

Park Junior School



Collective Worship Policy

“Together we make a difference.”

Introduction

Children at Park Junior School are prepared for life in a diverse society. They are helped towards an awareness that people in Britain today come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and ethnic origins and as such may have their own distinct language, religion and culture; including aspects such as music, food, literature and customs.

We aim to help children to develop the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes with which to play a full and active part in our multicultural society.

The Law on Collective Worship

DfES Circular 1/94 contains all the detail on the law relating to Collective Worship.

In its simplest form the law states that:

- collective worship must be provided daily;
- collective worship may take place at any time of the school day;
- schools may decide on the age/groupings of pupils and these may vary from day to day;
- the times decided for the delivery of collective worship may vary for different groups from day to day;
- generally collective worship should take place on school premises;

- the content of the majority of acts of collective worship in a term should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, reflecting the broad traditions of Christian belief.”;
- the content should have regard for the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of pupils;
- parents may withdraw their children from collective worship;
- teachers may withdraw from collective worship;
- in a community school the responsibility for managing the provision for collective worship is with the head teacher after consultation with the governing body; and
- every maintained school is required under the Education (Schools Information) Regulations 1996 to include in its annual prospectus information about the collective worship provided by the school and how parents may withdraw their children from it.

What is Collective Worship?

Collective Worship is a time when the whole school, or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all pupils an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Collective worship is not the same as an Assembly because staff and pupils do not have the right to withdraw from Assembly. Assembly may be taken to mean the time when members of the school are gathered together to pass on information and move forward matters of secular business (notices).

For the School:

Collective Worship contributes significantly to the ethos of Park Junior School and it is our aim that it is a time when the school community can:

- share common aims and values
- celebrate achievement and special times
- explore together the world in which we live
- develop a community spirit

For the Pupils:

We also intend that Collective Worship contributes to the development of the pupil as a ‘whole’ person by providing opportunities to:

- worship that which is considered worthy
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- develop their own spirituality
- reinforce positive attitudes
- participate and respond
- reflect on what it means to be human

The Contribution of Collective Worship to aspects of the Curriculum

Collective Worship time is distinct from curriculum time. However, in Park Junior School, Collective Worship will at times feature aspects of the curriculum, which will enhance the experiences of pupils by reflecting on the work done in classes. At times, Collective Worship will enrich class work through its consideration of subject matter from different perspectives.

The provision of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, intellectual and cultural development is in line with school policy which informs our practice. To ensure Collective Worship provides opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development it should address a wide variety of themes and topics, use diverse stimuli and resources and provide pupils with the opportunity to 'respond' on their own level.

At Park Junior School, Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development of pupils in the following ways:

To the spiritual development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- Ⓢ reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of things;
- Ⓢ experience times of quiet inactivity to counterbalance the activity which generally marks the rest of the school day; and
- Ⓢ hear stories and words from religious and other literature which suggest that there is more to life than meets the eye

Collective worship contributes to the moral development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- Ⓢ reflect on matters concerning right and wrong;
- Ⓢ hear about incidents in which, and people in whom, goodness or right are exemplified; and
- Ⓢ learn about religious and other teachings concerning right and wrong

Collective worship contributes to the social development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- Ⓢ gather with others for a common purpose;
- Ⓢ share times of joy and times of sadness with others; and
- Ⓢ learn how to behave appropriately within a specific social setting
- Ⓢ discuss the values and vision within our school

Collective worship contributes to the cultural development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- Ⓢ hear music from a range of times, places and cultures;
- Ⓢ reflect upon ideas concerning beauty and that which is pleasing to the eye and ear

Collective Worship contributes to the intellectual development of pupils by providing with an opportunity to:

- Ⓢ learn about religions from around the world;
- Ⓢ discuss the values of each of the different religions

Positive Purposes/Aims for Collective Worship

Collective worship can add value to the education process.

It provides an opportunity to:

- Ⓢ encourage pupils to develop an awareness of the universal moral principles of right and wrong, justice and fairness and a proper concern for the fate of others and the world;
- Ⓢ affirm and celebrate the values and ethos of the school;
- Ⓢ add to the pupils' development an awareness of, and a sense of belonging to, the many different dimensions of the school's community;

- Ⓢ experience the sense of gathering for a special purpose;
- Ⓢ share an experience that promotes thought and reflection;
- Ⓢ promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- Ⓢ provide an opportunity to reflect on practical issues raised by becoming an adult citizen of the world
- Ⓢ consider and reflect upon a variety of situations and issues and make a personal response; and
- Ⓢ reflect quietly and make an internal response in the light of personal beliefs and background; this may include worship of God within each participant's own faith understanding.

Organisation

At our school we hold a daily act of collective worship. We meet as a school at least four times a week and have a reflection time in class once a week.

ELEMENTS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Acts of collective worship at Park Junior School include many elements. Some of these are:

Music/Songs

Music can help to set the scene and create an appropriate atmosphere. It can be listened to, so helping pupils to reflect on a theme. It can be played or sung.

Stories of the faiths

At Park Junior School we remember to choose stories/passages that are appropriate to the age of the pupils, as well as being in harmony with the theme.

Reflection Techniques

During collective worship music and a range of techniques can be used to help create a reflective atmosphere. These include using art or artefacts, using flowers, plants or natural objects, sharing information from the internet on the projector screen, having children act out stories and situations and sharing a range of stories from the many faiths that make up our diverse community.

Reflection

To most people reflection is the central part of worship. Reflection can involve words, but doesn't necessarily have to. Reflection can be still and quiet. At Park Junior School we invite children to reflect in an appropriate way by respecting each other and sitting quietly in order to concentrate. In reflection we may use the word God. Where children have a faith we ask them to pray to their own God.

WITHDRAWAL FROM COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Parents have the statutory right to withdraw their children from school worship. This can be total – that is where the children would be wholly excused from all acts of collective worship partial – that is, where children are excused from certain kinds of collective worship only or from certain elements within the act of collective worship.

At Park Junior School, we believe that collective worship has a unifying role and although parents do not have to justify requests to withdraw, the headteacher will speak to the family in person, fairly informally to ensure:

- Ⓢ That there is no misunderstanding about the nature of collective worship in general
- Ⓢ That they have not been misinformed about the school's practice in particular
- Ⓢ Where possible a partial rather than entire withdrawal.

The governors and headteacher would aim to ensure the appropriateness of its practice and its prospectus was clear about the nature of collective worship.

Appendix 1

Sample letter to visitors invited to take part in Collective Worship

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to come to our school on..... to talk to class...../ years..... in assembly/collective worship about

Assembly/collective worship begins at..... and generally lasts for..... minutes. It will take place in.. (location) and approximately pupils will be present from Years.....(aged.....).

Please arrive by..... and report to the school office, where you will be required to sign our visitor's book.

For the duration of your stay at our school you will be required to wear a visitor's badge; this ensures that everyone understands that you are in the building on school business.

Our school community is not a faith community and collective worship is provided for all pupils. Therefore the experience you plan should be comfortable, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of all. As part of your presentation you may wish to share your beliefs with the children. This is perfectly acceptable as long as these are put into context. Please remember it is not the place of a school to provide opportunities to convert or indoctrinate pupils. The pupils need to be reassured that all of their faith or culture backgrounds are of equal status and validity.

In our school we do not expect or invite children to pray as though they were all members of the same faith. As part of collective worship our pupils are used to having a quiet thinking/reflection time when they can consider the meaning of what they have heard and seen to their own lives. We hope that those who are religious believers use this time to relate the focus or theme to their own religious beliefs and some may indeed pray or worship internally.

If you have any queries please contact..... at the school. Please also contact us if you have the need for any equipment to be made available for you.

We look forward to seeing you on.....

Yours sincerely,

Policy created by:	David Tebbutt	September 26
Policy to be reviewed:	FGB	September 28
Policy agreed by governors:	Signed:	Date: