



Collective Worship Policy

Effective November 2021



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Summerlea C P School – Collective Worship Policy

Introduction

At Summerlea School we believe it is important to meet together daily as a community to reinforce community values and to worship together. The character of worship in the school is focused upon the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils. In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that Collective Worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our Collective Worship on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our worship in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school. Collective worship is co-ordinated by the Subject Leader for Religious Education and a variety of themes and activities are used to ensure a high-quality experience for all the children regardless of family background.

Summerlea Community Primary School has adopted the guidance for Collective Worship from West Sussex County Council (see Appendix 1).

Aims

- to provide an opportunity for pupils to meet together daily as a whole school/phase/year group
- to provide an atmosphere where pupils can be encouraged to reflect meaningfully on life
- to introduce children to religious worship in a meaningful and honest way
- to enable those pupils who want to worship God to do so
- to encourage and develop a sense of community in the school reinforcing the aims and ethos and celebrating the ideals and values of the school
- to introduce children to a variety of cultures and religious practices and belief

Organisation and Management

The school holds daily assemblies/reflection times where pupils meet together. These have a variety of aims, content and experience. Assemblies take place in the school hall or classrooms at various times each day and teachers supervise the entrance of their class. Music is played at the beginning and end of assembly chosen by a different nominated member of staff each week.

Within these assemblies the daily act of collective worship takes place.

Collective worship is co-ordinated by the Subject Leader for Religious Education with support from other members of the staff team who lead assemblies.

A half-termly programme of assembly themes is produced and distributed to all staff. This is part of the annual programme organised by the subject leader for RE in conjunction with the Senior Management Team. Themes are based around special occasions held at various times, Christianity, PSHCE, the Summerlea Seven Values and British Values, Key Three and Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills.

We have assemblies which also reflect the achievements and learning of the children. These play an important part in promoting the values and ethos of the school.



All the worship in the school is based around a set of values that are clearly Christian and central to other faiths. The content will vary and will be more explicitly Christian on some occasions and will be equally explicit to other faiths on others. Records of all assemblies are kept ensuring that the worship is of a broadly Christian character.

Collective worship will vary in the content but will normally contain a song, a prayer or reciting of the school creed and on occasions readings or references to the Bible or other children's literature – this will take into account the children's age, level of understanding and children's religious faiths and home background.

All teaching staff attend collective worship on a Friday. A representative group of teachers (one per year group) attends during other assemblies. Other members of staff do not usually attend collective worship unless they are required to do so but may do so for special occasions.

Weekly Programme

Monday: Whole school assembly led by the Headteacher, other members of the leadership team or a visitor

Tuesday to Thursday: Key Stage assemblies/singing practices/year group or class assemblies/reflection time

Friday: Whole school achievement/celebration assembly led by the Headteacher or other members of the leadership team

(N.B. This list intends to show the variety available and does not recommend a pattern)

Time Allocation

Assemblies are planned for approximately 20-30 minutes each day and approximately half the time is given to collective worship and half to other matters of school interest.

Resources

A range of books and resources are available to support collective worship in the school and are kept in the staff room and library.

Withdrawal

We recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their children from worship if they so wish. When parents request that their child be withdrawn from collective worship parents meet with the class teacher to clarify the beliefs and practices that they wish their child to be excluded from. Any such children look at books or work in the classroom and arrangements for their supervision is made by the class teacher. Parents may choose to organise their own "reflective religion work" for the children to do at this time. All other children should attend the assembly if possible. Staff also retain the right to withdraw but may be required to give support in the hall.

Spiritual Development

Worship is used explicitly to promote spiritual development. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to consider and reflect on a variety of issues. This is done through the input, readings, singing, prayers and quiet time for reflection.



The aims of Spiritual Development at Summerlea Community Primary School are:

- to foster a sense of awe, wonder and mystery
- to foster a sense of spirituality in the world around
- to develop an awareness that there is often more to things than meets the eye
- to appreciate the quality of silence, reflection, the ability to listen and concentrate attention
- to develop a sense of worth and a sense of the worth of others
- to value the spirit of community – its demands, rituals, values and celebrations
- to foster an awareness of the joys of life

Community

The school works with several local Churches. The Reverend Bob Sneddon from Rustington Methodist Church and Roger Purdom from Littlehampton Churches regularly lead assemblies and representatives from Arun Community Church also support the school.

Parents and carers are warmly invited to attend assemblies for special occasions. We welcome Governors' attendance at our assemblies as any time.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is part of the responsibilities of the Subject Leader for Religious Education. This policy will be reviewed every three years.



Appendix 1

BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW

The basic requirements of the law are as follows:

All Schools

- All pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall, on each school day, take part in an act of collective worship.
- This may be a single act of worship or separate acts for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups.
- It may take place at any time of the school day.
- Worship should take place on the school premises.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from worship.
- Teachers have the right to withdraw from collective worship.

For Community schools

- For community schools, the act of worship shall be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".
- Community schools may apply to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) for a determination that worship in their school could be other than wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. Any schools considering applying to SACRE should seek advice on procedures from the General Adviser (R.E.)

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

The Education Reform Act uses the word collective rather than corporate in the same way as the 1944 Act did. This is a reminder to us that school worship is not intended to be the same as church worship where the participants are there by choice and are a body of believers. This is an important distinction in which we accept that pupils in our schools will respond to worship in very different ways. Indeed, it is likely that there will be a very wide variety of responses to worship from pupils.

- Schools need a broad understanding of worship if the appropriate provision is to be made.
- This appropriate provision will vary depending on the age and aptitude of the pupils.
- It must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.
- This broader understanding might be:-
 - to provide an atmosphere where pupils can be encouraged to reflect meaningfully on life;
 - to allow those pupils who want to worship to do so;
 - to introduce pupils to religious worship in a meaningful and honest way;
 - to bring pupils to the threshold of worship.

WHAT IS MEANT BY "WHOLLY OR MAINLY OF A BROADLY CHRISTIAN CHARACTER"?

This clause is difficult to define but there are some fairly clear points which attach to it:-

- The requirement for worship to be of a "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" is for community schools.
- Worship should not be distinctive of any particular denomination.



- There is nothing in the Act or the Circular 1/94 that suggests any form of content. This means that the content, such as the use of hymns, prayers, Bible readings, etc is for the Headteacher in community schools to decide.
- In making this decision, the Headteacher will take into account:-
 - any relevant circumstances relating to the pupils' family background;
 - their ages and aptitudes.
- It is not necessary for every single act of worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character but within each school term, most acts must be so.
- The acts of worship should contain some elements which relate specifically to the traditions of Christian belief and which accord a special status to Jesus Christ.
- An act of worship which is "broadly Christian" need not contain only Christian material provided that, taken as a whole, it reflects the traditions of Christian worship.
- The term "broadly", however, discourages a narrow interpretation being given to Christian worship and encourages schools to use a variety of resources and methods.
- Although the Act and Circular say little about how to interpret Christian worship we are told that it must relate to the "broad traditions of Christian belief". It is very clear that within these broad traditions we see a wide range of practices in use. This range includes:
 - Music - Hymns, songs, folk songs.
 - Readings - Biblical and others.
 - Prayers - silent, spoken, read, formal.
 - Silence
 - Meditation
 - Dance
 - Drama
 - Storytelling
 - Ritual
 - A Talk - sermons
 - Use of devotional objects
- The Act of Parliament talks of exploring Christian "belief" and not "practice". This point emphasises that the worship found in schools will not be the same as that found in churches but will be a different type of worship that is relevant to the pupils and helps them to explore Christian beliefs.
- Whether a school has worship that is "wholly" Christian or "mainly" so is for the school to decide.
- It is intended that the character of the worship is such that all pupils will take part unless they have been withdrawn by their parents.

HOW LONG SHOULD WORSHIP BE?

- The Act gives us no guidance on the length of worship, but it should be of a reasonable length.
- In the final analysis only, a court of law could decide what is reasonable.
- A quick prayer, a short blessing or grace at meal times would not be considered as reasonable, however a short period of worship handled with care and sensitivity which included, for example, a reading and a prayer would seem quite acceptable.
- It would also be quite acceptable, and probably desirable, to vary the length of worship depending on the setting so that some days would consist of a relatively short act of worship while other days would consist of a longer event.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP OR ASSEMBLIES?

- Collective worship is legally different from curriculum matters and when calculating the amount of curriculum time in the week the time given to collective worship is not counted.
- There is nothing in the Act to suggest that collective worship should be carried out in isolation from assemblies.
- It is acceptable for "Assemblies" to consist of both worship and other activities.
- In order to enable aspects of the curriculum to be covered alongside worship it would be wise to identify this formally and to allocate the time to be given to each area.
- A school would need to be able to identify the distinct part of the activity which is the collective worship required by the Act and care would need to be taken to ensure that collective worship could properly be described as wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

DETERMINATIONS

Which schools can apply to SACRE and for what?

- Applications for a determination can be made only by community schools.
- Community schools may apply to SACRE for worship in the school to be other than "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".
- They may apply on behalf of the whole school or groups of pupils in the school.
- The considerations that may apply are:
 - any circumstances relating to the family background of the pupils concerned which are relevant for determining the character of the collective worship which is appropriate in their case e.g. the faith of the family.

How can a school apply to SACRE?

- If any school is considering an application to SACRE the Headteacher should first contact the General Adviser (R.E.) who will be able to explain the procedures.
- Before an application the Headteacher must consult the school's governing body.
- The governors may wish, in turn, to seek the views of parents.

What form will worship take following a determination?

- SACRE will give their determination in writing to the Headteacher and the worship will have to be carried out in accordance with those instructions.

WITHDRAWAL

The provision for parents to withdraw their children from collective worship was first put in place in the 1944 Education Act and has been re-enacted in subsequent acts of parliament since with little change. The original purpose was to allow parents who for reasons of conscience did not want their children to attend collective worship to withdraw them from attending.

The Statutory Requirements

Subsequent acts of parliament were brought together in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The provision for withdrawal is set out in section 71.

The main requirement is set out in subsection (1).

If a parent of a pupil in a community school requests that he may be wholly or partly excused:-



(a) from receiving religious education given in the school in accordance with the school's basic curriculum,

(b) from attendance at religious worship in the school, or

(c) both from receiving such education and from such attendance,

the pupil shall be so excused until the request is withdrawn.

Summary of requirements

- If a parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship, then the school must comply.
- Parents are not obliged to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal.
- Schools should not divulge information about withdrawal to other schools without the agreement of the teacher.
- This applies to all LA maintained community schools.
- If the request is to be partly excused the school must make all reasonable attempts to comply but have the flexibility to deny the request if the logistics of agreeing makes it too difficult.
- A parent may request that a pupil be withdrawn from school premises to receive worship of a denominational nature. A school may comply so long as the LA is satisfied that this will not interfere with the child's attendance at school other than at the beginning or end of the school day.
- A parent may request that, once the child has been legally withdrawn, a child receive collective worship of a denominational nature on school premises. The school is required to allow this request if:
 - the provision cannot be conveniently provided elsewhere;
 - the school does not meet the costs;
 - the school does not consider that because of the special circumstances it would be unreasonable to do so.
- A school continues to be responsible for any child withdrawn by its parents from collective worship unless the child is lawfully receiving collective worship elsewhere.
- Schools are required to set out the right of withdrawal in their prospectus.

Advice

What should a school do if a request is made?

1. As this is a legal provision, the school should ask for any request for withdrawal to be made in writing.
2. To avoid any misunderstanding, a Headteacher will find it helpful to establish with a parent wanting to exercise the right of withdrawal:
 - The religious issues about which the parent would object to their child being taught and the elements of worship they would object to the child taking part.
 - The practical implications of withdrawal.
 - The circumstances in which the school can reasonably be expected to accommodate parental wishes; and
 - If the withdrawal is partial, whether the parent will require any advance notice of such collective worship.
3. This should not affect the fact that parents do not have to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal.
4. The school must then make arrangements to enable the withdrawal to take place and ensure the health and safety of the pupil.



How to organise withdrawal?

- The pupil's health and safety is the most important responsibility the school has.
- It would be normal for withdrawal to be exercised through the physical withdrawal of the pupil from the place where the collective worship is taking place.
- However, if both the parent and the school agree that the pupil could remain physically present there is nothing in the law that prevents this.
- It is good practice to ensure that the pupil is gainfully employed when withdrawn so if they do not bring work from home a check should be made to ensure they have something to do.
- If the pupil is withdrawn from worship a number of organisational options are used by schools:
 - the pupil works in the back of class and is supervised by that class teacher;
 - the pupil works in a library and is supervised by the librarian or other adult;
 - in smaller schools the pupil may sit outside the office and be supervised by the office staff.
- There is nothing to stop the pupil joining the assembly for those aspects that are not worship and parents do not have the right of withdrawal from these aspects.

What about withdrawal from school premises?

If a parent requests that a pupil should be withdrawn from the school premises for of collective worship the LA is the responsible party. The school should contact Nigel Bloodworth, General Adviser (RE) for advice on how to proceed (Tel 01243 753921, Fax 01243 753911, Email nigel.bloodworth@westsussex.gov.uk). No costs can be met by the school or LA.

How should a school respond to a request for alternative collective worship to take place?

- Sometimes where a group of pupils are withdrawn from collective worship a parent or other responsible adult will offer to come into school to run the worship. This is often a convenient way of making the provision.
- The school is still responsible for those children and needs to feel secure that the person running the session is capable and has the confidence of the school.
- The school must consider this request if made and must agree unless there is good reason not to.
- No costs should be met by the school's budget share or otherwise by the LA.

PLANNING

- Collective worship is an important event in schools and should be planned carefully.
- It is recommended that outline plans for the whole year and detailed termly plans are made.
- Records should be kept:
 - to enable the planners to arrange a coherent experience for the pupils;
 - to provide evidence of the daily act of collective worship;
 - to provide evidence that a community school is providing collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

SOME PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Schools need to plan for worship to be of educational value for ALL who attend. In trying to meet this end the following principles might prove useful:

- There is a need for a clear whole school policy which should involve a wide audience for discussion and include a clear statement of aims.



- There needs to be an assembly co-ordinator. This could be the Headteacher or a senior member of staff or another member of staff, who need not be the R.E. co-ordinator. It needs to be recognised that this is a difficult and time-consuming responsibility if it is to be done well. It may be appropriate for a team to undertake this work with a leader to co-ordinate the whole programme.
- Although assemblies may deliver aspects personal and social education this is not collective worship and care needs to be taken to ensure that these aspects do not predominate.
- There is a need for worship to be an activity and experience to which all can contribute and from which all can benefit irrespective of personal commitment or life stance.
- There is a need to regard assembly as a planned learning experience which does not place the presenter or recipient in an awkward or less than honest position.
- There is a need to value groups of pupils coming together as the whole school community or part of the community in a meaningful way. The assembly can then have the purpose of fostering a sense of belonging and affirming and celebrating the ideals and values of the school.
- Where possible, pupils should be encouraged to play an active role in collective worship.

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

Schools are free to choose how they organise their worship. It may be at any time of the school day and in any grouping that is also used for other activities. The organisational strategies differ in primary and secondary schools with size and space being important factors.

Primary

- Whole school assemblies prove to be the most successful strategy.
- Separate Infant and Junior assemblies allow the content to be focused more carefully on the age and aptitude of the pupils. Normally a successful strategy.
- Class assemblies. Proves to be the least effective strategy because it depends on all staff being able and comfortable in taking the worship.
- The beginning of the day is still the most effective time for worship, but this is under pressure as it is the best time for learning. Immediately before the end of the day is the least effective.

MUSIC, ASSEMBLIES AND "COLLECTIVE WORSHIP"

Introduction

Music is used widely in school assemblies and enables pupils to listen to music, to sing and to perform with instruments. Music is often used to help create an atmosphere that is conducive to worship and can contribute to the spiritual development of the pupils.

It is essential that assemblies are carefully planned and provide a valuable experience for the pupils taking into account their age and aptitude, and family background.

If aspects of the music curriculum are to be delivered through the assembly it is equally important that these should be carefully planned as part of the wider music curriculum as well as carefully planned into the assembly.



Music Education

The music curriculum is set down by National Curriculum Orders and consists of:-

Performing

Performance in this context means singing and playing instruments. It includes the process of practice and rehearsal as well as performance product.

Composing

Composing in the national curriculum includes improvising and arranging as well as composing.

Improvising consists of making up music on the spot.

Arranging includes activities such as adding simple percussion parts to songs, or performing a piece using different instruments from the original ones.

Composing is a more refined process, similar to the drafting and re-drafting process in writing.

The process includes:

- *exploring, investigating and creating sound;*
- *choosing or selecting appropriate sounds;*
- *combining and organising the sounds into compositions;*
- *re-drafting as appropriate;*
- *notating or recording the composition.*

The completed work may lead to a performance which may or may not be by the composer(s).

Listening and appraising

Pupils' listening and appraising should be developed within the context of their performing and composing. Listeners may be helped to understand what they are listening to by having composed music which has a common starting point.

Pupils should listen to and appraise their own music and music by other composers. They should be encouraged to talk with understanding about what they hear and to respond in a variety of ways.

Music in assemblies

There is very little doubt that music enhances the assembly in a number of ways and that it can contribute to the music curriculum provided it is planned coherently.

- Assemblies provide an opportunity for pupils to listen to music.
- Music played during assemblies can contribute significantly to providing a beneficial atmosphere.
- Pupils knowledge of a range of music maybe developed and extended through a planned programme of regular listening which includes opportunities to listen to particular pieces on more than one occasion.



- Music as pupils enter and leave the assembly can be difficult to listen to properly and provides limited opportunities for pupils to develop appropriate listening and appraising skills.

Provide opportunities for pupils to perform

Singing is a well-established method of worship which most pupils enjoy. Singing during assemblies allows children to become involved rather than be merely a passive observer and contributes to a variety of approach. The assembly is an opportunity for pupils to perform to an audience while either singing or playing instruments or both. The performance would need to be well planned and could include the performance of children's own compositions.

Developing the music curriculum through assemblies

Not all music during assemblies will necessarily contribute to the music curriculum but much of it does or could. For music in assemblies to augment the music curriculum it should be part of a planned process that identifies when and how music is taught.

Music in assemblies could make a contribution to the teaching and learning in school if it is part of good planning in music which will build on past work, take account of progression, is differentiated and enables children to learn and not just to take part.

For example, an individual or group of pupils could perform a previously rehearsed instrumental piece, or a class or group of children could sing a previously rehearsed song.

Most teaching and learning in music will take place in class groups where the work is matched more closely to the particular needs of the pupils.

"Hymn" Practice

In order to learn hymns/songs for assemblies, schools often have an identified period of learning and practice. If it is well done, children enjoy the singing and the process adds to the success of the assemblies.

There are clear connections with the music curriculum as pupils enlarge their repertoire and improve the quality of their singing. There are, however, also a number of factors to be considered if these periods of practice are to be an effective way of teaching aspects of music.

These include ensuring differentiation where a wide age range is involved: both because of the experience of the pupils and the range of songs/hymns they already know and because of their vocal development and the appropriate choice of material. It is desirable to group pupils by age and vocal experience. It is unlikely that grouping pupils across more than one key stage would lead to suitably differentiated work.

"Hymn practice" itself is unlikely to constitute the daily act of collective worship but it would be possible to develop the occasion to meet the requirements. For example, it would be easy to have brief explanations of the words in the songs and to allocate a short period at the beginning or end of the practice that would, for instance, consist of a reading and a prayer to complement the hymns.



This policy was approved by the governing body of Summerlea Community Primary School

in:November 2021.....

Signature of Chair of Governors:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Hocking", written over a dotted line.

Signature of Headteacher:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Helen Morris", written over a dotted line.



Policy Review Form

Please complete this section when reviewing and updating this document.

<i>Author</i>	<i>Name</i> Helen Morris	<i>Date</i> November 2017
<i>Reviews</i>	<i>Name</i> Helen Morris	<i>Review Period: 3 years</i> November 2021
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