



Collective Worship Policy

Date approved:	October 2021
Approved by:	New Generation Schools Trust Board
Review date:	October 2022

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Worship is an important part of our school's life as it gives us the opportunity to celebrate, as well as encouraging our children to think about their place in the world, through Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. We will not shy away from our responsibilities in enabling children to think deeply about themselves, the world in which they live and the place that faith has in our society.

Daily Acts of Collective Worship, called 'collectives' at Hope Community School take place within our Christian context and framework. They are an important element of our foundation, at the heart of school life and contribute to a spiritually rich environment.

Our Collective Worship aims to:

- develop a sense of community within and beyond the school
- acknowledge the things which have meaning, value and purpose for the children as individuals, as well as for the school and the wider community
- enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues and the many questions which relate to life
- enable children to explore and respond to a variety of forms of worship, thus enabling those children with a religious commitment to deepen their experience of worship, and to allow those without a religious commitment to begin to appreciate what worship means for others
- enable children to approach the threshold of worship by fostering in them an attitude characterised by feelings such as humility, awe, wonder, appreciation, thankfulness, respect, reverence and elation
- celebrate achievements, special occasions and special events in relation to individual children within school, to the school as a whole, or to the wider community
- acknowledge and respect difference and diversity

Acts of Collective Worship may:

- be evocative and challenging, providing opportunities for personal reflection and response;
- provide opportunities for children to develop a sense of awe and wonder.
- provide opportunities to share with children's the central teachings of the Christian faith, centred around the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, at an age appropriate level and thereby encourage them to explore and reflect on their own beliefs and understanding of God.
- establish, explore and reinforce the common Christian values of the school community such as love, peace, forgiveness and compassion; secure foundations
- allow us to find out together what God teaches in the Bible;
- include features from Christian Worship e.g. prayers, songs, Bible readings, use of religious symbols e.g. candle, cross;

- provide opportunities for us to explore our individual identity in relation to God as individuals, as members of the Hope Community School's community, and as part of the wider Church community;
- provide opportunities to bring before God in prayer, personal needs and the needs of others;

There may be children attending Hope Community School with a Christian faith who will wish to worship as Christians and we recognise there may also be children without such a commitment or understanding. We do not make assumptions about children's beliefs and our daily acts of Collective Worship are appropriate for every child. In particular, we do not require children to do or say things that they do not believe to be true.

These daily gatherings will reflect our Christian ethos of inclusivity by:

- recognising and celebrating the diversity of cultures, life styles and faiths which exist in our school and local community;
- having an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for every student to attend;
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils;

Right to withdrawal

Any parent/carer who does not wish their child to join the rest of the school community for this daily time of Collective Worship is entitled under law to withdraw their child. However, the Christian ethos of Hope Community School is carefully explained to prospective parent/carers in the Prospectus, on the website and at Open Days.

When presented with a request for withdrawal from either Religious Education or Collective Worship it is very important that both school and parents/carers fully understand the options the law allows. A request should be made in writing and when received the Principal (possibly with the class teacher and/or RE co-ordinator) will discuss the request with the parent/carer. The rationale for Collective Worship alongside the themes and topics for the term should also be shared and parents/carers should be given the opportunity to read these properly before discussing the information. The school's religious designation should also be explained stressing how the ethos is inclusive and respects personal beliefs. They should then discuss the practical implications of withdrawal and the circumstances in which it would be reasonable to accommodate parents'/carers' wishes. The parent/carer could be invited to observe a lesson, time of worship or visiting speaker or accompany a visit. This may provide reassurance that the approach being adopted is one of genuine open enquiry that respects the beliefs of all children.

If parents/carers choose to withdraw their child from Collective Worship arrangements should be made to provide the pupil with an alternative to support their SMSC development. In these cases, the parents/carers should work with the Principal on ensuring alternative, appropriate materials and resources are available. These should have clear outcomes and be in line with British values and those of the school.

The role of staff

All members of the school community, including staff, are encouraged to share in Acts of Collective Worship to develop a sense of community and belonging and in keeping with the close family ethos of the school.

Staff should not be disqualified from employment or discriminated against in terms of pay or promotion on the grounds of their religious opinions or practice in participating or not participating in acts of worship

It is expected that all teaching staff should attend Celebration Collective Worship, but they are not required to lead the collective worship part of this occasion. It is hoped that our a fully inclusive approach to collective worship within the realms of the law will promote collective worship that all staff will feel able to attend.

Christian themes and values ...

Underpinning everything we do every day at Hope Community School is our strength of belief in the importance of Christian values.

The school's Forty core Christian values will be explored through Collective worship. Each week we consider some of these values more thoroughly in our collectives and weekly soft start sessions, supported by parents/carers. We explore how they feature in our lives, how they are represented in bible stories, how they affect the world we live in and how they shape the people we are.

We ask our children to share where they have seen each value in action, how it has affected them and how they might apply their learning in the future.

As each value is focused upon it is shared within our whole community and is part of day to day learning within school.

If you would like more information on the themes and topics for the term for our Collectives please speak with our Principal.

Wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character

The Education Reform Act 1988 provision 7 states that Collective Worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character. This statement means that collective worship in all maintained schools must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief. However, an Academy with a religious designation we are required to provide collective worship in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Academy's designated faith. It can also choose to reflect the other principal religions and those found in the local community.

Daily Acts of Collective Worship at Hope Community Schools take place within the Christian context and framework. They are an important element of our foundation, at the heart of school life and contributing to a spiritually rich environment.

There are religious and human values that many religions and life stances (e.g. Humanism) have in common, e.g. justice, love, peace, charity, sacrifice, morality, saying sorry. Worship with a theme such as 'forgiveness' or 'honesty' is broadly Christian even if specific Christian material is not used.

Many Christian beliefs are shared by other world religions e.g. God as creator, humankind as stewards of the world, goodness overcoming evil. For example, the Jewish festival of Hanukkah celebrates freedom from oppression and the power of God. In collective worship, material based on this celebration would allow those who believe in justice to share, and be broadly Christian too.

Local School Council checklist for collective worship

The Council is responsible for ensuring a school is legal in carrying out its duty to ensure:

- All pupils in attendance at the school receive a daily act of collective worship. (CW)
- CW to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. If the school wishes to seek a determination to lift the requirement for its collective worship to no longer be broadly of a Christian character it must apply to SACRE (see appendix 9 for further details)
- CW is appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils in their school
- There is a system in place for parents to be able to exercise their right to withdraw their child (ren) from CW.
- Teachers are not disqualified from employment or discriminated against in terms of pay or promotion on the grounds of their religious opinions or practice in participating or not participating in acts of worship
- There is a CW policy that has been approved by the Local Council within the last two years
- The Trust monitoring form to is filled in by the school and returned to the Trust before the end of each academic year signed by the chair of the Local School Council
- CW contributes to the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

Monitoring and observation of collective worship

Members of the Local School Council should observe acts of collective worship during the school year and give feedback to the Principal and staff member that delivered the collective, if appropriate. The Council Member with responsibility for ethos should visit to observe once every half term as a minimum. Members of SLT should regularly observe staff delivering collective worships and use an observation template to provide feedback.

This policy should be read alongside the Trust's 'Collective Worship Advice' document.