



Thameside Primary School: Collective Worship Guidelines

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Contents

SMSC	p.3
Legal requirements	p.3
Key features	p.4
Types of collective worship	p.4
Exemptions	p.5

Policy reviewed by:	Rosamund Porter
Key Changes:	<p>The inclusion of Insideout happiness keys in our assembly themes</p> <p>Removal of: “However, many decide not to, fearing that their child may feel different from classmates, and may miss important elements of assembly if the worship element is not kept clearly apart from secular spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, and from notices” from Exemptions section</p> <p>Clarification of terms within the Exemptions section</p> <p>Clarification of terms and removal of reference to “nursery schools and classes” from within Legal section</p>



Rights Respecting Schools

Thameside Primary School is a Rights Respecting School and therefore school policies will respect the UN Convention on the rights of the child. The Collective Worship policy links to:

Article 13: Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and receive information of any kind as long as it is within the law.

Article 14: Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of parents to give their children guidance about this right

SMSC

Collective Worship is one of the ways of providing for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These are defined as follows:

Spiritual Development

- how an individual acquires personal beliefs and values, the basis for personal and social behaviour

Moral Development

- knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to right and wrong

Social Development

- concerned with the skills and personal qualities necessary for individuals to live and function effectively in society

Cultural Development

- refers to pupils' increasing understanding and command of those beliefs, values, customs, knowledge and skills, which taken together, form the basis of identity and cohesion in societies and groups

Another way of providing for these is through the school ethos and climate. Schools should have a value system.

School Values

- belonging (respect, pride, volunteering, tolerance)
- resilience (determination, not giving up)
- assurance (controlling emotions, have a go, participation)
- independence (decision making, making good choices, being productive)
- integrity (honesty, trust, knowing right and wrong)
- no limits (ambition and aspiration, being the best we can be)



Legal Requirements

- all pupils must take part in a daily act of worship, apart from those withdrawn by parents
- Reception classes are excluded from daily acts of worship
- Daily acts of worship can occur anytime during the school day
- Daily acts of worship can be held as a whole school, or within age groups, or within teaching groups
- Daily acts of worship must be on school premises. Any act of Collective Worship off premises must be in addition to statutory daily act of worship
- Daily acts of worship must be wholly or broadly of a Christian nature

Key features of Collective Worship

Collective Worship should:

- be respectful of pupil and staff integrity
- be an educational experience
- be relevant to the needs of pupils
- encourage pupil participation
- foster a thought provoking atmosphere allowing for spiritual reflection and response
- foster a sense of community
- Create an atmosphere, e.g. using:
 - music
 - visual aid to focus
 - darkness
 - candle or light

Types of collective Worship

There are three ways of carrying out Collective Worship, by class, by year group, or by whole school. Collective Worship by class will usually take the form of circle time, and this can be used to explore a theme from curriculum planning, or an issue that has arisen from the classroom, such as a behavioural problem.

Circle time

- a circle is a symbolic way of showing equality
- create an atmosphere (see above)
- have circle times at the same time as the rest of the team so that it isn't disrupted by noise from another area or class
- children should form the circle quietly, and settle quickly and calmly in order to maintain the atmosphere
- start and end with a game, such as pass the squeeze, up down up, Chinese whispers, or pass the smile
- make sure that everyone is comfortable in the circle – there shouldn't be anyone who is squashed out
- give everyone the chance to speak – children who don't want to contribute can say 'pass', but make sure you go back to give them a second chance, they may just have needed a chance to think of a contribution
- include support staff when appropriate



- younger children can pass an object (eg a teddy) to show whose turn it is to speak
- expect that everyone will listen to others and respect their views – lead by example and value all contributions
- have a time for reflection, or ‘thinking time’ before the final game

Circle times can also be used to teach PSHE, British Values and Rights Respecting Schools.

Key Stage or Whole School Assemblies

Key Stage assemblies are held on Wednesdays and are led by any member of the teaching team on a rota basis. Whole School Assemblies are held on Monday mornings and are led by the Headteacher. These assemblies should be planned for:

- They should be held in an area that is big enough to house all children comfortably, eg hall or a classroom with furniture moved back
- If furniture has to be moved, this should be done in a quiet and unobtrusive manner by adults, this should be completed before children enter the area
- Staff create an atmosphere before children enter area – see above
- Children should walk into the area in a quiet, calm manner, in order to get a ‘feel’ of the atmosphere
- Children should ‘find a space and fill a space’ without fuss –train children to do this independently from the youngest age
- Turn the music off by fading the volume, only when the children are settled and still
- They should celebrate children’s achievement – for example in KS2 assembly with the good book. Children should be recognised for behavioural achievement, whether learning or social behaviour, and can be used to set targets, for example ‘*Joe has shown the value of ___ this week because he ___*’
- Whole school assembly should also celebrate children’s achievements as above – each week the Head teacher will share the names of children who have been nominated from each class for showing the school values and a special values postcard will be sent home
- These assemblies have an underpinning theme which is linked to British Values and/or our Insideout Happiness Keys.
- Wherever possible, they have a visual focus for the children
- More often than not the Headteacher’s assemblies centre around a story with a message –which is made explicit during a discussion afterwards
- They may be a story about a real life person who has set a good example for others – ensure that children are able to make the connection between them and their own lives – what can they learn from them?
- They must have a time for reflection, or ‘thinking time’
- The music is turned back on at the end for children to walk out to in a quiet, orderly manner

Class Assemblies

Class assemblies are held on Friday mornings, and each class takes it in turn to produce one. Parents of that class are invited to attend, and should be encouraged to participate. It is expected that each class will produce at least one assembly per term.

Exemptions from collective worship



Parents have the right to have their children excused from worship in any state-funded school. Parents who wish to withdraw need to put this in writing to the Headteacher.

Leaders of school assemblies should keep the secular and worship elements distinct and separate, and allow time for pupils (and teachers) to leave the room when worship takes place if they so wish.

Teachers should be able to receive advice related to their specific situations from teaching unions. Your rights and obligations are broadly as follows:

- *In community schools* teachers cannot be required to attend or lead collective worship, but do not have a right to withdraw from the non-worship part of assembly (a reasonable requirement because of the need to supervise pupils)
- teachers cannot be required to teach RE unless their contract shows they have been explicitly employed to teach it;
- teachers cannot be disadvantaged in their employment because of their religious opinions or the fact that they do not attend religious worship;
- Under the *School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document*, teachers are required to undertake their professional duties under the reasonable direction of the head teacher.

Most pupils do not have the right to opt themselves out of collective worship. Only pupils in sixth form education or over the age of compulsory school age may withdraw themselves from collective worship.

R Porter, February 2020