



we are a learning community with the spirit to succeed

Holywell Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

(Based on Herts Model Policy issued September 2015)

Status:	Non-Statutory
Approval Body:	Governing Body
Review Frequency:	2 Years
Last Review:	February 2019
Next Review:	Spring 2021



Holywell Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

1. Background to collective worship at our school

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”.

Families who send their children to this school are from a range of faith backgrounds. Some children are from practising Christian families, some are from religions other than Christianity including Hindu, Muslim, Jewish etc. and some are from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times. (See Appendix 1 for a list of special occasions regularly celebrated by the school).

The Headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship. Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from collective worship.

2. Some Definitions

2.1 Collective worship

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring “collective” not “corporate” worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

2.2 Worship of a broadly Christian character

The majority of acts of worship must be of a “broadly Christian character”, and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational.

Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

3. Values and aims

We believe at this school that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in every day situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

4. Objectives

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions together

- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....;
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

5. Planning

In this school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. When the whole school meets together (Monday and Friday) this is generally between 9:05 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. On Tuesday and Thursday each class meets together as part of their PSHE lesson and on Wednesday there is a reflection time after singing assembly.

The Headteacher usually leads the whole school reflection time on a Friday, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days. The assembly schedule is currently designed and implemented by the leadership team.

The school year is divided into weekly themes which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship. (See the school's Charter in Appendix 2).

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupils' contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors' contributions

6. Success criteria

At this school we evaluate our acts of worship against some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
- A sense of occasion
- Good order
- Staff affirmation
- A sense of challenge
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil's experience

7. Some Challenges

7.1 Staff non-contact time

We appreciate the need for staff to have some time during the school day set aside for planning and preparation. We also recognise the value of the whole school, including staff being involved in our school worship.

7.2 Song/music

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise with the songs we sing. We are careful with our choice of songs to recognise that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing. We change the words of some songs to make them more inclusive when appropriate. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme.

Every week we have a singing practice. During this we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

7.3 Prayer

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to our prayers which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'It is now our quiet time. I would like you to think, wish or

pray. And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian/ Hindu/ Muslim prayer/poem/reading...' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

7.4 Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. All visitors are issued with this policy and, unless otherwise agreed, will fit into the theme for the week.

We have made links with some people who visit us regularly to lead worship.

8. Monitoring and review

8.1 This policy will be monitored by the Governing Body and reviewed every 2 years.

Appendix 1

List of Special Occasions

Autumn Term:

Harvest festival

Eid Ul Adha

Black History month

Divali

Remembrance day

Anti-Bullying week

Hannukah

Christmas

Spring term

Burns night

Chinese New Year

St David's day

Easter

Summer term

Eid

Other days and events that are celebrated include St George's day, St Patrick's and St Andrew's day.

Appendix 2

The Holywell School Charter displaying the 6Rs:



Holywell Primary School

We are a learning community with the spirit to succeed

Our charter



Responsibility

We are all responsible for our own learning, our own behaviour and our shared community.



Resilience

We never give up, we encourage each other to persevere and to set targets. We aim for 'excellence' in all that we do.



Resourceful

We 'learn to learn'. We ask thoughtful questions and we know different ways to solve challenges and overcome obstacles.

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Reasoning

We can explain our ideas, justify our opinions, and give reasons to our answers. We have the curiosity to find things out.



Reflection

We recognise and celebrate our achievements, we learn through our mistakes and we strive to improve.



Respect

We show respect to each other's feelings, beliefs, ideas, interests and belongings.

Learning is at the heart of what we do

At Holywell we know it is important to learn how to learn.

We learn how to learn as individuals, in pairs and in collaborative groups.

We develop the skills to think in a systematic and divergent way, to be both analytical and practical.