



# **Collective Worship Policy**

## 1. Requirements

### 1.1 Change Record

Issue	Date	Author	Description
1.0	March 2015	P Atkin	Existing Collective Worship Policy
1.1	September 2018	P Atkin	Update to better reflect current practice
2.0	19 September 2018	P Atkin	Ratified by Governors
2.1	25 November 2020	P Atkin	Minor Updates and COVID Variations
3.0	2 December 2020	P Atkin	Ratified by Governors

Note: All issues except those of the form 'X.0' are draft.

### 1.2 Equality Statement

In developing and reviewing this policy we have carefully considered its impact on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

### 1.3 Approval and Review

This policy was approved by the Governing Body on 2 December 2020. It is due for review in the Autumn Term 2022.

## 2. Introduction

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”.

Fowlmere Primary School is a school which welcomes all children and as such our community comprises families from a range of faith backgrounds, including families 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.

The head teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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.

## 3. Definitions

### 3.1 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.

### **3.2 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.

## **4. 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 school values (Care, Ambition, Determination, Teamwork, Confidence) are 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 everyday 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 a 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.

## **5. The Conduct of Collective Worship**

Daily school assemblies form an important part of the curriculum of our school and cover moral and social issues as well as spiritual ones. As such, there are times when an entire assembly may be seen as collective worship, for example sharing and discussing the spiritual meaning of the Christmas story, and times when only part of an assembly would be classed as collective worship, for example, an assembly on a local event which ends with a moment of collective worship through a song or quiet thought.

### 5.1 Planning

Themes are planned over a two-year cycle. Care needs to be taken to concentrate on the social, moral, spiritual and cultural elements, not simply the content of other curriculum areas. Within the planning there is flexibility to:

- mark Christian and other festivals;
- explore the religious meaning and significance of, but not participate in, the festivals of other faiths to members of their faith communities;
- allow for response to special or sudden events within and beyond the school community.

Collective worship should be planned to ensure coherent delivery of the aims and to record the activities undertaken.

From time-to-time, the school may suspend the Assembly Theme cycle in order to address other whole-school issues which require time to be spent in assembly, eg when introducing a new initiative.

### 5.2 Range of Activity

Worship will include a balance of a range of activities. These may include, but are not limited to:

- reading or participating in stories, poems, etc
- pupil contributions
- listening to or making music
- discussion with a partner
- drama activities
- prayer and reflection
- sharing achievements

Wherever possible, we would like the whole school community to feel as though they can take part in collective worship. Therefore, activities should allow children to reflect on their own personal spiritual response as much as a “broadly Christian” one.

### 5.3 Organisation of the Week

<b>Monday</b>	Whole-School Assembly on the school Assembly Theme usually led by the Headteacher
<b>Tuesday</b>	Whole-School Assembly on the school Assembly Theme usually led by the Assistant Headteacher
<b>Wednesday</b>	Class-based Circle Time Assemblies
<b>Thursday</b>	Singing Assembly
<b>Friday</b>	Sharing Assembly with parents which includes school home certificates and other celebrations

All staff in school are expected to attend assembly on a Monday and a Friday.

### 5.4 Prayer

Many assemblies include a ‘quiet thought’ in which children are encouraged to listen and think about the focus and experience a moment of personal reflection. At times children may be invited to listen to Christian prayers or the words of significant people of other faiths. Children may join in the affirmation of these prayers if they wish, but they will never be pressured to do so.

### **5.5 Songs and Music**

Songs are a central part of our collective worship. Songs for our assemblies should be inclusive of the whole school community and care will need to be taken with the choice of words to ensure that they do not inadvertently discriminate: e.g. *If you're a friend of Jesus you're a friend of mine*.

Music is chosen from a broad range of styles and cultures. From time-to-time music will be overtly religious (eg a setting of a Latin mass). Children will be encouraged to experience their own spiritual and cultural response to the music and text which may or may not be religious in character.

### **5.6 Visitors**

From time-to-time visitors will be invited to lead collective worship in our school. They should be made aware of the aims and content of this policy as well as the values, ethos, expectations and standards of the school.

## **Appendix 1: COVID Variations**

The COVID pandemic has significantly impacted the way in which the school delivers Collective Worship since the school can no longer meet together in the school hall.

To mitigate the impact of this the school is making use of three alternatives:

- The use of class assemblies, planned and delivered by class teachers
- The use of class assemblies, planned and delivered by the headteacher on a rota basis (eg Class 1 on a Monday, Class 2 on a Tuesday, etc)
- The use of Microsoft Teams to deliver whole-school assemblies to the screen in the classroom.

Wednesday Circle Times continue as usual.

The content of assemblies has been adjusted to meet the needs of pupils returning from a prolonged period of home-schooling and to address social and emotional needs of the school community as they arise.

The school plans to return to whole-school assemblies as soon as possible as the absence of these impacts the sense of whole community within the school.