



Strood Academy
Collective Worship Policy
Academic year 2024/25

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Collection Worship Policy

Strood Academy Policy Statement on Collective Worship and Moral Religious and Spiritual Matters

Within the Academy it is regarded as axiomatic that the moral, religious, spiritual and cultural development of each student is fundamental to every aspect of the curriculum. The Code of Conduct supports and makes explicit this philosophy, and helps to both develop a sense of right and wrong and show respect for Fundamental British Values.

Whilst it is within Religious Education (World Values) in particular, that religious beliefs, teachings and practices are taught, other subjects also invite students to reflect, both implicitly and explicitly, on the purpose and meaning of life within their curriculum. The curriculum ensures students feel valued and promotes a sense of purpose and identity.

Definition of Collective Worship

Collective worship is a time when the whole Academy, or groups within the Academy meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all students an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship does not presuppose shared beliefs, and does not seek uniform responses from pupils. It caters for a diversity of beliefs and points of view, allowing individuals to respond as individuals.

The Law on Collective Worship

The Education Reform Act of 1988 sets out the law regarding collective worship and Circular 1/94 provides further guidance. The Law States that:

- Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God. 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 the worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered.
- To develop a community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.

Collective worship is intended to be appropriate for, and to include, all pupils attending a school, regardless of their own personal faith. Collective worship in schools differs from the corporate worship of believers in a particular faith.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the act of collective worship, sixth formers have the right to decide for themselves whether or not to attend the act of collective worship. Teaching staff are also permitted to withdraw.

Aims of Collective worship

For the Academy:

Collective Worship contributes significantly to the ethos of Strood Academy and it is our aim that it is a time when the Academy community can:

- Share common aims and values
- Celebrate achievement and special Events.
- Explore together the world in which we live
- Develop a community spirit.
- Provide a caring reflective environment based on Christian values.
- Encourage promotion of Fundamental British Values.
- Encourage students to be open to new ideas.
- Promoting an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all pupils, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Developing pupils' character, which we define as a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives pupils the qualities they need to flourish in our society developing pupils' confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy

For the students:

We also intend that Collective Worship contributes to the development of the character of students by providing opportunities to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within school and the wider community.
- Consider spiritual and moral issues.
- In understanding other people and their beliefs and values.
- Develop their own spirituality.
- Reinforce positive attitudes.
- Developing and deepening understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance
- Explore the language which people use to express their beliefs and values.
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them.
- Ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- Knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- Sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them

- Willingness to reflect on their experiences.

The Academy aims to provide an opportunity for students to be involved in an act of worship and to celebrate the values and ethos of the school. Collective worship is a focus for spiritual development and an area for spiritual and personal growth. Its concern is to underline the concerns of us all on matters such as life and death, the purpose and quality of life, and lifetime choices. It provides opportunities for considering moral issues.

Another important aim is to enable students to see themselves as part of a community. It is recognised that for some the academy environment can be students' main source of security and thus collective worship provides the potential for exploring what it means to belong to a community with shared values and beliefs.

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

Assemblies can incorporate collective worship, but there is a distinction between the two. A report on sporting achievements may come under 'assembly' but using the students' sporting achievements to explore and reflect on human potential, determination, loyalty, courage could be the stimulus for a 'worshipful response' and therefore could constitute collective worship.

Procedures

- There is one assembly each week for every student in the school. Each assembly is 30 minutes in length with a short period for reflection at the conclusion of the assembly
- We have a 'theme' which provides a clear focus on important issues or concepts such as morality, community, forgiveness, sharing, peace etc.
- We attempt to connect with our students through themes and approaches.
- We offer time for reflection at the end of the assembly which helps provide a calm atmosphere before students are dismissed to lessons.
- Wide variety of approaches are used to give opportunity for reflection; dramatic, readings, pictures, photographs, stories, music, dance, silence, reflections, songs, prayers, mime, visual images and artefacts
- In addition, form tutors and their groups engage in reflections surrounding the week's assembly. Furthermore, the theme is addressed, where appropriate in Personal development lessons, comparing a variety of responses to the issues raised on a global level
- During form time, groups reflect on social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues which have been raised by current affairs and consider their responses to moral dilemmas, through a pre-planned activity designed by the RSE and PSHE lead.

- Students will be given the opportunity to further engage in reflections regarding social, spiritual and moral issues during their personal development timetabled lessons
- The Principal or other senior members of staff lead whole school worship at least once a term. In addition, acts of worship are arranged for special occasions e.g. Remembrance Service and Christmas
- College teams, members of the senior team, form tutors or visitors may lead group assemblies each week. Students are encouraged to take part in both planning and leading an act of collective worship.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Principal is responsible (under the School Standards Framework Act 1998) for overseeing collective worship
- The Principal delegates the planning of calendar events. This is discussed with the Senior Leadership Team.
- All form tutors follow the programme for weekly reflections in tutor time.
- Parents of a student have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be partly excused from attending collective worship the school will comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right must contact the Principal. Where this is deemed appropriate, students will be expected to provide their own study at the back although close to the assembly so that they can come in to hear important announcements and the recognition of student success.
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006 makes provisions for students in post -16 education to exercise the right to withdraw themselves from the act of collective worship, but not from assembly.
- The Principal is responsible for ensuring that parents are reminded on an annual basis of the content of this policy.

To fulfil this policy the leadership team and Governors will ensure that:

- All registered school age students take part acts of worship
- The emphasis in the course of the year will be on Christian beliefs and values
- Acts of worship are appropriate, with regard to age, aptitude and background of the young people involved.
- The faith background of staff and young people is respected at all times.

Whilst we are aware of the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act, at Strood Academy it is not always possible for all students to take part in an act of collective worship as a whole group, due to lack of space. However, students attend one such act within their college groups at least once a week during assembly time. This enables all students to have a sense of belonging to a larger group from year 7 to 11 within their college setting. There are also assemblies throughout the academic year which are supported by senior students.

Within the Academy, we have Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus and other faith groups but, reflecting the society in which we live; most are not committed to a particular religion. It is therefore recognised that our school worship must be open-ended and safeguard the integrity of the participants. We provide the opportunity to worship and reflect in accordance with the 1988 Education Reform Act but students are left free to explore their own beliefs.

Time has been given during the year to make staff aware of the legal requirements and a forum is available for raising awareness and encouraging discussion on the school's implementation of the policy.

The Nature of Collective Worship

The emphasis in the course of the year will be on Christian beliefs although there will also be opportunities to explore and give value to the contribution and ethos of other religious and secular groups.

Students are involved in collective worship : in readings, musical contributions, drama, reports etc. Students are given the opportunity for reflection and silence. Where prayers are used students will be invited to join in, not coerced.

Times of silence or of listening to known prayers or texts of Christianity or other faiths can offer good opportunities for reflection.

While no child should be expected to say, or affirm prayers or words of songs which they do not believe, it may be appropriate to adapt the words of a well-known song or to ask the children to listen to a prayer from a particular faith, possibly inviting those who know the prayer to join in with saying the words. The words of selected prayers or hymns might be a starting point for discussion and further reflection.

Colleges are encouraged to have celebrations as a theme in all assemblies where students who have performed well in their studies or extra-curricular activity are congratulated.

The Delivery

Management of Collective Worship is the responsibility of PSHE/RSE co-ordinator.

Collective worship is usually delivered by the Principal, Senior Staff, and the Subject Leaders. Major faith celebrations and national/world events are included in the planning. A record of which will be held by the senior leader responsible for PSHE and RSE..

Quality in Collective Worship

It is accepted that collective worship should be like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing and evaluation. This being so, a variety of styles are employed. These include, in the course of a year, music to create a mood and focus attention; readings from the Bible and other relevant sources; hearing a talk or story; having the opportunity to take part in prayer; the use of artefacts; drama and role-play; the questioning of students; ICT; opportunities for quiet reflection.