



Collective Worship Policy May 2022





Sandwell Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Policy statement on collective worship

The Sandwell Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) believes that collective worship time, which is distinct from the curriculum, should provide all pupils irrespective of background, members of different faiths or of no religion, with:

- relevant, meaningful experiences which enrich the education offered through the curriculum
- opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- opportunities for responding to the best in humanity's journeys of faith and belief, including voluntary opportunities for worshipping God.

SACRE believes that collective worship can make a significant contribution to the ethos of the school by reinforcing and reflecting the beliefs and values which bind the school community together. It can inspire, uplift, celebrate and give a sense of purpose and direction.

SACRE believes that collective worship should model the ideals of inclusion, respecting the integrity of all involved.

The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education for Sandwell, endorses the requirement for schools to:

- comply with the legal requirements
- produce a school policy for collective worship which takes account of the legal requirements and the guidance offered by Sandwell LEA through its SACRE
- ensure that a school policy is fully implemented

The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education for Sandwell will, from time to time, in accordance with its duty, monitor the provision and practice of collective worship in its schools.

Intent

All pupils at Grove Vale Primary are required to take part in daily collective worship where they are given the opportunity to consider, celebrate, reflect on and develop their understanding of spiritual and moral issues. The daily act of worship is considered an integral and important part of school life.



In accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the daily collective worship shall be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, though not representative of a particular Christian denomination.

At Grove Vale Primary School, daily collective worship implies the recognition of spiritual and moral issues, and may be whole school or class based. Broadly Christian in this sense would mean that schools should explore themes such as Creation, Fall, Salvation, Justification, Redemption, Sanctification and Faith, Hope and Love in terms that are age and development appropriate and ideally linked to the pattern of the Christian year. But it also means that worship should not be identified with a particular Christian tradition and include the breadth of denominational life found in Sandwell

The Law: Community Schools

These are the schools for which SACRE has responsibility and the current legislative framework was originally set out in the 1988 Education Reform Act and reiterated in the 1996 Education Act. Summarised the main points are as follows:

- There must be a daily act of worship for every pupil. This can be at any time of the day in any normal school grouping. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, after consultation with the governing body to ensure this happens. Except in special circumstances, and after consultation with governors, the act of worship should take place on school premises. Collective worship is distinct from assembly which can be a gathering for a wide variety of reasons.
- The majority of the worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, meaning it should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief. It can contain non-Christian elements or on occasions contain no Christian elements, provided that throughout each term, the majority of the worship complies with the broad traditions of Christian belief.
- Worship must be appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils. Worship must not be denominational.



- The basic requirement is that there should be an act of collective worship for all registered pupils every school day. (Section 385.1 EA 1996). There are only two exceptions to this: parents have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from all or parts of collective worship and pupils in school sixth forms are permitted to decide for themselves whether to attend or not.

Definition of Collective Worship

For the purpose of this policy, “collective worship” is an act which is additional to, and separate from, ordinary school activities. Collective worship is a time when individuals collaborate to promote the values which are fundamental to the school’s ethos, as well as the wider community. Collective worship can both reinforce and contribute to the ethos of the school, in addition to offering a unique occasion in the school day to pause and explore life beyond the prescribed curriculum.

It encourages members of the whole school community, teachers and learners together, to challenge assumptions and reflect upon issues which transcend normal day to day experiences, thus broadening understanding and contributing to our search for meaning in life. By enabling pupils to acknowledge the value of diversity in terms of race, gender, culture and differing abilities, it fosters inclusion and breeds tolerance.

To “take part” in collective worship implies more than a passive attendance, such that it should have the ability to elicit responses from pupils even though they may not feel able to actively identify in the act of worship on a particular occasion.

Aims of Collective Worship

- To consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs
- To encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered;
- To celebrate or reflect on things that are of worth



- To develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes
- To encourage pupils to learn how to be part of large and small gatherings
- To celebrate achievements of others within the school community
- To develop understanding of, and reflect upon the value of, our environment and its importance in our lives

Organisation and Planning

- The headteacher and RE leader are responsible for creating the agenda for collective worship. The act of worship will be held 3 times a week in the school hall and twice a week in individual classes.
- Each assembly held will have a theme relevant to current affairs and topics agreed by the headteacher.
- The content of all acts of collective worship will be considered to ensure suitability and relevance to pupils of all ages and backgrounds.
- The school may invite visitors or guest speakers to speak during collective worship, in accordance with the timetabled theme- see policy statement below.

Weekly Collective Worship Programme

Day of the week	Delivery of Programme
Monday	A whole-school celebration assembly is delivered by members of senior management to praise children for their weekly achievements in class.
Tuesday	Class teachers are to read a story with a message and discuss this with the children in individual classrooms at the end of the day.
Wednesday	A whole-school singing assembly is delivered by a member of the teaching staff.
Thursday	Children are to complete some reflection time in class based on their week of learning so far.
Friday	A whole-school assembly is delivered by a member of the teaching staff to consider, celebrate and discuss the weekly events in the news.



Implementation

The school aims to promote rich and meaningful experiences of collective worship that are appropriate to pupils' needs, ages and interests by:

- Presenting displays that promote and enhance spiritual ideas and thoughts.
- Encouraging pupils to reflect and contemplate on their thoughts, feelings and beliefs.
- Using artefacts, secular stories, resources, music, art, drama and speakers to engage pupils' interest.
- Involving pupils in different experiences of worship, e.g. silence, prayer, rituals, shared or written prayers, etc.

Right to Withdraw

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship and are not required to provide a reason for doing so. Parent/carers will be encouraged to discuss their decision with the headteacher following a request of withdrawal in terms of:

- The elements of worship in which the parent/carer would object to the pupil taking part.
- The practical implications of withdrawal.
- Whether the parent/carer will require notice in advance of such worship, and if so, what period of notice is preferred?

Withdrawal of a pupil usually involves their physical absence; however, if it is agreed so between the headteacher and parent/carer, the pupil may remain in the collective worship but will not be involved in any discussion.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

The school will take into account pupils of different ages and abilities when delivering the collective worship programme.

The school will arrange for 1:1 supports to assist pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) if the need arises.

Policy statement for visitors

Expectations

Visitors invited to lead collective worship should be made aware that:



• collective worship is non-denominational in county schools; must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'; and reflect the religious traditions of the United Kingdom.

• School assembly is not an opportunity for any kind of coercion. An evangelistic or proselytising presentation by groups of whatever faith or life-stance perspective will not be suitable or acceptable.

Schools do well to make sure this does not happen;

• speakers can encourage pupils to reflect and consider ideas presented to them, but these must be contextualised (i.e. 'Christians believe...' 'Atheists think...' rather than 'This is the case...')

• space should be allowed for the process of reflection, but pupils should not be put under pressure to accept or reject faith viewpoints. Calls for commitment to a religious viewpoint are not appropriate.

Visitors should:

• present their acts of collective worship with care and sensitivity, but also in a dynamic and compelling way; they should not be dull!

• bear in mind the age, interests and aptitude of the pupils they are addressing, avoiding inappropriate language or references to materials such as films and TV programmes that are not suitable to that age group.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher in agreement with the governing body.

This policy will be evaluated in accordance with feedback from questionnaires and class discussions.

Any changes made to this policy and the collective worship programme will be communicated to all members of staff.

The scheduled review date for this policy is **March 2025**

