



# Collective Worship Policy

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Laurance Haines School has a religiously diverse community. Many faiths are represented including those from non-religious families. The faith background of the child's family is respected at all times. We aim for all children, parents and staff to connect with the statement,

**“You see me. You hear me. I belong”**

We believe at this school that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Collective worship can take many forms, from assemblies, to moments of silence and reflection in the classroom or more personal reflection during our Calm Start or across the curriculum. 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.

In assemblies, we will share the school creed and regularly use moments of silence or reflection. This provides opportunities for reflection and for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

## **Some definitions**

### **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.

### **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.

## 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
- Embrace and celebrate 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.

## 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.

## Planning

In this school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. The following key stage assemblies can take place:

- A 'Jigsaw' assembly, introducing PSHE themes and celebrating children's learning and reflections in these themes
- An Extraordinary Person assembly – highlighting individuals who are often not celebrated for their personal achievements and their positive impact on humanity
- A whole key stage themed assembly
- A showing assembly to inform others of the work happening in each class
- A singing assembly led by the music coordinator and other teachers
- An assembly to celebrate the good work and achievement taking place in school
- An assembly to celebrate each week's birthdays (KS1)

The school year has been divided into half termly 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. In October, the whole school (from Nursery to Year 6) attends St Michael and All Angels for a Harvest service in which each year participates, prayers from across the religions are written and read by Year 6 pupils and this is supported by the parents. At Christmas, Years 1 to 6 attend St Michael and All Angels for a Christmas service to which, not only parents are invited, but also members of the community e.g. the local councillor.

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.

### **We choose from a range of methods, including:**

- Pupil's 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

### **Success Criteria**

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

- A sense of belonging
- 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
- Pupil voice, prioritising the views and lived experiences of the children most vulnerable to discrimination
- Staff voice, prioritising the views and lived experiences of the staff most vulnerable to discrimination

### **School Creed**

After every assembly we share the School Creed which is a way of sharing a collective voice. Children have the option to take part in the school creed or reflect about their own faith silently.

This is our school,  
Let peace dwell here,  
Let the rooms be full of contentment,  
Let love abide here,  
Love of one another,  
Love of all people,  
Love of life itself,  
And love of God,  
Let us remember,  
That, as many hands build a house,  
So many hearts make a school.