

REDLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP GUIDANCE



1. BACKGROUND TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT OUR SCHOOL

1.1 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”.

1.2 Families who send their children to this school are from a wide range of ethnicities and therefore a number of religions are represented. There are also children from families who have no religious backgrounds. 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 children’s families are respected at all times.

1.3 The Headteacher 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 and staff are entitled not to take part. 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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 Headteacher. However, we would hope that most people would feel comfortable with the type of collective worship offered at Redlands.

2. SOME DEFINITIONS

2.1 Collective worship

Worship 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.

2.2 Worship of a broadly Christian character

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. However, all children should be enabled to reflect on Christian stories and those of other faiths in a thoughtful manner.

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.

3. VALUES AND AIMS

3.1 We believe at this school that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. 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.

3.2 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
- Develop an understanding of the feelings of other people in every day situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings and beliefs
- 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 perspective and beliefs, whether it be religious or not

3.3 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.

4. OBJECTIVES

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

- 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, the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes and standards manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....
- 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 to other people.

5. PLANNING

5.1 At Redlands we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. The whole school meets together for assembly twice each week: Wednesday 9:00am – 9:30am and Friday 2:30pm – 3:00pm. On Monday morning FS2 and KS1 meet together and for the rest of the week (and KS2 on Monday) there is a worshipful/reflection time in the classroom (Candletime).

5.2 The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher usually leads the whole school worship, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership and class assemblies take place each term.

5.3 The school year has been divided into six terms, each with a core value. Staff leading worship can plan around these values and themes will encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. As part of our inclusive ethos, we do not use prayers, but prefer to end each assembly or collective worship time with a time of quiet reflection whilst watching a lit candle.

5.4 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 verity in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship

We choose from a range of methods, including:

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

6. SUCCESS CRITERIA

At this school 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 pupils' experience

Review date: Spring 2020