Collective Worship Policy

Date adopted by Governors/ Academy	January 2025
Date to be reviewed	June 2027
Policy Status	
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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

RATIONALE

The Education Reform Act, 1996 (amended by the School Standards and Framework Act 1988) explains that "each pupil in attendance at a community, foundation or voluntary school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship". At Henlow Church of England Academy the arrangements for collective worship are the responsibility for the governors after consultation with the Headteacher. The Headteacher is then responsible for ensuring that daily acts of collective worship take place.

It is acknowledged that being involved in an act of collective worship can make a lively and relevant contribution to the personal growth of each individual pupil; aiming to assist in their search for meaning and in the development of their own spiritual and moral values. As collective worship and assembly are not one and the same thing, worship at Henlow Church of England Academy aims to reflect something different and 'special' from ordinary activities.

STATEMENT OF AIMS

Through Collective Worship at Henlow Church of England Academy we aim to

- provide a special experience and a sense of occasion, separate from the children's everyday experiences
- celebrate things of worth to the pupils, the school and our community
- provide opportunities to worship God and to maintain a healthy respect for a broadly Christian faith while introducing children to a variety of faiths, showing some children what it is to worship while reaffirming the beliefs of others
- create an atmosphere that promotes thought and reflection and which nurtures the spiritual and moral development of pupils as required by the Education Reform Act 1988
- provide opportunities for pupils to be involved in presenting, performing in or responding to collective worship
- include a diversity of worship forms including music, meditation, silence, reflection, story-telling, visiting speakers etc.

PURPOSE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective worship is defined as a daily act of worship for the entire school community that is inclusive, invitational, and inspiring, offering a unique opportunity to encounter faith, reflect on Christian values, and understand Anglican traditions within a diverse society. It serves as a central, special event distinct from regular lessons, aiming to foster spiritual awareness, a sense of community, and an understanding of Jesus Christ and the Trinity for everyone, regardless of their own beliefs.

Through collective worship we aim to give the pupils the opportunity to

- reflect upon the traditions and beliefs of Christianity and other religions and their relevance to their lives in an invitational manner.
- explore their own beliefs

- establish a sense of belonging to the school community and its ethos
- develop a sense of community spirit
- understand how to worship
- develop a caring attitude towards themselves and others
- reflect on their own and others' experiences
- consider aesthetic, spiritual, moral and cultural issues
- develop a sense of awe and wonder
- be still, quiet and reflective
- learn more about themselves and the world in which they live

RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

It is anticipated that all pupils will attend assemblies and acts of collective worship. However, parents/guardians have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship and we acknowledge that they are not obliged to state their reasons for doing so. The school will provide supervision for any withdrawn pupils and we will aim to respond to parental requests. The Headteacher will also keep a record of any pupils withdrawn from collective worship.

ORGANISATION

Different arrangements for collective worship are evident in each year group. However,

- themes are agreed annually and the Headteacher keeps a record of collective worship themes
- themes may change as a quick response to given situations
- each year group meets fortnightly in the school hall, as a whole year group, led by a member of the senior leadership team or visiting speakers including governors
- collective worship at other times takes place in class bases, either as individual classes or amalgamated groups
- in Key Stage 3 and 4 a 'real life application' is also provided. While this alone is not an act of worship, it does offer space for reflection and spiritual development
- on special occasions, including significant Christian religious festivals, a whole school assembly may take place; this inherently includes collective worship
- collective worship takes place every morning during registration with the exception of exam periods when the timetable changes.
- every fortnight each class participates in extended collective worship. The intention of these sessions is to deepen student understanding while providing further opportunity for reflection. At times these sessions are conducted at the prayer tables.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Although teachers, including the Headteacher are not required by law to take part in collective worship (as distinct from assembly), teachers and staff at Henlow Church of England Academy are generally willing to participate. As a result, sharing

of good practice, including observations and feedback through year team meetings, allows for monitoring and evaluation to take place. In addition, the observation of the pupils' general behaviour in and around the school and to one another should provide evidence of the value and success of collective worship.

It is anticipated that pupils will develop a range of important skills and attitudes including understanding, tolerance, empathy, self-esteem and responsibility. The National Curriculum Council (1991) provide the following learning outcomes for spiritual development

- recognising the existence of others as independent to oneself
- becoming aware of and reflecting upon experience
- questioning and exploring the meaning of experience
- understanding and evaluating a range of possible responses and interpretations
- developing personal views and insights
- applying the insights gained with increasing degrees of perception to one's own life

By talking to and observing pupils it is hoped that these outcomes will be evident as success criteria if they have

- improved self-esteem
- good listening skills
- higher order thinking skills
- the ability to ask pertinent questions
- the ability to communicate effectively
- the facility to sustain engagement
- the ability to express sophisticated opinions
- the ability to offer valuable contributions to the collective worship theme
- the ability to offer original thought

In response to monitoring and evaluation, review will take place annually, specifically between the Headteacher and Year Leaders, including the RE Subject Leader.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All pupils, regardless of race, religion or gender are entitled to attend and to participate in the acts of collective worship. Collective worship at Henlow Church of England Academy will aim to take into consideration the ages and abilities as well as the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children in our school.