

# **COALWAY COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL**

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY**

### **Introduction**

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of collective acts of worship within the school.

The Collective Worship Policy at Coalway Community Infant School pays due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken account of the guidance offered by the LA through SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education).

All maintained schools should provide daily collective worship for registered pupils (apart from those who have been withdrawn by their parents), which is wholly, or mainly of a broadly Christian character. At Coalway Community Infant School this is usually provided within a daily, whole school assembly.

The Collective Worship Policy is consistent with the philosophy and aims of the school as expressed in the school prospectus.

This policy has been formulated and agreed by the teaching staff and governing body.

The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff, and will be monitored by the Head teacher and RE subject leader.

### **Philosophy**

Collective worship can make a significant contribution to the ethos of the school by reinforcing and reflecting the beliefs and values which bind the school community together. It can inspire, uplift, celebrate and give a sense of purpose and direction. In addition, Collective worship offers a unique occasion in the school day to pause and explore life beyond the prescribed curriculum.

It encourages members of the whole school community, teachers and learners together, to challenge assumptions and reflect upon issues which transcend normal day to day experiences, thus broadening understanding and contributing to our search for meaning in life. By enabling pupils to acknowledge the value of diversity in terms of race, gender, culture and differing abilities, it fosters inclusion and breeds tolerance. Collective worship should model the ideals of inclusion, respecting the integrity of all involved.

Furthermore, whilst allowing those with religious commitment to enter into worship, those who have no such commitment are offered an opportunity to sense what worship can mean.

### **Aims**

At Coalway Community Infant School we believe 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.

For the School:

Collective Worship contributes significantly to the ethos of Coalway Community Infant School and it is our aim that it is a time when the school community can:

- share common aims and values
- celebrate achievement and special times
- explore together the world in which we live including multi-cultural aspects
- develop a community spirit

For the Pupils:

We also intend that Collective Worship contributes to the development of the pupil as a 'whole' person by providing opportunities to:

- worship
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- develop their own spirituality
- reinforce positive attitudes
- participate and respond
- reflect on what it means to be human
- come together as a school community

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. It is attended by all pupils and staff. Any visitors in school are very welcome to join in.

### **The Contribution of Collective Worship to aspects of the Curriculum**

Collective Worship time is distinct from curriculum time. However, at Coalway Community Infant 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 class-work through its consideration of subject matter from different perspectives. This will be reflected in our weekly whole school and celebration assemblies.

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 should 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.

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, standards manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful

- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

### **Legal Status of Collective Worship**

**Daily** - All maintained, community, foundation or voluntary schools are required by law to provide a daily act of collective worship.

**Wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character** - All pupils should take part in an act of worship which is 'wholly, or mainly of a broadly Christian character' in some appropriate grouping at some point in the day – unless they have been withdrawn by their parents. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 defines 'broadly Christian' to mean that it should 'not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination'. Not every act of collective worship is required to be Christian, provided that 'taking any school term as a whole' most are.

### **Determinations**

Collective worship should be appropriate to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of pupils within the school. The legal requirement for collective worship to be 'wholly, or mainly of a broadly Christian character' is appropriate for most pupils across the country and the county.

If, in the opinion of the Head teacher, the requirements for 'broadly Christian' worship is inappropriate for the whole school, or a group within the school, an application may be made to the SACRE for a 'determination'. This will allow for acts of collective worship according to a religion other than Christianity where this is more appropriate.

Where a determination is granted by the SACRE, the requirement for the school to provide daily collective worship remains; it is only the 'broadly Christian' nature of this worship which is 'lifted' or 'modified'. (For further guidance see Circular 1/94)

### **Withdrawals**

In accordance with legal requirements, parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship on religious grounds. Parents should make their wishes known to the Head teacher who will ensure that any pupils who are withdrawn are appropriately supervised while the act of collective worship takes place. Pupils can be withdrawn wholly or partly from acts of collective worship only by parents. Schools should not use this time to withdraw pupils for other activities.

### **The Management of Collective Worship**

The Head teacher is responsible for arranging the daily collective act of worship after consultation with the governing body.

### **The Organisation of Collective Worship**

Collective Worship is organised to take place in the school hall. Acts of worship will usually last for approximately 15 minutes, although it is recognized that this time will be shortened or lengthened when it is appropriate. Longer acts of worship take place on Mondays and Fridays at Coalway (Monday hymn practice and Friday celebration theme).

## **Leadership**

Members of the school staff (typically the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher/RE/PSHE/Music subject leaders/senior management) and visitors will also be involved in leading acts of worship.

## **Planning Acts of Collective Worship**

The content of all acts of Collective Worship will be considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils. A source list of themes, special occasions and events is included in the appendix, but planning will be flexible to allow the inclusion of current and topical issues. Planning of Collective Worship aims to ensure that there is continuity and progression each term. Selected visitors will also be welcome to lead Collective Worship – guidance will be given by the Head teacher.

## **The Act of Collective Worship**

A variety of teaching and learning styles and active and interactive methods are appropriate in acts of Collective Worship. Any and all of the methods employed in the classroom can be used effectively in acts of Collective Worship. Leaders will choose the style/method and resources which are appropriate to the content, the age, aptitude and the background of the pupils.

The content and process must be sufficiently stimulating in order to evoke a response in the individual. This may not be visual, but opportunity must be given to express this response through reflection and prayer.

## **Each act of worship should have:**

### **1 Worship**

- a. This should take place in a space in the school building which is conducive to a worshipful atmosphere - at Coalway Community Infant School, the School Hall is mainly used.
- b. A clear focus on important issues or concepts such as love, forgiveness, peace etc.
- c. Materials and approaches which connect with the pupils (heart and mind)
- d. Space for reflection – giving time to think about the issues raised and enabling time to pray.
- e. A feeling that this time is somehow special, out of the ordinary.

**2 Plenty of participation...** both active and passive, by pupils and adults. This is a time for building up the sense of community and promoting the ethos of the school. It is important therefore that staff, as well as pupils, are in attendance.

**3 Wide variety of approaches...** dramatic, readings, stories, music, dance, silence, reflections, songs, hymns, prayers, mime, visual images and artefacts that could be used as a focus for worship.

**4 Variety of leaders...** including visitors from outside the school, local people from faith and community groups, representatives of charitable activities, school governors, parents... as well as different members of school staff.

**5 Broadly Christian...** this does not necessarily mean prayers, hymns, Bible stories have to be used on every occasion – but it will be important to include over the course of each term Christian stories, teachings and perspectives and to mark special days and seasons in the Christian calendar.

## **Song/Music**

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise with the songs we sing.

Every week we have a singing practice. During this we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

### **Prayer**

We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher and RE subject leader on an ongoing basis.

The success of acts of worship will be evaluated 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 pupil's experience

The Collective Worship policy will be reviewed annually by staff and governors.

### **Review**

This policy statement will be reviewed annually.

Date of policy: October 2016

Review Date: Annually

## Appendix

Day/time	Theme
Monday 10.00-10.30	Whole school singing. Singing songs linked to topics/themes/religious festivals/values
Tuesday 10.00-10.20	Rolling programme of agreed whole school worship/values topics.
Wednesday 10.00-10.20	
Thursday 10.00-10.20	
Friday 10.00-10.30	Whole school celebration linked to achievement in and outside of school. As a school, behavioural, academic and social aspects are celebrated.