



Collective Worship Policy

Reviewed – October 2019

Reviewed – May 2021

The role of Collective Worship in the life of our school

Collective Worship makes a valuable contribution to the life of Woodlawn School. It provides an opportunity for members of the school community to pause from activity, to gather, to remind themselves of and to reflect upon the beliefs and values which bind the school community together. It also allows those with a religious commitment the possibility of entering into worship and those with no religious commitment to sense what worship is and to reflect deeply. In this way we aim both to affirm and to protect the integrity of all members of the school community.

In particular, Collective Worship in our school

- provides an opportunity for members of the school community to stop activity, to pause and to reflect on important issues;
- builds up the sense of group identity;
- gives pupils the experience of being still or silent;
- provides an opportunity for celebrating times of success or joy;
- provides an opportunity for meeting at times of sadness or sorrow;
- provides an opportunity for highlighting and reflecting upon core school values and offers the opportunity to mark significant points in the year, such as festivals and school events.

Our School and the Law on Collective Worship

At Woodlawn School we acknowledge that the Education Reform Act of 1988 sets out the law regarding Collective Worship and we ensure that the 'broadly Christian character' requirement is achieved in the majority of our Acts of Collective Worship over the course of a school term. We do this in a number of ways, for example, by

- making reference to God or Jesus, when appropriate (but being sensitive to the nature of the school community and guarding against the assumption that simply to use such words somehow creates 'worship' or 'legality');
- encouraging a positive and responsible attitude to the environment;
- encouraging a quest for honesty, integrity, justice and truth;
- encouraging children to look beyond the obvious, the immediate and the material;
- encouraging love and respect for self and for the other person;
- encouraging service to others and to the community; and
- building Christian festivals into the yearly programme (which does not, of course preclude focusing on festivals from other faith traditions as well).
- encouraging a focus on our school core values of friendship, kindness, honesty, respect and responsibility

At Woodlawn School we seek to make Collective Worship as inclusive as possible. Therefore we:

- recognise that there are many forms of commitment, religious and non-religious;
- regard variety – in religion, culture and belief – as something to be acknowledged and explored rather than avoided and denied;
- build festivals from a variety of cultural and religious traditions into our yearly programme.

Collective Worship and the School Curriculum

At Woodlawn School we recognise that Collective Worship is in 'dialogue' with the curriculum i.e.

- Collective Worship draws from the curriculum – by providing an opportunity to reflect on and highlight classroom work, for example; and
- Collective Worship feeds back into the curriculum – by providing ideas and suggestions which can be followed up in the classroom.

The day to day organisation of Collective Worship in our school

Collective Worship takes place on a daily basis for all year groups either in a gathering of the department, whole school or a class group.

It is organised so that there is a variety in content and leadership. The timing is flexible and worship is either organised for the whole school or in separate Primary/Secondary or as a class group. From arrival to dismissal, is a period of no longer than 15 minutes, although it is recognised that the time may be extended or reduced, as appropriate.

We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that Collective worship 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 and to listen carefully to the teachings and participate in singing hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and sometimes using an object/picture that acts as a focal point for the attention of the children.

Children should be listeners and spectators, not participators of a faith other than their own. Children may participate by showing and describing artefacts, customs etc but should not participate in ritual which may be offensive to members of that faith community.

It is important that:

- The option to share or not in prayer is always given to those who are present.
- All religious artefacts are treated with proper respect.
- A time to be silent, to reflect on what has been seen or heard is encouraged in every act of worship.
- A natural break is made at the end of the assembly if time is to be used to give out notices

The Headteacher or teachers and sometimes local clergy or other representatives of local groups lead assemblies. Our most regular visitors are from our local Church of England Church.

A copy of the Collective Worship Policy is given to all those who lead school worship.

Our current organisation is

Monday	Secondary Department Assembly
Tuesday	Class
Wednesday	Class
Thursday	Class
Friday	Primary Department Assembly

We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the Christian faith and we often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. We often incorporate the SEALs themes into our planned worship time.

Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies by showing their work to the other children and raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of schools. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised. Woodlawn School celebrates the successes of all the children in assemblies.

From time to time we invite the children to lead the sessions as appropriate as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the school works together to support the achievements of our children.

We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

Record Keeping

We recognise the importance and value of record keeping. We plan our Collective Worship as part of a series of weekly themes well in advance of the day they take place. A copy of the weekly themes for the term is given to all staff and is also displayed in the staff room and in the Headteacher's office.

The right of parents to withdraw their children from Acts of Collective Worship

At Woodlawn School we seek to be an inclusive community. However we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. This school expects that withdrawal will only be made following parental discussion with the Headteacher followed by written confirmation of withdrawal. Our school has a system of suitable supervision for pupils withdrawn from Acts of Collective Worship.

The right of members of staff to withdraw from Acts of Collective Worship

All teachers, including the Headteacher, have the right of withdrawal from the Act of Collective Worship, but the Headteacher, should they wish to exercise this right, maintains statutory accountability for Acts of Collective Worship in our school. This right of withdrawal does not extend to assemblies.

The role of Governors

The Governing Body will review this policy, formally, two years from the date of its adoption. Informal Review may be necessary in the interim and should take place as and when required.