



Collective Worship Policy

Ratified by Standards & Achievements Committee: 12th June 2015

Reviewed: May 2017

Reviewed: May 2019

Next review: May 2021

Introduction

The Collective Worship Policy at the Federation of Westminster Special Schools pays due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken account of the guidance offered by the LA through its SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education). The Policy is consistent with the Federation's mission and vision statement, as expressed on the Federation website and in the individual school prospectuses.

Rationale

The Federation of Westminster Special Schools are located in central London and are a hard federation of two schools that meet the needs of a diverse population of learners with diverse backgrounds. This document sets out to define and describe how we come together in collective worship.

Definition of Collective Worship at Westminster Special Schools

The Westminster Special Schools are made up of two inner city special schools representing a wide range of faiths and beliefs that we embrace and celebrate. We believe firmly in the spiritual aspect of education and its power in bringing people together, in acknowledging and honouring the individual while strengthening our sense of community and promoting positive relationships.

Collective Worship is a time when the whole school, or groups within the school, meet together in order to experience, share, consider, celebrate and reflect on common experiences, concerns, issues and interests. It offers all pupils an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Aims of Collective Worship

For the School:

Collective Worship contributes significantly to the ethos of the Federation and our school communities. We aim to:

- share and experience moments of awe and wonder
- share common aims and values
- be included, experience and participate in significant national festivals pertinent to developing a sense of community and British values
- celebrate achievement and special times
- explore and experience together the world in which we live
- develop a community spirit and community cohesion

For the Pupils:

We also intend that Collective Worship contributes to the development of the pupil as a 'whole' person by providing opportunities:

- to develop a sense of self
- to develop a sense of belonging to a community
- to develop their own spirituality
- to reflect on what it means to be human
- to worship that which is considered worthy
- to experience and consider spiritual and moral issues

- to experience and explore their own and others beliefs
- to reinforce positive attitudes
- to participate, respond and to be included

By that which is considered worthy we mean to be inclusive of all belief systems; i.e. Hinduism, Buddhism and major monotheistic religions.

The Contribution of Collective Worship to aspects of the Curriculum

Collective Worship time is distinct from curriculum time. However, in our schools, Collective Worship will, at times, feature aspects of the curriculum in particular RE. These aspects of the curriculum will at times be extended, enhancing the experiences of the pupils by reflecting on their learning by extending these into different locations, elevating these through acts of worship and celebration

At times, Collective Worship will enrich class work through its consideration of subject matter from different spiritual perspectives. These opportunities allow us to offer an enriching and multifaceted curriculum.

The provision of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is in line with school policy which informs our practice. To ensure Collective Worship provides opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development it addresses a wide variety of themes and topics, using diverse stimuli and resources and providing pupils with the opportunity to engage in a way that is meaningful and appropriate to the individual.

The Management of Collective Worship

Collective worship is managed by the senior leadership of both schools to ensure that the practices observed chime with the spirit and ethos of the Federation. Pupils engage in, and/or experience a variety of differing acts of worship that are arranged to ensure they are appropriate and meaningful for the young people. Each school comes together as a part or as a whole community when these opportunities are organised.

The Organisation of Collective Worship

We have an inclusive approach to our population and as such collective worship opportunities are organised to reflect this. Both schools have timetabled opportunities for collective worship where the school community comes together and we also have opportunities for small group collective worship, e.g. within primary and secondary, that is appropriate and meaningful. We also identify other opportunities where we come together experience times of stillness and quietness and develop the skill of reflection.

Leadership

Most members of the school staff, and occasionally visitors, will be involved in leading or participating in acts of worship at some point in the school year.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship; inclusive practice

The content of all acts of Collective Worship will be considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils.

Visitors will be invited to lead Collective Worship from time to time and will be given guidance on acts of Collective Worship at our schools. Leaders from Faiths within the area will increase the pupils' awareness, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these Faiths.

The Act of Collective Worship

As an inclusive organisation we adopt a variety of pedagogies that ensure our pupils engage in appropriate and meaningful acts of Collective Worship across the Federation. Any and all of the methods employed in the classroom can be used effectively in acts of Collective Worship. A variety of resources will also be used to support the pupils' experiences. Teachers and those leading collective worship will choose the approach and resources which are appropriate to the content, the age, aptitude and the background of the pupils.

The content and process must be sufficiently stimulating in order to evoke a response in the individual. This may not be visual, but opportunity must be given to express this response in a manner that is appropriate to and for the individual.

If announcements are to be given at the same time as an act of worship then they will be of a positive nature, which at times may enhance the act of worship itself. Announcements will be made preceding the act of worship and a clearly defined break between them and the act of worship will be made (a change of personnel, music, a moment of silence etc.).

Withdrawal

Any parent who objects to their child attending an act or acts of Collective Worship may request that their child is withdrawn. Parents are encouraged to discuss this with the Head of School. Any pupil who is withdrawn from an act or acts of Collective Worship will be supervised during that time by a member of the school staff.

Review and Evaluation of the Policy

The policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure it is kept in line with any curriculum changes that take place within the school or externally.