



Rivermead Primary School

Policy on Collective Worship

Committee Responsible: Learning and Teaching

Date of Ratification by Committee: January 2024

Date of Next Review: Spring 2026

The Collective Worship Policy at Rivermead Primary School pays due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken account of the guidance offered by the Local Authority (LA) through its Standing Advisory Council for Education (SACRE).

Definition of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is a time when the whole school community, or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all pupils an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

We recognise that at Rivermead, our school community includes people from a variety of cultural and faith, and non-faith backgrounds. Therefore, our Collective Worship does not in any way suggest an act of worship which involves a group meeting to subscribe to any particular faith or denomination of a faith. It does not pre-suppose shared beliefs, and we do not seek uniform responses from pupils. Our Collective Worship caters for a diversity of beliefs and points of view, allowing individuals to respond as individuals. It can provide a focus for thought, inspiration and reflection for pupils (and staff) whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none.

Worship can mean:

- awareness of
- appreciation of
- respect for
- preference for
- devotion of
- adoration of
- commitment to

Worship of a Broadly Christian Character

Schools are asked to provide pupils with the opportunity to worship as understood in the normal and natural sense of offering reverence or veneration to a divine being or power. Furthermore the majority of the acts of worship must be of a 'broadly Christian character,' which particularly means that they should reflect the traditions of the Christian belief and must contain some elements, which accord a special status to Jesus Christ.

However, by law (paragraphs 60-63 of DCSF Circular 1/94) headteachers must have regard to family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes.

In order to achieve an act of worship which meets legal requirements as well as educational principles, we focus on those characteristics which are shared by faiths as well as those which are specific to Christianity.

These include:

- that there is one God, a supreme spirituality, the source of all life who created the world and all that lies in and beyond it;
- that the nature of God may be found through love and selfless caring for others;
- that all relationships between human beings should be guided by love;
- that the spirit of love be used by those with power to value and care for the world and all that is in it.

In this way, our acts of collective worship can become a purposeful collective spiritual experience which supports the ethos of the school.

Aims of Collective Worship

For the School:

Collective Worship contributes significantly to the ethos of Rivermead Primary School and it is our aim that it is a time when the school community can meet together to:

- share common aims and values
- celebrate achievement and special times
- explore together the world in which we live
- develop a community spirit and establish a shared identity

For the Pupils:

We intend that Collective Worship contributes to the development of the pupil as a 'whole' person by providing opportunities to:

- worship that which is considered 'worthy'
- learn what active faith looks like and feels like
- explore their own beliefs and develop their own spirituality
- understand and respect the beliefs of other faith communities and those of no faith
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- reinforce positive attitudes
- participate and respond
- reflect on what it means to be human

Activities

A number of activities can legitimately be called worship. Amongst these are:

- Reflection on the meaning of life
- Pondering ultimate questions
- Developing a sense of transcendence
- Responding to a challenge
- Experiential exploration of a religious idea
- Celebration of learning about religion
- Learning from the experience of others

As in classroom teaching, we use a variety of teaching and learning styles and leaders will choose the style/method and resources which are appropriate to the content, the age, aptitude and the background of the pupils. We want all pupils to feel able to join in and respond, therefore, we use many interactive techniques and we provide the opportunity for children and adults to express their response through reflection and/or prayer.

Some of the methods we use at Rivermead are:

- Pupils' contributions
- Stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Reflection
- Songs and music
- Sacred/secular readings
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points

Collective Worship

- Dialogue/creative silence

It is important to create the right atmosphere for worship by making sure we mark the worship element of an assembly in a special way e.g. by music, looking at a picture or artifact, thoughtful quotes or silence.

Parents are invited to Sharing Assemblies

Governors are welcome to attend any assembly with some notice.

The Contribution of Collective Worship to Aspects of the Curriculum

Collective Worship time is distinct from curriculum time. However, at Rivermead, Collective Worship does at times feature aspects of the curriculum – this enhances the experiences of pupils by providing an opportunity to reflect on the work done in classes. At times, Collective Worship enriches class work through looking at subject matter from different perspectives.

The provision of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is in line with school policy which informs our practice. To ensure Collective Worship provides opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, we address a wide variety of themes and topics, use diverse stimuli and resources and provide pupils with the opportunity to 'respond' on their own level.

The Leadership and Management of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is generally led by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head who plan, monitor and evaluate acts of Collective Worship. Themes are often based upon the school's Golden Rules. The content of all acts of Collective Worship is considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils.

Termly planning sheets list themes, special occasions and events, but will be flexible to allow the inclusion of current and topical issues. These plans are shared with the Governing Body and ensure that there is continuity and progression, and enable the monitoring and evaluation of acts of worship to take place.

The Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is organised to provide a variety of groupings and takes place in the school hall, a classroom or outside. Acts of worship will usually last for approximately 15 minutes, although it is recognized that this time will be shortened or lengthened when it is appropriate.

Leading Acts of Collective Worship

Every member of the school staff and occasional visitors will be involved in leading acts of worship at some point in the school year.

Collective Worship

Visitors will be welcome to lead Collective Worship from time to time and will be given guidance on acts of Collective Worship at Rivermead. Leaders from Faiths within the area can contribute to pupils' awareness of different beliefs, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these Faiths.

Withdrawal

Any parent who objects to their child attending an act or acts of Collective Worship may request that their child is withdrawn, indicated on the annual consent form. Parents are encouraged to discuss this with the headteacher. Any pupil who is withdrawn from an act or acts of Collective Worship will be supervised during that time by a member of the school staff.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is the responsibility of the Learning and Teaching Committee and will be reviewed annually.

The school will use the following success criteria in its evaluations

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