



## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY**

(see also Inclusion; EAL; Equal Opportunities; Race Equality; RE)

### **1. Introduction**

Goodmayes Primary School is a large multi-cultural school located in the south-east of the London Borough of Redbridge. It is a community school which caters for children between the ages of three and eleven. The range of cultures and backgrounds represented by the pupils and their families is a marked feature of this primary education provider.

According to school documentation, the main faiths represented in the local community are:

- Islam
- Christianity
- Sikhism
- Hinduism

### **2. Policy statement**

2.1. This worship policy has been designed with our school population in mind. It is written in accordance with Redbridge SACRE's and the Local Authority's guidance for collective worship.

(SACRE is the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. All local authorities are required by law to have a SACRE to advise on matters concerning the teaching of Religious Education and Collective Acts of Worship and make determinations of cases in which the requirement for Christian collective worship is not to apply.)

2.2. In implementing this policy, due consideration to equal opportunities (with regard to race, gender, religion and ability) should be ensured with reference to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (as amended) and other relevant legislation.

2.3. This worship policy reflects the law and strengthens the community ethos of the school.

2.4. Collective worship will take place daily and will be appropriate to all pupils of any religion or none, to enable them to be present and take part as appropriate.

2.5. Collective worship is an opportunity for pupils to celebrate their own religious festivals, those of the school and the wider community. All present should feel valued whatever their faith or personal beliefs. Under no circumstances will pupils be asked to accept beliefs that are contrary to their family background.

- Acts of Collective Worship will take place daily at clearly designated times of - sometimes as a whole school or as a key stage, year group or class.
- They will reflect the beliefs and backgrounds of individual pupils and encourage a voluntary response from pupils.
- Acts of worship will not assume a shared religious commitment.
- Acts of Worship will encourage pupils to consider their own place in the community, help understand the importance of British Values and how they shape us in terms of being responsible citizens.

2.6. All teachers are expected to contribute to planning and leading Acts of Collective Worship (ACW) so that:

- their professional expertise is developed
- pupils can experience a variety of styles and viewpoints

2.7. Those planning and leading Acts of Collective Worship (ACW) should aim to include a time of quiet reflection or thinking. (This is one of the ways in which the experience is an 'act of collective worship' rather than simply an 'assembly').

2.8. There is a weekly pattern of Acts of Collective Worship (ACW) for each of the Key Stages.

2.9. Each term there are a particular assemblies that parents are invited to attend. We encourage their attendance, as this promotes community spirit; in addition, it shows the school and the families working together in support of the children's achievements.

2.10. Governors' attendance at our assemblies is always welcome.

### **3. Aims and purpose**

3.1. Collective worship occupies an important and unique place in the life of Goodmayes Primary School. It provides an opportunity for members of the school community to pause from activity, to gather together, to remind themselves of and to reflect upon the beliefs and values which bind the school community together.

These key beliefs and values include the following:

- all pupils and adults within the school are valued
- all members of the school community should show care and concern for others
- diversity makes the world a richer place in which to live
- respect, tolerance and understanding are needed when living with people from many backgrounds.

3.2. The community of our school come from a wide variety of faith backgrounds, including those who do not practice or profess any faith background. Through our daily act of collective worship we aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to:

- provide an opportunity for children to worship God or significant figures and deities who represent children's religion or beliefs
- enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues
- enable children to explore their own beliefs
- encourage participation and response
- develop in children a sense of community spirit
- promote a common ethos, with shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes
- promote respect and tolerance of other faiths

### **4. Legal requirements**

4.1. All maintained schools must provide Collective Worship for all pupils.

- Collective Worship must be offered daily, but may be offered at any time during the school day.
- It can be a single act for all pupils, or separate acts for any normal grouping of pupils e.g. a class, key stage, or a year.
- The headteacher (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998), in consultation with the Governing Board, has the responsibility for making arrangements for worship.
- Most of the acts of worship in any one term must be of a wholly, or mainly, of a broadly Christian character.
- The way in which this 'Christian character' is defined must be decided by each individual school, with regard to the pupils' family background, ages and aptitudes.

4.2. Goodmayes Primary School includes pupils from a range of faith backgrounds including Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism- as well as pupils with no religious beliefs.

- No act of worship should be distinctive of any particular (Christian) denomination, e.g. it should not have a strong Church of England content, or Catholic content - it should be 'ecumenical'.
- Acts of worship can include:
  - worship which is of a broadly Christian character;
  - worship which is broadly in the tradition of another religion (as long as this is only a minority of acts of worship in any one school term);
  - worship which contains elements drawn from a number of faiths.

## **5. Right of withdrawal**

Parents may withdraw their children from Collective Worship on grounds of conscience, should they wish to do so, but we believe that Collective Worship is inclusive and beneficial for all pupils. It is hoped that no child will have to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. If parents/carers wish to withdraw their child, they should discuss this with the headteacher. A formal request must be made in writing and brought to the attention of the school governors. Where a decision is made to withdraw, arrangements will be made for the child to be supervised elsewhere during the act of worship.

## **6. The place and value of Collective Worship in Goodmayes**

6.1. Collective worship provides an invaluable opportunity for the school community to focus on and reaffirm those values which are considered to be of supreme worth and importance. Values which are regularly re-visited as themes for collective worship include: co-operation, commitment, courage, empathy, honesty, forgiveness, friendship, loyalty, responsibility and self-worth. We believe that our times of collective worship can play an important role in deepening the spiritual awareness of our pupils. We also incorporate moral principles held by all religions such as respect, kindness, care and tolerance.

6.2. Collective worship, at its best, provides pupils with an opportunity to reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of things. Pupils are led into an experience of quietness to counterbalance the busy activity, which generally marks the rest of the school day. Such quiet times will often lend themselves to the nurturing of a sense of awe and wonder, especially with regard to the natural world (e.g. the power of the seed to grow or a candle glowing in the darkness). We are also able to sensitively explore issues of loss and suffering, limitation and frustration.

6.3. Collective worship at Goodmayes Primary gives pupils the opportunity to hear stories and words from religious and other literature which suggest that there is more to life than we can see. Through collective worship, we encourage the children to recognise the widely-held belief in the existence of a deity. We will often consider values which are shared by different faiths. Acts of collective worship will reflect the broad tradition of Christian belief (reflecting Christianity's multi-cultural and pluralist nature) and promote a positive ethos and community values. They will draw on the values and traditions of other religions as appropriate, helping to promote confidence in a pupil's own traditions and the ability to see value in the traditions of others.

6.4. The school aims, through its collective worship programme, to add to the quality of school life by providing opportunities:

- for all members of the school community to pause and reflect;
- to celebrate times of success or joy;
- to meet in times of sorrow;
- to hear about incidents in which, and people in whom, goodness or right are exemplified;
- for pupils to learn the skills of being quiet and still;

- for pupils to develop social skills (e.g. being part of a large group);
- to listen to music;
- to learn how to appreciate and mark the achievement of others;
- for pupils and adults to learn about ways of life and teachings (including religious) other than their own.

## **7. Content of Collective Worship**

7.1. Collective Worship may include the following:

- Personal reflection and self-expression;
- Exploration of the many values and beliefs which, although Christian, are also reflected in society at large and held as important by members of other world religions, e.g. a sense of awe at the natural world;
- Personal recognition of right and wrong (moral);
- The capacity to flourish as a human being (spiritual).

7.2. The content of Collective Worship will be designed to enhance the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and provide opportunities for reflection, to celebrate the good, praise achievements and promote recognition of each pupil's own worth and potential.

7.3. Throughout the year there are a selection of themes on which assemblies are based which reflect the diversity of our school and the fundamental British values.

## **8. Monitoring and review**

8.1 Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of a designated school governor, who is also responsible for Religious Education. The governor concerned liaises with the Headteacher before reporting to the Governing Board.

8.2 This policy will be reviewed in Autumn Term 2023.

This policy links with the school prospectus, RE and PSHE&C policies.

Agreed by Governors: **Autumn Term 2021**

Review Date: **Autumn Term 2023**