

WHITEHILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

"...putting children first..."



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Date reviewed: April 2021

Reviewed by: N James

Ratified by *Governors*:

Collective Worship Policy

Rationale

The 1996 Education Act requires schools to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that addresses the spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical aspects of each individual. Worship helps at least the first two aspects.

The law requires that there is a daily act of collective worship organised by the school, and that the majority of these must be: 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character.'

Organisation of collective worship is the responsibility of the Headteacher and governors of the school having regard for the family background of the pupils (e.g. family faith) and the ages and aptitude of the pupils. Its timing and organisation can be flexible and there may be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts for pupils of different age groups or in different school groups.

Aims and Purpose

- To provide an opportunity for children to worship God.
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues.
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs.
- To encourage participation and response.
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit.
- To promote a common ethos, with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes.
- To provide an opportunity to show children how to worship.

What is Collective Worship?

There is no legal definition of what worship is, but Whitehills considers it to have these elements:

We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly. We expect everyone to take part in an active assembly.

It is recognition, affirmation and celebration of realities and values held by the community that worships.

During worship the realities of these values are reviewed and discussed so that individual members of the community can be helped to grasp them personally.

The community focuses on what it knows to be of worth and hence worthy of preservation and promotion in its members' education.

Whilst most acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect the traditions of other religions that are represented in the school and wider community.

Elements of Worship

Any single act of worship need not necessarily contain all these elements, but they would be observable over a pattern of acts of worship.

- Responding to things of worth.
- An invitation to participate or observe.
- A recognition or, and response to, the spiritual dimension of human experience.
- Music/songs/hymns.
- Words/stories/Scripture.
- Ritual.
- Stillness and reflection /prayer.
- Awe and wonder.

It is important to remember that school worship is intended to be educational rather than doctrinal. We plan for collective worship to take place within school assemblies. Daily collective worship is not required in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Assembly

- Foster a sense of belonging, by bringing pupils together to participate in the experiences of the immediate and wider community.
- Share together such emotions as delight, joy, hope, friendship, acceptance, anguish, fear, forgiveness and reverence.
- Celebrate the beauty of life and living.

EYFS meet communally in one of the Reception classrooms once or twice a week and join other children in the Hall twice a week during the summer term. On Monday, Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 meet together for an achievement assembly (Worker of the Week) led by either the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. On Tuesday Key Stage 1 and Year 3 meet together and on Thursday Key Stage 2 meet for birthday assembly in the hall. These assemblies are led by the different members of teaching staff. Wednesday assemblies are class assemblies, guest assemblies or led by the Head teacher or Deputy Headteacher.

If at any time this is not available assemblies will take place in individual classrooms and can be held by Zoom.

Assemblies are led mainly by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Senior Leaders but all teaching staff deliver a proportion of the assemblies appropriate to their year group as part of professional development. Each class presents an assembly annually to which parents are invited.

We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We regard it as a special time of calm reflection and expect children to behave in an appropriate way.

Assemblies at Whitehills generally take place on a daily basis, last for approximately 15 minutes, and involve the whole school or Key Stage participation.

Planning for Assemblies

The themes of our Wednesday assemblies are related to either our core values or the topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum and reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in these assemblies by showing their work to the other children.

Assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised.

Sometimes parents are invited to attend our assemblies to promote community spirit and the partnership between school and home supporting the achievements of the children.

Governors' attendance at our assemblies is always welcome.

Right of Withdrawal

We expect every child to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the assembly. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1996 Education Act. [Head Teacher will keep a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.]

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of a named school governor who is also responsible for religious education together with a named member of the leadership team / subject co-ordinator.

Assemblies should aim to:

- Foster a sense of belonging, by bringing pupils together to participate in the experiences of the immediate and wider community.
- Opportunities to develop the school's core values of respect, responsibility and hard work.
- Offer an invitation to all present to explore, extend, share and deepen their level of experience.
- Share together such emotions as delight, joy, hope, friendship, acceptance, anguish, fear, forgiveness and reverence.
- Celebrate the beauty of life and living.
- Provide for the moments of awe and wonder, for truth, and for facing the harsher realities of life.
- Allow positive reflection on success and failure in an open, honest and sensitive atmosphere.
- Create an atmosphere in which there is opportunity for silent reflection and active participation.
- The event is collective rather than a corporate one and allows for a range of responses to the opportunities presented. It is also an occasion where the integrity of the individual is protected.

Reviewed April 2021