims and values, achievements and special times.
- What it means to be human - exploring a range of beliefs and ideas and how the behaviour of some people gives an example of the best a human can become
- Ideas of right and wrong - applying these to current personal, school and external issues
- contributes to the way in which people live and work together as communities, both in school and beyond
- Reflects ways in which people in different places and times have experienced, responded to and expressed issues of belief and behaviour.
- Experience a variety of styles of worship
- Celebrate together

The DfE circular 1/94 states that collective worship is to provide opportunities for pupils to:

- worship God
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- encourage participation and response
- promote community/shared values
- reinforce positive attitudes

By providing good quality collective worship, we aim to build an inclusive ethos around shared purposes and values, which contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each child. In doing so it contributes to a thriving learning community and to the development of an awareness of British Values. 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, and allows children to explore their own beliefs and spirituality.

What is best practice?

At Elkesley Primary and Nursery School, we will offer opportunities for the whole school community to:

- celebrate together and share common values
- develop a reflective approach to living and thinking deeply
- foster a corporate identity and build community
- affirm the individual and the community
- deepen every individual's capacity for emotional responses
- awaken empathetic responses
 - look beyond the material and the physical
 - share experiences and possibilities of the transcendent
 - challenge and question their own thinking and the views of others
 - feel safe and affirmed in doing any of the above.

It may include:

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

The Contribution of collective Worship to aspects of the curriculum

Collective Worship time is distinct from curriculum time. However, in Elkesley Primary and Nursery School, 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 diverse stimuli and resources and provide pupils with the opportunity to 'respond' on their own level.

A note about Prayer

Where prayer is used it is important to ensure that:

- There should be no expectation that children will pray.
- Words introducing any prayer-like activity are given as an invitation rather than an instruction.
- Any invitation to pray is made for the benefit of those pupils for whom it is appropriate.
- The use of silence gives space for prayer or reflection or both.
- The words need to be owned by the speaker and/or grounded in a religious tradition
- Everyone can be included in a personal reflection on the theme or story or words of a prayer.
- There is an expectation that everyone will be still and listen to the words a prayer, without expectation of participation.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

At Elkesley Primary and Nursery School we ensure that there is:

- a commitment from senior leaders to the value of collective worship
- an allocation of an appropriate budget for resources and training
- thorough planning to meet the needs of our school, its learners and community
- educational use of religious and other material, ensuring variety in its form and presentation
- an open approach that gives pupils opportunities to respond without compromising them in any way
- every opportunity to interest and inspire pupils
- encouragement for all members of the school community to share in the planning and leading of collective worship
- an appropriate structure to indicate the beginning and end of collective worship.

Termly planning sheets list themes, special occasions and events, but will be flexible to allow the inclusion of current and topical issues. Together with weekly planning and recording sheets, these will ensure that there is continuity and progression, and enable the monitoring and evaluation of acts of worship to take place.

Visitors will be welcome to lead Collective Worship from time to time and will be given guidance on acts of Collective Worship at Elkesley Primary and Nursery School. Leaders from faiths and non-religious groups within the area will increase the pupils' awareness, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these traditions.

What the law requires

The law requires 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”.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from all parts of collective worship.

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. We request that those who wish to withdraw their child(ren) inform the Head Teacher in writing so that school records are accurate. We also appreciate opportunities to speak with parents who have concerns as we are always keen to develop our understanding of sensitivities and to overcome difficulties where possible.

Those children who are withdrawn from worship are cared for by a member of school staff.

Teachers do have the right to withdraw from Collective Acts of Worship.

In inviting the school community to worship, we have to be mindful of the varied backgrounds that the school community come from and it is therefore never the practice of our schools to preach to or seek to convert. The faith background of all is to be respected at all times.

The Head Teacher is responsible for the provision of collective worship, supported and monitored by the governing body.