



# Collective Worship Policy

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## **West Hampstead Primary School Collective Worship Policy**

It is the requirement of the law that all maintained schools provide daily collective worship for registered pupils (apart from those who have been withdrawn by their parents).

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. Daily collective worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. The precise nature will depend on the family background, ages and abilities of the pupils.

West Hampstead Primary school has a determination from the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) allowing for this requirement to be lifted.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To foster pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development;
- To provide an opportunity for prayer, or for silent reflection on life's meaning, values and concerns.
- To reflect on values and on their own beliefs
- To develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values
- To encourage respect for everyone and the differences between us.
- To raise awareness of the wider world and topical issues.

### **Equal opportunities:**

Parents have the right of withdrawal of their child from the collective worship sessions. However the aim of these sessions should be such that all children should be able to attend and indeed empathise with much of the content, without feeling any pressure of indoctrination. Likewise, there will be no obligation on children to participate in hymns or prayers of a religious nature but instead to use the time for private, silent reflection.

Where a child is withdrawn, appropriate activities will be provided.

### **Inclusion**

The collective act of worship should be educational but not interpreted as a directive to children of different faiths to worship in a way that is unacceptable to them. "Worship" broadly interpreted, relates to the respect for and celebration of values that we deem to be of worth. A collective act of worship, in the form of a school assembly or similar, is a morally and spiritually uplifting part of children's education and can also help to unify a school community with diverse social and religious cultures or backgrounds.

Collective worship must reflect beliefs that are upheld within different religious denominations, or within other social or moral codes of practice.

These beliefs are essentially:

- that all people are to be valued regardless of age, race, gender or disability;
- that we must strive to eradicate prejudice, war and cruelty;
- that the human race is responsible for the stewardship of the earth's resources, and for ensuring that the world is a place in which justice, peace and harmony reign.

## **Implementation**

Assembly and Collective Worship is an integral and important part of the school day. Care must be taken to ensure a calm, sharing and reflecting atmosphere. During Collective Worship a sense of special quality time should be developed. Pupils should be invited to listen quietly to information, stories or prayers that are read, think about them and join in only if they wish. They may be invited simply to reflect quietly.

The school holds a daily collective act of worship involving, usually but not exclusively, a key stage assembly. This will provide a time for discussion of shared values or concerns, or celebrating festivals of a religious nature (these will include Christian festivals as well as others such as Diwali, Passover, Chinese New Year). Assemblies are each morning for approximately 15 minutes.

Outside speakers may be invited to address the assembly. Themes will be delivered through class presentations, the reading of poetry or stories, singing of songs, performances etc. Stories may be traditional fables, modern stories, or from the Bible or other non-Christian religious writings.

Children are given the opportunity to think about what has been experienced, respond to it, relate their own experiences and use their imagination to go beyond the experience provided.

Assemblies should show a balance of music, speech and silence. Pupils often find it easier to focus their thoughts if there are pictures, books, artefacts or objects to look at and these should be used at appropriate times.

Participation in songs is a valuable educational activity for all children in that it provides them with an opportunity to feel for themselves what it means for others to engage in these particular forms of worship. Songs should be chosen with care so that they are accessible to the majority of pupils and support the theme of the assembly.

At the end of each act of collective worship, children are given the opportunity for silent reflection. This may be introduced with wording such as: "...think about the words I am going to say". If you'd like to listen to the words carefully and think about their meaning...", etc.

### **Involving the community:**

Parents should be made aware of the school's collective worship policy. They are encouraged to attend and participate in these acts of collective worship. Like-wise the school encourages the involvement of local community groups, of a variety of faiths and cultures, to take part. The beliefs and values of the members of the school community should also be reflected in the content and themes of the collective worship assemblies.

The assembly and act of worship must at all times show respect for all individuals within the school. Care must be taken to ensure no one feels alienated or pressurised to take part in anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. Pupils should be invited to join in reflection, otherwise they should be asked to remain quiet for the sake of those who do wish to join in. Respect and celebration of all cultures and religions will be taken into account.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The collective act of worship programme is planned in advance over a termly period of time, by the Senior Leadership team. This is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the effectiveness of the content and delivery of the collective worship. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

## Features of school collective worship

West Hampstead school's collective worship typically features the following:-

- A sense of enquiry, exploration and open-mindedness.
- A celebration of meaning, purpose and direction.
- An awareness of life's joys and sorrows.
- An awareness that life involves choices, right and wrong, justice and injustice.
- A sense of uniqueness, self-esteem and identity.
- A sense of oneself and others as feeling, thinking persons.
- A sense of inter-dependence with the natural world and with each other.
- An awareness of the nature of commitment and how this affects a person's values and attitude to life.
- An awareness that religious faith is based on the concept of deity.
- An awareness that religious faith includes a sense of reverence, devotion and adoration and a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- A sense of transience and constant change.
- A sense of pattern, sequence and order.
- An awareness of paradox and a sense of their being more to situations than meet the eye.

## VALUE AND USE OF THEMES

Themes are chosen at the end of each term for the coming term by staff. School events and festivals are taken into account when choosing the themes.

Amongst other things, a theme can:

- Provide a focus for planning and forward thinking
- Excite interest.
- Act as a catalyst for imaginative ideas.
- Provide continuity.
  
- Suggest boundaries.
  
- Link with the RE scheme of work which are based on Camden's agreed syllabus.
  
- Provide a context for recognising and reflecting on important issues and incidents which affect the school.
  
- Music can also be used at the start and end of each assembly to provide a quiet listening and calm atmosphere.

We are proud of the rich variety of cultural backgrounds represented in our school which includes a wide range of faiths. We wish to acknowledge and respect each faith in our assemblies drawing on material from all faiths, traditions and cultures. Our aim is that the content will be acceptable to people of all backgrounds.

## DIFFERENT KINDS OF ASSEMBLY

It is intended that music in the form of singing, instrumental performance and listening will make up part of, or be the core of every assembly.

### Singing Assemblies

Taken by the Creativity Lead, these assemblies give opportunities for children to sing together in a large group.

### Class Assemblies

Classes are required to give an assembly to the whole school community once a year. This is to share the work they have done and to help them and the school reflect, focus on and celebrate their learning and achievements.

### Themed Assemblies

During the term, there may be themed assemblies involving the whole school. These may be to celebrate a festival, or to look at the work in a particular subject-area throughout the school.

### Length of Assemblies

Each assembly will last approximately 15 minutes except for whole school assemblies which will last for up to 30 minutes.

### Content

To avoid duplication of content there is a planning chart in the staff room where teachers leading assemblies indicate the aspect of the theme that they have chosen. In every class the Weekly Theme Sheet is hung in a prominent position, so pupils know the focus for the week.

### Festivals

We have selected seven festivals which will be celebrated by a major assembly. These will involve certain year groups looking at different aspects of the festival and overseen by the RE Co-ordinator. In this way we also publicly acknowledge and value the variety of faiths and traditions represented in our school and community.

Christmas (Autumn Term)

Harvest (Autumn Term)

Diwali (Autumn Term)

Chinese New Year (Spring Term)

Eid (Spring Term)

Passover/Easter (Spring Term)

### Exercise or right of withdrawal

The parental right to withdraw a child from attending collective worship should be freely exercisable and a school must give effect to any such request. Parents are not obliged to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal.

The right of withdrawal from collective worship would normally be exercised through the physical withdrawal of the pupil from the place where the act of worship is taking place.

Indeed the school could insist that this is the way the right is to be implemented. If, however, both the parent and the school agree that the pupil should be allowed to remain physically present during the collective worship but not take part in it, nothing in the law prevents this.

Experience suggests that, to avoid misunderstanding, a headteacher will find it helpful to establish with any parent wanting to exercise the right of withdrawal:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part.
- The practical implications of withdrawal; and
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship and, if so, how much.

Parents may also request that their children be allowed to pray during the day. There is a special room set aside at West Hampstead and available to those pupils during the day.

### Key Stage 1 Timetable for Collective Worship

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Headteacher's Assembly	Achievement Assembly – SLT	Singing Assembly – Creativity Lead	Story Assembly - SLT	Values Assembly – Phase Leader
1.15-1.30	1.15-1.30	1.15-1.30	1.15-1.30	1.15-1.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious Festivals – celebrating cultures and religions</li> <li>• British Values</li> <li>• Local, Nation and &amp; International Events</li> </ul>	Celebrating the achievements of the children	Songs and Music Appreciation – Linked to festivals and values.	Reading for Pleasure	Focussed on the school values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspiration</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Consideration</li> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Resilience</li> </ul>

## Key Stage 2 Timetable for Collective Worship

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Headteacher's Assembly	Achievement Assembly – SLT	Circle Time – In Classrooms	Singing Assembly – Creativity Lead	Values Assembly – Phase Leader
12.15-12.30	12.15-12.30	12.15-12.30	12.15-12.30	12.15-12.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious Festivals – celebrating cultures and religions</li> <li>British Values</li> <li>Local, Nation and &amp; International Events</li> </ul>	Celebrating the achievements of the children	Focussed on the school values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspiration</li> <li>Community</li> <li>Consideration</li> <li>Responsibility</li> </ul> Resilience	Songs and Music Appreciation – Linked to festivals and values.	Focussed on the school values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspiration</li> <li>Community</li> <li>Consideration</li> <li>Responsibility</li> <li>Resilience</li> </ul>