

# **Willand School**

## **Collective Worship Policy**

### **Rationale**

Daily collective worship is a legal requirement, but in the case of this school it is considered an integral and essential part of the whole school ethos and curriculum. It is to be broadly Christian in nature and inclusive of all registered pupils. It is a time when the school community can express itself and develop spiritually both as a group and individually. It is intentionally a learning experience and is set in an educational context. It is one means by which the school fulfils its aims and contributes towards the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the children.

Parents have the right to withdraw a child from collective worship.

A member of staff may also decline to participate in acts of worship within the school on grounds of conscience.

### **Purpose**

The act of worship should seek to:

- (a) reflect, express, affirm or challenge commonly accepted personal and social values; and
- (b) provide experiences so that those with a commitment to a religious life may worship adequately without violating the integrity of those without a religious commitment; and
- (c) provide experiences for those not committed to religious beliefs without violating the integrity of those who have religious beliefs.

Schools “should sensitively try to evoke those senses and feelings from which it might be said that worship most naturally arises”: e.g.

- sense of beauty
- sense of wonder and awe
- feeling of pride
- sense of pity
- sense of smallness in the face of greatness
- sense of grandness in the face of smallness
- feeling of shared sadness
- sense of shared loss
- sense of peace
- sense of thankfulness
- sense of stillness in the midst of a busy existence” (1) Bill Gent, *School Worship: Perspective, Principle and Practice*. CEM 1989.

### **Guidelines**

As the act of worship in this school is conducted within an educational context it therefore follows that evangelism (an attempt to persuade the participant to adopt a particular religious belief), is not appropriate. However, worship should provide opportunities for:

- the whole community to celebrate
- sharing and experiencing differences

- building a sense of group identify
- encouraging a sense of personal and social responsibility
- a break from the busyness of life (for stillness and quiet)
- learning how to behave in a large social group
- learning how to perform in front of an audience
- learning how to respond to a performance
- making visible the school's leadership
- developing inner awareness
- exploring feelings and emotions

## **The Pattern of Worship**

Children will meet daily as a school, key stage or in class groups. Each week there will normally be three whole school assemblies. The first, on Monday, taken by The Headteacher, the second on Thursday taken by the Music co-ordinator and the third on Friday taken by a class or lead by an invited guest such as the local minister or vicar. Class assemblies will be lead by the class teacher.

## **Approaches to Classroom Worship**

Provide a clear, conceptual focus.

Allow time for thinking, sharing, listening, response, stillness and silence.

Keep the session simple and short. Some ideas to use are:-

- a short passage of scripture
- a story, poem, or piece of literature
- a picture, poster, or slide
- a prayer - perhaps with a simple ritual
- a hymn or song which the pupils come to know well
- a flower, twisted root, a shell, signs of seasonal change
- an object from the technological world to assist reflection on the power and creativity of human beings
- a personal account of an event or experience in your own life
- music
- silence

Invite pupils to reflect on the content of the worship either individually or in small groups, allowing discussion and reflection for two or three minutes. Pupils should be encouraged to actively participate through such things as drama, personal accounts, prayer and music.

The use of music to begin or end may be helpful.

## **Planning and Record Keeping**

The Headteacher is legally responsible for collective worship. The Collective Worship Co-ordinator plans weekly themes for the whole school throughout the year. These are distributed to staff. Class teachers are responsible for their own plans for class assemblies within this planned framework.

The programme contains themes which during the course of the year centres around:

- religious festivals and special days
- annual events and anniversaries
- aspects of the school curriculum eg SEAL themes
- developments from classroom activities
- published assembly books and other literature.

In order to prevent too many restrictions the full plan leaves room for the more topical and spontaneous acts of worship (for example, exploring current affairs and responding to events in the life of the school).

### **Pupils withdrawn from Worship by Parents**

Any pupil may be withdrawn from school worship by the parent. No reason for withdrawal needs to be given. When a child is withdrawn the class teacher should provide a valuable alternative activity.

The child should always be at school during the time of collective worship. Every effort should be made to try to not make the child feel isolated and different.

### **Visiting speakers and groups**

Pupils can gain a great deal from representatives of various religions, charity and cultural agencies, parents, artists and other professional business or trades people participating in acts of worship. All who lead worship should have the opportunity to read the schools act of worship policy and be fully briefed by the co-ordinator or the teacher responsible for the collective worship. Every assembly should be under the control of a member of the teaching staff. All teachers and visitors who lead acts of worship should appreciate that while it is not always possible, or appropriate, to avoid controversial issues, acts of worship should never be an occasion for proselytising or promoting a particular set of beliefs. Visitors should also be aware that permission should be gained from the school for distribution of literature, raising money or giving invitations to attend out-of-school activities.

### **Collective Worship Timetable**

#### **KS1**

Monday	-	Whole school
Tuesday	-	KS1
Wednesday	-	Class Assembly
Thursday	-	Whole school
Friday	-	Whole school

#### **KS2**

Monday	-	Whole school
Tuesday	-	Class assembly
Wednesday	-	KS2 only
Thursday	-	Whole school
Friday	-	Whole school