



Robert Miles Junior School

Collective Worship Policy

The text below outlines a proposal for Collective Worship that provides for the religious, moral and spiritual needs of our children. It seeks to fulfil the statutory requirements laid out in the 1988 Reform Act, whilst ensuring that the provision is inclusive, purposeful and relevant to our children's needs. These requirements were reinforced in the Education Acts of 1996 and 1998.

The policy also aims to sensitively address parent/carer rights for withdrawal from these sessions and the need to make sure that the policy is clearly understood and easily accessible.

At Robert Miles Junior School we provide a daily collective worship opportunity for children registered at our school (except where there may be children who are withdrawn by their parents), which complies with the 1988 Education Reform Act regarding collective worship. Our policy is published on the school's website.

Collective Worship Policy Legal Requirements

- The Education Reform Act (1988) requires schools to provide a daily act of worship for all registered pupils.
- Headteachers in county schools must consult the governors, but are themselves responsible for arranging acts of worship and ensuring that they take place, even if on grounds of conscience, they absent themselves.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of worship.
- Teachers, including headteachers, have the same right of withdrawal.
- Acts of worship must be "wholly or mainly of a broad Christian nature" and "not to be distinctive of any denomination" and must not be evangelistic in their content or delivery (ERA Section 7.1)
- They should make a contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- In providing acts of collective worship the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the children should be taken into consideration.

What do we mean by Collective Worship at Robert Miles Junior School?

Collective worship comes in many forms. At Robert Miles Junior School we view collective worship as an opportunity to reflect and grow spiritually and morally. Although there is an obligation on the school to ensure that worship is of a predominantly Christian nature, at our school we want to ensure that children of all beliefs and faiths can practice and express their beliefs. This includes children who are agnostic or atheist. We apply a clear distinction between spirituality and religion. We will also actively encourage opportunities to explore the faiths and practice of other religions and cultures.

Worship has to do with worth and worthiness. It is recognising, affirming and celebrating that which is worthy of honour and respect - ideals and the highest achievements of which humanity is capable, matters of truth, goodness and beauty, an appreciation of the world, a recognition of the interdependence of human beings, a response to the plight of those in need. We attempt to achieve a real sense of purpose by sensitively trying to evoke those senses and feelings from which it might be said that worship most naturally arises.

These might include:

- a sense of awe and wonder
- a sense of beauty,
- a sense of sympathy and pity
- a sense of perspective
- smallness in the face of greatness
- grandness in the face of smallness
- a sense of justice and injustice,
- a sense of shared loss
- a sense of gratitude and appreciation
- a feeling of shared sadness
- feelings of joy
- a feeling of being "moved" and the need to take action
- a sense of inner peace
- a sense of right and wrong
- a feeling of pride and achievement
- a sense of stillness in the midst of a busy and changing existence
- a sense of community.

Collective worship can also take many forms in a school day. It can occur in a single event like an assembly or with small groups; or even individually. Our emphasis is on ensuring that the experience is collective. In our school collective worship can be seen;

- As a whole school during assembly
- As a whole class,
- In small groups throughout the day,
- Through personal opportunities for reflection and thought throughout the school day.

These opportunities can remain inclusive by ensuring that there are personal development opportunities for all. This is the basis on which the purpose and success of collective worship should be evaluated. Collective Worship is a key device for staff and pupils for the promotion and celebration of the school values:

- *Responsibility*
- *Equality*
- *Achievement*
- *Consideration*
- *Honesty*

We also recognise that Collective Worship also provides explicit opportunities to address issues of cultural significance and promote community cohesion.

Broadly educational in content

Collective worship is a valuable learning experience for children. We want our collective worship to reflect the Values of the school. All collective worship should allow for spiritual, moral, social or cultural development.

- We want to create valuable learning experiences and where possible create valuable links to our R.E. and PSHE.
- We want to provide an opportunity to celebrate the academic, social, personal and sporting achievements of the children.
- We want to provide and promote opportunities for how to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in a larger social gathering.

The Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective worship is voluntary. Pupils and parents have the right to remove themselves from these sessions. However, we recognise that participation is the key to successful Collective Worship. Effective Collective Worship will have an impact if;

- more children are actively involved in collective worship,
- more staff are committed to its practice.
- the practice is inclusive and relevant.

Assemblies are held at different times of the day, depending on other curriculum and organisational demands. The act of collective worship will vary in length.

Organisation of assemblies is generally as follows:

<i>Monday:</i>	Whole school assembly, led by Head Teacher
<i>Tuesday:</i>	Pupil led School Council whole school assembly/whole school assembly led by Deputy Head Teacher
<i>Wednesday:</i>	Honours Assembly, including parents
<i>Thursday:</i>	Class PSHE assembly
<i>Friday:</i>	Whole School Singing Assembly, led by Head Teacher

These times are not fixed and visiting speakers may take the part of one of the above each week.

The Head Teacher encourages involvement from faith practitioners from outside the school and each term different visiting speakers are invited into school.

We invite parents to assembly when their child's achievement is being celebrated in Honours Assembly. This helps to promote the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children.

We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

Inclusive Worship

Inclusion is about allowing all children to participate. For collective worship this is about ensuring that everybody actively participates and benefits whilst allowing children of particular faiths to practise their beliefs. We want our collective worship to recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, lifestyles and religions which exist in our multi-cultural

society. However the majority of the Acts of collective worship will be largely of a broadly Christian character and follow the Christian calendar.

Special arrangements should be made with the school's leadership team to provide appropriate guidance and time for the practice of all faiths if requested or agreed with parents/carers.

Our key principles are:

- We should create an atmosphere in which all feel valued and safe.
- It should be suitable for every child to attend unless withdrawn by his/her parent or carer.
- Collective worship will focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to our children.
- Will include active participation by pupils, parents, staff and members of our local community.
- When prayers are used, we should make it clear that all children can join in if they wish to or quietly reflect on the focus on our collective worship.

Parent/carer rights to withdraw children from RE and collective worship

Parents/carers have a right to withdraw their children from parts of Religious Education and Collective Worship. To exercise this they should contact the school requesting that they do not wish their child to take part in RE lessons and Collective Worship

Parents/carers do not need to explain their reasons for seeking withdrawal, but to avoid misunderstandings they will be invited to discuss the provision with the Headteacher around the following points:

- The religious issues about which the parents/carers would object to their child being taught.
- The practical implications of withdrawal.
- If a parent/carer will require advance notice of such issue in the future and if so how much.
- Withdrawal from Christmas productions and other religious festivals and celebrations.
- We remain responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn from RE or Collective Worship, unless the child is lawfully receiving RE or taking part in Collective Worship elsewhere.

This Policy was adopted by the Governing Body Strategic Development and Pupils Committee February 2013

Next review: Spring Term 2016