



THE NOBEL SCHOOL

DOCUMENT REFERENCE	POLICY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP
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POST	Deputy Headteacher
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TARGET AUDIENCE	All staff and parents regardless of race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, or gender reassignment.
STATUS	Approved

Member of staff responsible: assistant headteacher

PRINCIPLES

The Nobel School believes 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.

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age students 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 students”.

Families who send their children to this school are in the main ‘nominally’ Christian; some children are from practising Christian families, in addition, there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-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 child’s family is respected at all times.

AIMS

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment for students to:

- become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community;
- grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in everyday situations and beliefs;
- explore the language which people use to express their feelings;
- 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 life stance, whether it be religious or not.

PRACTICE

At The Nobel School we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. There is one assembly each week for every student in the school. In addition form tutors provide tutor groups with opportunities for reflection during tutor time in the remaining tutor times in the week.

The headteacher, senior and middle leaders lead the whole school worship each week. Students are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership at certain times of the year.

The school year has been divided into weekly themes, which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, aspects from the school calendar and the school's focus on developing the character attributes of CARE (courage, aspiration, responsibility, empathy). Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up.

Please see additional guidance on assemblies in Appendix 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body.
- The assistant headteacher is responsible for planning the calendar of themes and reflection activities on a termly basis.
- All form tutors are required to attend assemblies unless they have formally withdrawn from them by putting their request in writing and meeting with the headteacher. All other staff are welcome to attend.
- Parents of a student have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. 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.
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006 makes provision for students in post-16 education to exercise the right to withdraw themselves from the daily act of collective worship, but not from assembly.
- The deputy headteacher is responsible for ensuring that parents are reminded on an annual basis of the content of this policy via the school website.

DISSEMINATION

This policy is shared with all staff via the staff policy library on SharePoint. Parents are advised of the policy on an annual basis via the school website.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The governing board reviews this policy on a bi-annual basis. Governor visits to assemblies occur during the year.

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: September 2022

APPENDIX 1 ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON PLANNING AND CONDUCTING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

SACRE GUIDANCE ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Whilst there is a legal requirement for schools to conduct a 'daily act of collective worship'.(The 1988 Education Act and subsequent Acts), none of this legislation actually defines what is meant by the term 'collective worship'.

SACRE recognises that schools need to clearly differentiate between 'corporate worship' and 'collective worship'.

Corporate worship takes place within a faith community context e.g. in churches, gurdwaras, mosques, synagogues, temples. Corporate worship implies a community with a shared set of beliefs and values. For most faith communities, worship is concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power. Few schools can expect that all their members will subscribe to a set of beliefs which enable the entire school community as such to constitute a worshipping community.

School collective worship should recognise that the school community is a collection of people. Thus, acts of collective worship should be sensitive to the collective character of individual schools, and to be inclusive the term must be interpreted in a way which is meaningful to the range of communities it serves. The school community will usually include people from a variety of cultural and faith, and non-faith backgrounds.

Therefore:

- the term 'collective' when used in relation to worship in schools refers to the gathering together of a school group or groups for worship; it does not in any way suggest an act of worship which involves a group meeting to subscribe to any particular faith or denomination of a faith;
- collective worship does not pre-suppose shared beliefs, and should not seek uniform responses from students. Collective worship caters for a diversity of beliefs and points of view, allowing individuals to respond as individuals.

A broad definition, which has been referred to as 'worth-ship', might encompass that which is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to people of excellence or 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 thus defined draws on literature, music, drama, art and other sources of inspiration. It can provide a focus for thought, inspiration and reflection for pupils (and staff) whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none.

The majority of acts of collective worship must be of a 'broadly Christian character', and must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominationally biased. Sensitivity to the faith background of pupils is enshrined in the law requiring headteachers to have regard to family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes.

In order to achieve an act of worship which meets legal requirements as well as educational principles, leaders may wish to concentrate on those characteristics which are shared by faiths as well as those which are specific to Christianity. These include:

- that there is one God, a supreme spirituality, the source of all life who created the world and all that lies in and beyond it;
- that the nature of God may be found through love and selfless caring for others;
- that all relationships between human beings should be guided by love;
- that the spirit of love be used by those with power to value and care for the world and all that is in it.

In this way school acts of collective worship can become a purposeful collective spiritual experience which supports the ethos of the school.

School acts of worship may, therefore, be a time of honouring excellence and exploring and sharing things of value and worth. During such acts of worship, pupils should be given an opportunity to worship inwardly if they wish to do so. This may be achieved through a moment or two of reflective silence during each act of collective worship. This will therefore allow a meaningful experience for all pupils whilst giving time for individuals to worship in the spiritual sense.

"A school is not a worshipping community....but rather a worship enabling community"
(B O'Keefe)

In conducting our assemblies, we choose from a range of methods, including:

- Students' contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Reflection/meditation
- Songs /music to unify and uplift
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors