

Assembly & Collective Worship Policy



(Due to Covid 19 – Currently being undertaken via TEAMS or in class bubbles)

Date effective and reviewed by Governors: Summer Term 2021
Review Date: Autumn Term 2022

At Constantine Primary School we believe in fostering understanding amongst our children. We value the religious/non-religious backgrounds of children who have one and seek to develop the moral and spiritual potential of every pupil. We feel that assembly and collective worship is an important aspect of school life where pupils and staff can feel part of a team within a community. We welcome parents and members of the community to take part in assemblies and collective worship and value their contributions. We recognise that legally we are obliged to have a daily act of collective worship and believe that it is important to lead the children in their worship.

Collective worship as distinct from assemblies is the only area of academy life which the law requires to take place every school day.

Legal Requirements

(for details see School Standard and Framework Act 1998 and Circular 1/94)

- All pupils must take part in a daily act of collective worship, unless they have been withdrawn from it by their parents.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. At present no children have been withdrawn.
- Collective worship are 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', to be within the broad traditions of Christian beliefs, on the majority of occasions.

Our local 'Open the Book team' attend on a weekly basis. Teams of volunteers from our local churches of different denominations attend each week to deliver *Open the Book* stories giving the children the opportunity to see, hear, and take part in the major stories from the bible. This is part of a national scheme organised by the Bible Society, and *Open the Book* aligns to the criteria used by OFSTED when inspecting collective acts of worship. The educationally sensitive scripts are used successfully in schools with a wide ethnic & religious background and there is no coercive content. The time for reflection is suitable for children of all faiths and none.

We actively encourage parents not to withdraw their children from collective worship and encourage parents to speak to staff if they are concerned. We believe assembly time and collective worship is so

valuable with regard to community cohesion and providing insight into others' beliefs to jeopardise this with children being withdrawn, but we recognise parents have a legal right to do so.

Aims of Collective Worship at our School

- to establish, affirm and celebrate the common and shared values of our school and Academy Trust
- to nurture the identity and nature of Constantine School as a community
- to develop positive attitudes among our pupils
- to provide an opportunity for pupils to worship God (Divine Being)
- to enable pupils to explore their own beliefs, values and commitments, with those of others.
- in short to promote the spiritual, moral social and cultural developments of pupils.

Worship is understood as an act of collective worship and can be interpreted very openly and widely as an act which brings a school group to a point where they are able to make a shared, reflective response to a divine being, power, ideal or value of some worth, wholly or mainly within the broad traditions of Christian belief on the majority of occasions.

Collective worship is an essential element in the school's promotion of the spiritual and moral development of pupils as required by ERA 1988.

Approaches to Assembly and Collective Worship

Daily worship is provided through the following means:

- Whole school acts of worship in assemblies
- Class group act of worship in assembly

Management

Responsibility for Assemblies and collective worship in our school lies with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher

- provides a rota for staff of assembly and collective worship
- provides a sequence of topics for each termly theme based around British Values, our school aims and the Olympic Values
- Establishes and maintains a resource base
- Liaises with the local community in terms of visitors.

Methods

There is a suitable variety of methods for collective worship to enable the experience to be as valid and relevant to the pupils as possible. There is also a ritual element associated with some of these methods to allow the pupils to benefit from the security and pattern of worshipping together.

These will include the following as is appropriate to the nature of the occasion:

- Music on entry and exit (Performers or composers are identified)
- Singing
- Use of prayers, including the children's own and thoughts of the day
- Readings from suitable sources, including the Bible, but also other sources of worth.

Celebration

Some acts of worship are recorded on our website, Class Dojo pages, Twitter and in the weekly newsletter where we share key messages.

Evaluation

Implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and her evaluation will be used in the review of the policy.

Appendix

Muslim attitudes to singing/musical instruments

Singing is not regarded as a valuable asset by Muslim parents. It is felt that singing heightens the emotions, particularly when accompanied by musical instruments. Also, it is felt that singing is seldom useful in gaining a career. Singing hymns is unacceptable for Muslim pupils. Both singing and musical instruments are referred to in the Qur'an as being forbidden ('haram').

Non-religious singing could be acceptable if it does not affect religious, moral or cultural values.

The issue of singing cannot be generalised. The decision will be up to individual parents.

The issue of singing/musical instruments remains the same whatever the age of the child. However, some parents may allow their children to take part in primary school as they are under the age of 11.

The school should inform the parents about the nature of assemblies, and be prepared to discuss these issues with them.

Jehovah Witnesses attitudes to assemblies

Children from families who are Jehovah's Witnesses do not observe celebrations like birthdays and Christmas because they are 'rooted in paganism'. Because of this they may exclude themselves or refrain from joining in when such celebrations form part of collective worship or assemblies in school.

They are taught to be tolerant and respectful, recognising the right of others to celebrate, but, in turn, appreciate respect for their decision not to participate.