



Alexander Hosea Primary School

'Roots to grow, wings to fly'

Collective Worship Policy

Alexander Hosea Primary School will follow the advice and policy for Collective Worship in accordance with South Gloucestershire policy.

Introduction

School **Collective Worship** will recognise that the school community is a collection of people. Thus, acts of **Collective Worship** will be sensitive to the **collective** character of our school; to be inclusive, collective worship will be interpreted in a way which is meaningful to the range of communities we serve.

Rationale:

The Nature of Collective Worship in Local Authority Community Schools

The law

The head teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body.

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".

Definitions

For this purpose, 'broadly Christian' means that worship that reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief should be the main form of worship. It is not necessary for every act of worship to be of this character, but, within each school term, the majority of such acts must be so. Any such worship should not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths and we will concentrate on these, as well as those specific to Christianity.

Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christian or from non-religious backgrounds, although we have a small number of children from a range of faith backgrounds, including Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist. 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.

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) would wish teachers of any religious persuasion, or of none, to feel able to participate in and lead assemblies which are genuinely worshipful in a general sense.

As with all areas of the curriculum, collective worship should be a valid educational experience. There is also the need to respect the different beliefs of teachers, parents and children. With this in mind, provision should be made for the opportunity to worship.

We favour a **broad** definition of worship which allows children to reflect upon their shared human experience and feelings of joy and sadness, thankfulness and need, reflections on shared values and concerns and the exploration of the spiritual area of experience. These experiences and attitudes can also lead to a fuller and more mature capacity for worship.

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.

VALUES AND AIMS

Collective worship provides an opportunity for children to explore and understand our school vision, aims and 'ASPIRE' values:

Adaptability

Self-belief

Perseverance

Inclusion

Respect

Enquiry

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.

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:

- foster a sense of fellowship by bringing pupils together to celebrate shared values of the school and the community; and explore the ASPIRE central values theme.
- foster a sense of wonder and awe at the beauty, mystery and power of the world;
- allow reflection on the fundamental questions of life, and focus attention away from the concerns of the moment to those things which are of eternal concern to human beings;
- provide an opportunity for celebration, thanksgiving and sharing of emotions such as love, joy, hope, friendship, acceptance, anguish, fear, reverence, forgiveness
- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimuli
- foster a concern for the needs of other people particularly at Harvest or in times of disaster
- provide a time for sharing successes and failures in personal, school and community life;
- provide an experience of being part of a caring community;
- foster new insights about life and foster empathy for others;
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not
- enable pupils to approach the 'threshold' of worship by instilling in them a worshipful attitude

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.

OBJECTIVES

We see school 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 and 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, 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 other people.

Assemblies may thus be 'Christian worship' if they stimulate young people to reflect, to feel awe, to learn to be still in order to discover their deeper self.

Guidance:

DFE Circular 1/94 is not legislation but offers guidance.

Organisation of Collective Worship

At Alexander Hosea school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework.

Each week we have four whole school assemblies which include, celebration, singing, the telling of Bible stories by the 'Open the Book' group (consisting of members from a range of local churches) and whole school worship usually led by the headteacher. One day a week, children have a class or key stage assembly.

Sometimes the local vicar or other visitors lead collective worship.

Content and Presentation of Collective Worship:

A range of themes are used which encompass our school values linked with SEAL themes, religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

The methods used to present particular themes may include:

- the spoken word: story, poetry, personal experiences and anecdotes, interviews, discussion, readings from the Bible and from other religious and secular literature, choral speaking, thoughts for the day/week, quotations, prayers, visualisation.
 - the sung word: hymns pop songs, folk songs, chants
 - visual stimuli: DVD, internet, pictures, posters, artefacts, natural objects, religious objects, personal objects, works of art.
 - performance: dance, music, mime, drama, role play
 - music: classical, pop, folk,
 - broadcasts: radio, DVD, CD, internet;

Opting out of Collective Worship:

Parents 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 will comply unless the request is withdrawn. In this case the school can offer two alternatives:

pupils can simply not attend collective worship and spend their time off the school premises with their parents or be under the supervision of a member of staff elsewhere in the school;

parents and headteacher together can agree to make informal parallel provision for those of a different faith, provided that this does not become the school's main act of worship and no additional costs fall on the school or the Local Authority.

Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the headteacher. However, we hope that our inclusive policy will be broadly accepted by a wide variety of people. Many parents see the provision of acts of worship by a school as part of its expression of care for the well-being of its pupils. Teachers may also withdraw from collective worship.

Conclusion:

We encourage children to take an active role in collective worship and provide the opportunity for them to lead assemblies too. Collective worship is used to strengthen the school's vision, values and aims as well as the British values; together these make a valuable contribution to our Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education and the overall school ethos.

Equalities statement

This policy has been screened for EIA (Equalities Assessment) to ensure that we give 'due consideration' to equality of opportunity and has been agreed and formally approved by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

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