

LITTLE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION/STATEMENT OF INTENT

It is the intention of Little Hill Primary School to provide a planned and relevant programme of Collective Worship for all pupils regardless of age, gender, ability, race or faith. The daily Act of Worship will normally form part of an assembly or its entirety.

The school has children from a variety of religious backgrounds. Some are practising Christians, some are from a nominal Christian background, some follow the teachings of other faiths and some have no religious affiliation. The children's ages and abilities have also been considered.

Staff responsible for delivering Collective Worship are made aware of the legal requirements for Collective Worship through the document "Guidelines for Teachers Delivering Collective Worship" (Appendix A). Staff will have personal copies of the plan for Collective Worship for the Year and suggestions for delivering Collective Worship.

THE AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT LITTLE HILL SCHOOL

1. To deliver a daily act of Collective Worship:

We interpret the term "Worship" to mean the following:

"An experience which is separate and special from normal everyday experiences."

"An experience which seeks to set the individual within the context of the realm of the spiritual."

2. We understand the legal requirement of the ERA of 1998 and the clarification in the DfES Circular 1/94 that Collective Worship should be "of a broadly Christian character" and that it should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief. We also understand from the ERA and DfES Circular 1/94 that "within each school term the majority of Acts of Worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, but it is not necessary for every Act to be so".

By the term "broadly Christian" we understand it to mean recognising beliefs, lifestyles, practices, values and customs of the Christian faith, but which are also shared with those of other faiths and those of no faith.

We seek to promote a positive experience of Christianity which will respect the integrity of each individual. We are working towards creating experiences which recognise the integrity and dignity of all those who adopt a religious life-stance and those who do not.

We aim to do this by adopting a broad and flexible approach which seeks to promote active involvement from pupils, thus developing their spiritual awareness.

3. To unite children from different backgrounds and to develop and strengthen the sense of community within the school.
4. To promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each child.

5. To celebrate and share special occasions and festivals.
6. To celebrate the worth of every individual involved in the school, both staff and pupils alike.
7. To develop care and respect for those within the school community and the wider community.
8. To develop positive attitudes towards those of other cultures and faiths through exploring and considering the variety of beliefs, lifestyles, attitudes and values which the pupils will encounter in society in general.
9. To explore personal feelings and encourage reflection and expression.
10. To introduce children to the Bible as well as literature and stories from different faiths.
11. To consider the variety of ways in which mankind has responded to the spiritual dimension of experience e.g. through the creative arts, through scientific discovery, through worship and prayer, ritual and celebration, through service to God and others.
12. To provide children with a stepping stone towards the experience of fellowship and to give the children a threshold to future worship.
13. To support and supplement the RE and personal and social curriculum (PSHE).

THE NATURE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Little Hill School intends to follow the legal requirements that “in a school term as a whole”, most acts of Collective Worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, by planning “broadly Christian” acts of Collective Worship into the Collective Worship and Assembly plan for each week. Each member of staff leading the assembly will be aware of the distinctive nature of collective worship.

Out of a total of five acts of Collective Worship per week at least three per week will be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”.

Through planning, discussion with staff and guidelines for staff we will ensure that Collective Worship is not linked to “any particular Christian denomination”.

THE ETHOS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship at Little Hill School supports the broad aims and values of the school by valuing children’s individuality and “worth”, in celebrating the children’s achievements and attributes and supporting their individual needs. Collective Worship at Little Hill is recognised as an educational and stimulating experience and it supports the school’s aim in developing a social and moral code of respect, care, fair mindedness and the spirit of enquiry.

At Little Hill School we recognise that to enable children to have the opportunity to actively respond and engage in Collective Worship, the children have to be aware that there is a specific planned time available for this to occur. We recognise that Collective Worship is principally a spiritual activity and therefore the appropriate atmosphere should be established.

We seek to do this in several ways:

1. By explaining to children the aim and practice of Collective Worship and how it differs from Assembly when notices are given out and school administration is dealt with. By establishing a “mood” of calm and reflection before and after Collective Worship.
2. By planning and delivering Collective Worship which is appropriate to the children’s ages and aptitudes.
3. By providing a focus for the children in Collective Worship such as a religious artefact, a lighted candle, a picture, etc.

Time for reflection is normally allowed within the time for Collective Worship itself and may be incorporated within classroom activities as appropriate.

Staff may choose to use a prayer in Collective Worship in order to provide opportunities for children to engage in Worship on their individual level.

When prayer is used in Collective Worship it is made appropriate to all pupils regardless of age, ability, faith or race by the Collective Worship Leader (see Appendix A).

Through this practice we believe that children’s integrity and dignity, whether they have a religious stance or no religious stance, is respected (see Appendix A).

THE ORGANISATION OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship takes place each day during an allocated time for Assembly and Collective Worship. A time allocation of 4 minutes per day is given to an Act of Collective Worship. We recognise that Collective Worship is a distinctive activity and it will be made clear to the children.

Three times a week the whole school will meet together for Collective Worship whilst on other days the children will meet in separate Key Stage Groups.

1. Whole school interaction reinforces our aim to develop and build upon the sense of community within the whole school. Time is also used for individual classes to celebrate achievements, present their thoughts and feelings about themselves or others and to participate in the preparation and presentation of Collective Worship.
2. Key Stage Assemblies allow for spiritual, social or moral issues to be targeted appropriately to each age group.

DELIVERY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The Co-ordinator of Collective Worship at Little Hill Primary School works in consultation with the Headteacher and the Governors. Responsibilities are to develop a scheme of work across the school, manage a budget for resourcing Collective Worship and to monitor, evaluate and organise resources. The Co-ordinator also offers staff support in Collective Worship.

THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

In accordance with the 1988 and 1994 Act parents have the right to withdraw their children from attending Collective Worship at Little Hill Primary School. If such a case occurs, the school finds it helpful to establish with the parent:

- particular elements of Worship which the parent would wish the child to avoid;
- the practical implications of withdrawal;
- whether the parent would require any advanced notice of such Worship and, if so, how much.

We welcome open communication with parents to avoid any misunderstandings. Parents are advised of their right to withdraw children from Collective Worship and Religious Education in the "Handbook for Parents".

Appropriate supervision will be arranged according to the nature of the withdrawal; i.e. physical withdrawal from the place where the Act of Worship is taking place, or conscious spiritual withdrawal whereby the child remains in situ.

In accordance with the 1944 Act, teachers at Little Hill Primary School also have the right to withdraw from taking part in Collective Worship if they so wish. In such cases, staff should negotiate this with the Headteacher.

Headteacher _____ Date _____

Chair of Governors _____ Date _____

Guidelines for Teachers delivering Collective Worship

The Law and Collective Worship

In accordance with the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the DfES Circular 1/94

'All registered pupils attending a maintained school should take part in daily collective worship'

The collective worship should be as specified in the ERA of 1988:

'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'

Please see the Collective Worship policy (Section 2) for our interpretation of this phrase.

Collective Worship should take place during the whole school and KS gatherings which we refer to as assemblies. Collective Worship is an educational experience. Some of the learning processes which may take place during Collective Worship are as follows:

- the ability to empathise with others
- the opportunity to reflect on feelings, practices, beliefs, relationships
- the ability to draw meaning and value from religious language and books, making the connection between them and their own lives and the life of the community of which they are a part
- evaluation of ideas and values
- expression of views and feelings

Collective Worship aims at developing the spirituality of children and can be delivered in a variety of ways. It is distinct from 'Assembly' in that 'Assembly' can draw attention to the shared values and standards of the school but it can also deal with practical school issues, for example, the giving of notices. Collective Worship should aim to actively engage the children, as one of its main goals is to *'elicit a response from pupils.'* It is important that the children and staff recognise that Collective Worship is separate and distinct from Assembly.

Key elements of Collective Worship

These are some areas that you need to include into your planning in order to satisfy the Collective Worship criteria.

- Listening
- Thinking
- Silence

Prayer

All acts should be accessible to all the children regardless of age, ability and faith. They should also be non-denominational. They should be structured and worded such that all parties involved feel that their integrity and that of others is not being compromised.

If a prayer is to be delivered as part of the Collective Worship, it will sometimes be appropriate for words to be used and sometimes silence so that, if the children wish, they can say their own prayer silently to themselves. The sentiments of the prayer should have some application to the children's life so that it is meaningful to the pupils. As the response to a prayer is a voluntary act, it should be introduced as such and pupils should be free to respond in their own way.

The Collective Worship leader should introduce the prayer by saying words along the lines of:

'I would like you to listen carefully now while I say a prayer'.

or

'I am now going to read a prayer to God. Please close your eyes and feel free to respond at the end with the word 'Amen' if you wish'.

Equally, when the beliefs of a religious group are being referred to, it is important that the Collective Worship leader prefixes statements with phrases such as;

'This is what Christians/Muslims believe'

'This is what Christians/Muslims believe Jesus/Mohammed said'

Songs

When using songs in Collective Worship, three issues need to be considered

- Is the language in the songs accessible to the children?
- Is the sentiment of the songs appropriate?
- What views do the songs promote?

Records

Please keep a record of your act of Collective Worship as we need these for three reasons:

- To ensure curriculum development
- To provide a clear focus for Collective Worship which can be built upon if the class teacher wishes
- To enable monitoring to take place to ensure that the requirements for 'statutory compliance' are met.