

Collective Worship Policy 2020

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 The aims and objectives of collective worship are:

- to provide an opportunity for children to worship God;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos, with shared values, and to reinforce positive attitudes.
- to teach children how to worship.

2 Collective worship

2.1 We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly. We expect everyone to take an active part in the assembly.

2.2 In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our assemblies on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church. However, we conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school.

2.3 While most acts of worship in our schools are Catholic, we also hold assemblies that reflect the traditions of other religions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

3 Organisation of collective worship

3.1 We hold a daily act of collective worship. This forms part of each morning assembly, which can be either a whole-school assembly (although sometimes we also hold separate EYFS and infant assemblies), or a class assembly.

3.2 We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time, and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful, to listen carefully to the teachings, and to participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, and sometimes candles or other objects, to focus the attention of the children.

3.3 The assemblies are normally conducted by the headteacher or other members of staff, but are sometimes led by local clergy or other representatives of local religious groups.

3.4 We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the Christian faith, and we observe the festivals and mark the events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies are related to topics that we teach as

part of the school curriculum. We plan our assemblies well in advance of the day they take place.

3.5 Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in the assemblies by showing their work to the other children, and by raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are loved and valued, and all achievements are recognised. St Mary's Infant and Junior Schools are successful school, and we shall continue to celebrate the successes of all our children at our assemblies.

3.6 Parents and carers are invited to attend class assemblies and liturgies. We encourage their attendance, as this promotes community spirit, and shows the school and the homes working together in support of the children's achievements.

3.7 Governors' attendance at our assemblies is always welcome.

4 Right of withdrawal

4.1 We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the assembly. Parents and carers do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

4.2 The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.

5 Monitoring and review

5.1 Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of the chair of governors. The governor concerned liaises with the Headteacher before reporting to the governors.

5.2 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.