

Collective Worship Policy

The John Harrox Primary School



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1. The context of collective worship in our school

- a) It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of collective 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 pupils.
- b) Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christian, but we do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times.
- c) The Headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body.
- d) Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from leading or taking part in collective worship.

2. The definition of collective worship

- a) Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring "collective" not "corporate" worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worth of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.
- b) Worship defined in this way can draw 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.

3. Values

- a) 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 (refer to our 5Cs), and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship.
- b) Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:
- c) become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community;
- d) develop an understanding of the feelings of the other people in everyday situations and beliefs;
- e) explore the language which people use to express their feelings;
- f) deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them;
- g) respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus;
- h) acknowledge diversity.

4. Aims

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- show an 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 and standards manifested in religions and society;
- 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 to other people.

5. Organisation

- a) Acts of collective worship are taken by the Headteacher, the Vicar of Moulton Parish Church, representatives from other local denominations, teachers and children. Collective worship may be taken solely by the teacher or children may assume responsibility for parts. Parents are invited to join us on special occasions and at times when class assemblies are planned.
- b) Each week we have a singing practice. During this we take time to consider carefully the words of the songs/hymns and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song/hymn.
- c) We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising.

6. Prayer

- a) We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe.
- b) 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.