

# Priors Field Primary School Collective Worship Policy



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### 1. Introduction

This policy has been prepared following the Guidance provided by SACRE- (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) and 'A Time to Share: A Practical Guide to Worship in Warwickshire Schools.'

#### **What is Collective Worship?**

Guidance from the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) suggests that Collective Worship should aim to provide an opportunity for worship, reflection and the exploration of belief and ideally it should draw on the whole of the curriculum, celebrating all aspects of life in school. The law has never clearly defined collective worship. It is known, however, that it is not the same as faith community worship (corporate worship) because:

- A community school is not a faith community
- A community school contains pupils and staff from many different faith backgrounds as well as those who have no religious beliefs or no faith background
- A school community contains a wide range of people with different views on what 'worship' might mean and what or whom may be worthy of worship
- Neither is collective worship the same as an Assembly because staff and pupils do not have the right to withdraw from Assembly.
- Assembly may be taken to mean the time when members of the school are gathered together to pass on information and move forward matters of secular business (notices). It also provides the opportunity to celebrate the many successes of individuals both within and as part of the school community

### 2. Aims and Objectives

Priors Field is a Community school. Worship is therefore an important part of the school day as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a community. It is attended by all students, staff and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in.

We recognise that Collective Worship is an important opportunity to provide opportunities for our students Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

The aim of collective worship is to provide the opportunity for pupils to:

- Reflect on the values that are of a broadly Christian nature and on their own beliefs
- Consider spiritual and moral issues
- Respond to the worship offered
- Be sensitive to the fact that participants will be at many different stages in their own beliefs and commitments
- Contribute to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of each child.
- Support the Social and Emotional development of our pupils through making use of the PSHE Curriculum
- Give expression to, and reaffirm and practise the values of the school community thereby developing a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values
- Allow reflection and response to the fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings
- Celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals.
- Foster and enable a concern for the needs of others, a recognition of the vulnerability of self and of others
- Provide members of the school community with the opportunity to experience stillness and quiet
- Provide members of the school community with the opportunity to respond to Christian language and symbolism
- Help students to begin to understand the nature and purpose of worship

And it might:

- Contain non-Christian elements and include acts of collective of worship which do not fit within this broadly Christian base
- Include elements common to Christianity and one or more other religions.

### **3. Equal Opportunities**

- The content of the majority of acts of collective worship in a term should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, reflecting the broad traditions of Christian belief.
- Collective worship should not exclude or alienate pupils who do not come from Christian families
- The choice of content should have regard for the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of pupils.

### **Rights of Withdrawal**

We seek to be an inclusive community however we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. This school expects that withdrawal will only be made following parental discussion with the head teacher followed by written confirmation of withdrawal.

The school will provide suitable supervision for students withdrawn from Acts of Collective Worship. However, no additional work is set or followed in this time.

All teachers, including the Headteacher, have the right of withdrawal from the Act of Collective Worship, but the Headteacher, should he or she wish exercise this right, maintains statutory accountability for Acts of Collective Worship. This right of withdrawal doesn't extend to assemblies.

## **4. Organisation**

### Legal Status of Collective Worship

The delivery of collective worship in community schools is guided by the law which states that:

- Collective worship must be provided daily
- Collective worship may take place at any time of the school day
- Schools may decide on the age/groupings of pupils and these may vary from day to day;
- The times decided for the delivery of collective worship may vary for different groups from day to day
- Generally collective worship should take place on the school premises
- In a community school the responsibility for managing the provision for collective worship is with the Headteacher after consultation with the governing body

All acts of worship should be of a 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' and not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. This means exploring with pupils key Christian concepts such as love, trust, forgiveness, mercy, humility, courage and integrity, respect for life, value of an individual, justice, co-operation and service, honesty and truthfulness.

Acts of Collective Worship at Priors Field take into account the student's ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds. Each week there is a theme for Collective Worship from the School Vision. Those leading worship that week are encouraged to relate their worship to this theme. The themes allow all those leading worship to approach the theme from their own perspective. This will mean that by the end of the week the students will have had the opportunity to reflect on the theme from a variety of viewpoints. Alternatively class teachers may develop their worship from themes and events that occur on the curriculum during the week. This pattern is flexible and on occasions it is recognised that teachers may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.

The school recognises that there is a difference between Acts of Collective Worship and the assembly of students. On some occasions assembly may proceed or follow and Act of Collective Worship. When this happens the transition from Assembly to worship will be marked in some suitable way e.g. reflecting on an image or a moment of silence and reflection.

A prayer spoken (owned) by the leader of an assembly or one of the participants, can be included as part of the collective act of worship. It may be preferable to offer pupils a moment of reflection on the subject of the act of worship, either in silence or listening to words which focus their attention. Where an act of worship is led by a member of a particular faith who wishes to include a prayer, this should be undertaken in the spirit of the pupils experiencing that faith's method of prayer, rather than presuming that pupils share the commitment of the believer.

## **5. Monitoring**

The Headteacher and SLT will monitor collective worship in school and it will be subject to an annual review with the outcomes being reported to Governors via the Headteacher's report or to the Performance and Standards Sub-committee.

## **6. Future Developments**

Policy and practice will be subject to regular review with changes made to reflect current legislation.