



Swindon SACRE Guidance on Collective Worship 2018

Time to Breathe

This guidance aims to support schools in Swindon to develop a collective worship policy to ensure that pupils have effective and reflective experiences in collective worship. It offers an explanation of the legal obligations including the right to withdrawal and explains the rich opportunities that assemblies offer students for spiritual and moral social and cultural development.

I. Why Do Collective Worship?

Schools are regularly reminded that Collective Worship is a legal requirement but here are some reasons why, even without this requirement, it is good to hold Collective Worship in schools.

Collective worship:

- gives time to breathe, offering space and stillness before, during or at the end of a hectic and pressured day to be oneself, to reflect or just to sit at rest;
- helps to foster a spirit of community in a school, year group or class;
- can enable the joys and sorrows of those present, those local to the school, and the joys and sorrows of national and international news, to be reflected upon and shared in a way which is otherwise not possible in school;
- enables the overall personality and ethos of the school to come across to everyone;
- is an opportunity to share and reinforce the values the school seeks to live by;
- enables individuals and groups of staff and pupils to share their concerns, interests and reflections;
- can help pupils ponder on the many ultimate questions life presents, and know that others of all ages ponder these too;
- can be a time of sharing those things that unite, whilst acknowledging or celebrating the diversity of beliefs and values within and beyond school;
- may provide an opportunity for pupils (and staff) to come close to God and to reflect on the most important directions and values for their lives;
- may provide a time which pupils can make their own;
- is one of the few occasions in a week of schooling that offers, or should offer, space for the spirit.

The content of Collective Worship is almost completely open. There is no National Curriculum for Collective Worship.

2. The Legal Requirement for Collective Worship

1. All maintained schools and Academies, whether or not they have a religious character, are required to have daily acts of Collective Worship and to teach religious education as part of their curriculum. Schools with a religious character provide denominational Collective Worship in line with their foundation and are not subject to the requirement to provide 'wholly or mainly broadly Christian' acts of Collective Worship.
2. All registered school pupils (5 - 18) are required to take part in an act of Collective Worship on each school day (unless withdrawn – see below). Pupils in special schools should take part in an act of Collective Worship as far as it is practicable.
3. Collective worship may be held at any time during the school day.
4. Separate acts of Collective Worship may be arranged for different age or school groupings.
5. Collective worship must take place on school premises, but governors of aided and religious foundation schools may, on special occasions, arrange Collective Worship elsewhere.
6. In any one term in a community or a non-religious foundation school or academy, acts of worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. That is, most (or all) of the acts of worship must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any one Christian denomination. (See detailed section below)
7. Collective worship must be appropriate having regard to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the pupils.
8. Where worship which is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character is inappropriate, the Headteacher and governors may apply to the local SACRE (and in the case of Academies will need to refer to the terms of their funding agreement), for permission to arrange worship for all or some of the pupils which is not wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character (see Determinations).
9. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship (see below).
10. Teachers cannot be compelled to lead or participate in Collective Worship, but it is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governing Body to ensure that it takes place.

Every school under Local Authority control must have a policy for Collective Worship that is drawn up in accordance with the law, and reflects as far as possible the consensus of views of the various stakeholders i.e. staff, governors and the community.

All Academies, in accordance with their funding agreements, must have an act of daily worship and will be inspected under Ofsted criteria which look to make judgements about SMSC and so Collective Worship may play a part of their decisions.

Within the legal framework the responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with:

- the Headteacher after consultation with the Governing Body in community schools;
- the Governing Body in consultation with the Headteacher in VC and VA schools.

DFE Circular 1/94 is not legislation but offers guidance. See 'What is Collective Worship?'

The Diocese of Bristol also produces guidance on planning Collective Worship for Church of England/ Methodist schools. The Diocese of Clifton will provide guidance for Roman Catholic Schools

How can schools introduce collective worship?

The Swindon Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education would hope teachers of any religious persuasion, or of none, to feel able to participate in and lead acts of Collective Worship which are genuinely spiritual in a general sense.

Non-faith schools are a secular space. This does not mean a non-religious space, but a space where no one religious or non-religious world view takes precedence over another. As a secular space, the school is a forum where expressions of religious and non-religious faith together with dialogue and discussions about and between different faiths and worldviews can take place. Swindon SACRE believes this should be encouraged – that a healthy school community includes open and respectful exchanges of and about different faiths and worldviews.

We favour a **broad** definition of worship which allows children to reflect upon their shared human experience and feelings of joy and sadness, thankfulness and need, their reflections on shared values and concerns and the exploration of the spiritual area of experience.

As with all areas of the curriculum, Collective Worship should be a valid educational experience. There is also the need to respect the different beliefs of teachers, parents and children. Worship can only be inclusive if it is broadly enough defined to include those who have no belief in divine beings or powers

'Wholly or Mainly of a Broadly Christian Character'

The Act states that the Collective Worship organised by the school is to be '*wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*'. We should note that this means that most school worship should reflect Christian **beliefs**, not necessarily Christian worship practices.

These beliefs encompass:

- an underlying purpose to creation and human responsibility for it: (*for example an interest in the environment and stewardship of the earth's resources arises from this belief*)
- human beings' responsibility before God and yet the failure to meet those demands fully; (*for example opposition to prejudice, cruelty,*

violence, arise from this belief)

- the uniqueness and value of each human being and the possibility of new beginnings: *(for example value of human life, concern for self knowledge, co-operation, respect arise from this belief)*
- The teachings of Jesus, who promoted concern for the needs of others (particularly minorities), gratitude, and forgiveness, and who opposed hypocrisy, exploitation, and the harsh judgement of others

These Christian beliefs are reflected in the life and teaching of Jesus, but also give rise to values which are in harmony with the broad spiritual and moral concerns that are shared by the world's religions and other worldviews.

In selecting *broadly Christian* material or any other material, it is important that schools ensure that acts of worship are 'inclusive'. It must be remembered that it is not the role of the school to nurture religious faith. Assemblies that raise the beliefs suggested provide opportunities for '*broadly Christian*' Collective Worship as well as stimulating all young people to reflect, to feel awe, to learn to be still and to consider the direction and meaning of their lives.

Content and Presentation

Swindon SACRE's approach should help schools to facilitate a version of collective worship that eases and promotes a polite and vigorous expression of faiths and a dialogue between them. It should emphasise a community ethos that celebrates all that is shared.

The unifying element for each act of collective worship will be a central theme focusing the attention of all taking part on a single idea. School or local events, a topic explored by one class, the lives and experiences of people past and present, current religious festivals, national and international days, and the school's agreed shared values are examples of suitable themes for collective worship.

The methods used to present particular themes may include:

- Spoken word: story, poetry, interviews, discussion, readings from the Bible and from other religious and secular literature and choral speaking,
- Music and singing - hymns popular songs, chants, or singing games
- Visual stimuli: pictures, posters, artefacts, natural objects, religious objects, personal objects, works of art, or film clips.
- Performance: dance, music, mime, drama, role play, or puppets
- Music: either performed or played
- Preparing and sharing food;
- Silence: stilling, reflection, contemplation, meditation and, if appropriate, prayer.

In today's plural society a creative silence may well be considered to be more inclusive than vocalised prayer. It can give an opportunity for prayer, without insisting on it. People can be guided to be still, to quieten their mental chatter and to discover their deeper self, the ground of their being, that place which some spiritual writers identify as the dwelling of

God. If done well, such acts of collective worship could encourage a less frenetic, more peaceful ethos in a school.

3.The Right of Withdrawal

We hope that by adopting an inclusive stance, Collective Worship (Assemblies) , will be broadly accepted by a wide variety of people. Many parents see the provision of acts of worship by a school as part of its expression of care for the well being of its pupils. However, there may be occasions when a parent insists on their right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from attending an act or acts of Collective Worship. Parents should make their wishes known to the Headteacher who will arrange that any pupils who are withdrawn will be supervised appropriately during the acts of Collective Worship.

Schools should ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from Collective Worship are aware of the programme and its intention to be open to and respectful of all pupils' personal beliefs. They should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents (or pupils themselves if they are aged 16 or over), and it should be made clear whether it is from all or some specific acts of Collective Worship. No reasons need be given, though parents may make arrangements for *alternative religious worship* to take place for their child provided that such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school and provided the effect would not be to replace the statutory non-denominational Collective Worship in the school.

Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from Collective Worship without influence from the school, although a school should ensure parents or carers are informed of this right (for example through the school prospectus) and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the Collective Worship programme. In this way, parents can make an informed decision. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected.

If parent and the school agree that the pupil should be allowed to remain physically present during the Collective Worship but not take part in it, nothing in the law prevents this.

Pupils should not be withdrawn so that they may participate in other activities. Schools have a duty to supervise pupils who are withdrawn from Collective Worship, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.

Determinations

The Education Reform Act of 1988 (sections 6, 7, 9, 12) entitles schools to apply to the SACRE for a 'Determination' if, in the opinion of the Headteacher, the requirements to have 'broadly Christian' Collective Worship is inappropriate for either the whole or particular groups within school. A 'Determination' will allow the school to adjust the legal requirements and allow worship of a different character to take place.

Applying for a Determination:

1. The Headteacher consults with the governors to determine the extent to which the requirement for Collective Worship to be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' is not appropriate for the school or groups of pupils within the school. It is also advised that the matter is brought to the attention of the adviser responsible for RE and Collective Worship.
Katy Staples katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org
2. The Headteacher and the governors consult with parents.
3. A decision to seek a Determination has been reached, the Headteacher must apply to the SACRE in writing, outlining the reasons why a Determination is being sought and giving evidence to support this. In the case of Academies agreement for a determination must be sought from the sponsors.
4. The SACRE will consider the application for a Determination and may request the Headteacher to present the application in person to clarify any issues and answer any questions.
5. In considering the application, the SACRE will take account of the views of:
 - a) the Officer representing the Director of Education;
 - b) the family background of the pupils concerned.
6. The SACRE may accept or reject an application, but cannot modify it. Each constituent group on the SACRE is allowed one vote, with the decision being reached on a majority.
7. The SACRE will notify the Headteacher and the governors of its decision in writing.
8. A determination will last for 5 years from the date of its effect, after which time it must be reviewed.
9. If a Determination is accepted, it will be the Headteacher's responsibility to decide what form the alternative worship will take, and inform SACRE, the governors and parents. In the case of Academies the Principal will need to inform the sponsor what form the alternative worship will take.
10. Where such a Determination is made in respect of all or some of the pupils in the school, daily Collective Worship must still be provided for them. Where a determination has been granted in respect of a class or description of pupils of a particular faith or religion, the alternative Collective Worship may be provided for

those pupils as a whole. It may not be distinctive of any particular denomination of any faith or religion, but may be distinctive of a particular faith or religion. Parents continue to have a right to withdraw their children from the Collective Worship.

Please note: Although Swindon Local Authority encourages and supports 'inclusive' acts of Collective Worship which should be appropriate for the whole school community, irrespective of belief, non-belief or life stance, this does not remove a school's right to apply for a Determination.

SACRE chair

SACRE adviser

SACRE clerk

Date

Appendix I - Framing Approach

Swindon SACRE recommends a '*framing approach*'. When children or adults share a text, artwork, piece of music, or saying they should introduce the piece with words which clearly identifies the tradition from which it comes so that a safe boundary is created from which all can freely respond to it.

For example:

'I/we are sharing this reading from the Gospel of Mark in the Bible. While this has special meaning for Christians we can all listen and respond in the way which is right for each of us.'

'I am sharing this reading from the Gospel of Mark in the Bible. While this has special meaning for me as a Christian I hope you will hear something in it which is helpful to you.'

'I/we am/are sharing this hadith which is important for many Muslims so that we can understand what it says and let it effect us in the way that is right for each one of us'

'I am going to tell you this fable from Aesop's fables which have particular meaning for many people, and are also strongly connected to stories from Hinduism and Buddhism. Let us all reflect on what this story says about greed.'

2. After leading the group to a period of calm silence, we recommend saying: *'Now we can use this quiet that we have made to reflect, meditate or pray according to our own beliefs.'*

Swindon SACRE believes that this is the most appropriate way to provide the opportunity for all to worship including those whose tradition focuses on worshipping God, without compromising anyone's integrity.

3. When festivals are celebrated SACRE recommends that children and adults present and share aspects of the festivals of their own traditions. It may be that if a culture of mutual respect is developing some children will still feel unsure about public recognition of their affiliation with a faith tradition. This may be the case particularly if there are very small numbers in the school or if the child has witnessed negative responses to their tradition during their life.

4. SACRE recommends that adults and children make decisions about collective worship and choose the content and format together, using these guidelines.

5. Individuals or groups need to be mindful of sensitivities of members of the whole school community in the choices they make and in the way they present material.

6. The teacher with responsibility for collective worship needs to ensure that there is a balance of material from different traditions through a term.

7. When members of local faith communities are invited to lead collective worship it is important that they comply with points 1 and 2 of these procedures.

Appendix 2

Model Draft Policy

This is an example policy that sets out what a school policy might look like. It would need to be adapted to your particular school, and would also have different emphases if your school is a faith or community school. Phrases in italics are recommended for faith schools only.

Insert : Name of School

Required Review Frequency	
Next Review Due:	May 2020
Committee Responsible:	
Document Location	

Version	Approved By	Date of Approval	Key Changes

Philosophy of collective worship at xxxxxx: (Some quotes you might like to use)

"The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me a continual spiritual journey"- Leo Buscaglia

"To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God". William Temple (1881-1894)

"Stillness is the altar of spirit" Paramahansa Yogananda(1893-1952)

"Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light"
Albus Dumbledore (J.K. Rowling)

xxxxxx School is a Community school/Church of England Voluntary Controlled School. Collective worship is an important part of the school day as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a school community. It is attended by all students, staff and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in.

Collective Worship and the Law

In accordance with legal requirements (School Standards and Framework Act 1998) an act of collective worship, taking into account of the age, aptitude and background of the pupils, is provided daily for all pupils except those withdrawn by parents. The school expects that withdrawal will be only made following discussions with the head teacher, followed by written confirmation of withdrawal. Special arrangements will be made by governors to supervise children withdrawn from acts of worship. In addition, staff have the right to withdraw from the act of collective worship.

"The arrangements for the required collective worship may, in respect of each school day, provide for a single act of worship for all pupils or for separate acts of worship for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups."

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Rationale

Inclusion is important to our vision and we aim for acts of worship to be inclusive of all pupils. There is an expectation that all pupils will be present. Careful planning and preparation ensure that there are clear learning intentions for all pupils at different levels of understanding. Collective worship is first and foremost for the educational benefit of all pupils. It is a shared activity that allows for a variety of responses and provides an opportunity for those of any religious faith or none to focus and reflect on stimuli which allow the human spirit to respond with integrity. The school is committed to respect the integrity of the backgrounds from which pupils come.

The school will also offer the opportunity to explore, reflect upon and respond to the mystery and meaning of the Christian faith.

At School Collective Worship we aim to:

- Strengthen and support the school community and celebrate each unique individual member (Church school might add – 'as made in the image of God'.)

- Give expression to reaffirm and practise the values of the school community
- Allow reflection and response to fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings
- Celebrate and give thanks for achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals
- Contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- Foster and enable a concern for the needs of others – recognition of the vulnerability of self and others
- Lead pupils to a deeper knowledge and understanding of different faiths and world views
- Provide members of the school community with the opportunity to;
 - A Church school might say – ‘Praise and reach out to God’
 - Experience stillness and quiet
 - Experience a variety of forms of music, art, drama, story that lead to personal reflection
 - Provide a foundation for a mature understanding and practice of worship in the future

At we arrange Acts of Collective Worship/assemblies in the following ways;

Day	Time	Grouping	Place	Leadership	Theme / pupil's role
Monday	3:00 – 3:20	Whole school	Hall	Head teacher	<i>Value of the term</i>
Tuesday	9:10 – 9:30	KS1 or KS2	Hall	Key stage assembly led by teacher or children	<i>Open the Book</i>
Wednesday	10:15 – 10:30	Whole school	Hall	Head teacher Music teacher	Singing assembly
Thursday	3:10 – 3:30	Whole school	Classrooms	Class Teacher	<i>Value of the term</i>
Friday	3:00 – 3:30	Whole school	hall	Deputy Head teachers	<i>Celebration Together</i>

Leadership, Planning and Evaluation of Collective Worship/Assemblies

There is a Collective Worship planning group led by the Headteacher as collective worship Coordinator and including representatives of the children, parents, teachers, and governors. This group meets regularly to plan, monitor and evaluate Collective Worship. The calendar for Collective Worship draws on *the Church year* and the school values.

Collective Worship will be treated like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing and evaluation. All those leading collective worship are asked to plan their act of worship in as much detail as they would any other learning activity. Staff are given appropriate training and mentoring to equip them in their roles as worship/assembly leaders.

All pupils attend an Act of Collective Worship/Assembly each day. These are organised on a rota and include whole school, phase-based and class-based worship.

A record is kept of Collective Worship. The Worship Coordinator is responsible for keeping this record.

The Collective Worship Planning Group is responsible for monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship. Children, teachers, and governors are all involved in evaluation of Collective Worship. The group reports to the Headteacher and the Governing Body.

Special services

We join together as a community at special times, e.g. Leavers' service, special times of celebration such as Red Nose Day and Poppy Day of Remembrance.

Music and art as part of our act of worship

Music is played before and after our assemblies to highlight that this is a special time for us to be together. We use music as part of our act of worship where appropriate to the theme as we see music as a medium able to evoke deep, intense feelings that are a part of an individual and theirs alone; memories, emotions of visual images.

The music, instrumental or vocal, may be selected to enhance the atmosphere for worship, stillness and reflection or to inspire thought and talking points in the areas of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

This listening time is also used to introduce children to;

1. Music of a variety of styles, cultures and traditions
2. A range of composers and famous works
3. Recognition and appraisal of a range of musical elements

Visitors to school

Visitors leading collective worship must be given clear instructions concerning age and ability of the pupils, purpose of occasion and appropriate delivery (content and material used).

The school will ensure that checks are made about connections with the school e.g. parent, charity representative, clergy from another denomination, adviser, colleague before the day

There will be a sharing of the aims and objectives of the visits and links made to the overall scheme for Collective worship.

The visitor's method will be reviewed before another invitation is extended

A follow up session will be linked where considered appropriate to the developing theme.

Visitors should report to the office to announce their arrival. All visitors must sign the visitor's book and may not be left with the children unless member of the school staff is present. They will be thanked as they leave the building.

Appendix 3 Websites for Collective Worship

The following websites provide suggestions for schools to supplement their Collective Worship programme. Swindon Council is not responsible for the reliability of these links or for the content of these sites.

http://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk/	The National Society's Worship Workshop website. Intended for CofE schools but others may find useful material here for Collective Worship that is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
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http://www.hibbert-assembly.org.uk/	Good starting points for sensitive assemblies from the Hibbert Trust, including advice to those leading assemblies by the Reverend John Harley.
http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/	Teaching resources from Christian Aid, with assemblies for primary and secondary.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218194057/http://www.teacher.net.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/assemblies/	Teachernet resources are now held on the national archives database. This is a bank of over 100 resources written by teachers for teachers. The search engine no longer works but you can access the examples via 'Assemblies A – Z'.
http://www.assemblies.org.uk	Primary and secondary school assemblies with a broadly Christian perspective 'for every season' from SPCK. Contains a section on assemblies to celebrate festivals of a good range of religions and a 'rapid response' feature to help schools address big issues in the news.
http://www.stapleford-centre.org/resources/assemblies/assembly-citizens	Secondary school assemblies for active citizenship and personal development from The Stapleford Centre, a Christian education organisation. Some free samples but requiring subscription for full access.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/stories/	CBeebies stories for primary school age children that could be used in assemblies – includes 'Seasonal' stories reflecting religious festivals and 'World Stories' reflecting different cultures.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/	Audio programmes from BBC learning for the 5-7 and 7- 11 age ranges. Listen again within 7 days of broadcast or order the CD. Sets of notes for teachers also available for free download.
http://www.bdeducation.org.uk/schools/teacher/collective-worship/	Collective Worship ideas and advice from the Diocese of Blackburn.
http://www.cafod.org.uk/resources/worship	Reflections on social justice and poverty for worship activities from the Catholic charity CAFOD. Prayers, liturgies and reflections across Church seasons and a wide range of themes.
http://www.creativeproverbs.com/	Franklin C. Baer's 'Quotations for creative thinking' searchable website.
http://www.fischy.com/	Music for emotional, social and spiritual health and wellbeing from Fischy Music.
http://www.hmd.org.uk/	National website for ideas on remembering the Holocaust.
http://www.humanismforschools.org.uk/	Assembly ideas and humanist perspectives from the British Humanist Association.
http://www.ibiblio.org/zen/	Zen Buddhist site with 'Koan of the Day.'
http://www.inspirationalarchive.com/inspirationalstoriesblog/	Archive of mostly Christian inspirational stories – a mixture of material, not all suitable for school assemblies.
http://www.irinnews.org/	Humanitarian news and analysis service of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/res	Oxfam's downloadable resources for primary and

ources/	secondary assemblies featuring issues of social justice. PowerPoint presentations, ideas for workshops, assembly scripts etc.
http://www.prayingeachday.org/reflect.html	De La Salle Brothers ('Christian Education in a Christian Community') collection of reflections and prayers for every day of the year. Click on a date for stories, questions and prayers for reflection.
http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/assembly/	Scripts for primary school assemblies, contributed by teachers.
http://www.reonline.org.uk/	Religious education website with search engine to find materials for use in assemblies.
http://www.request.org.uk/	Resources for most of the Christian denominations – not specifically for Collective Worship but can be adapted.
http://www.retoday.org.uk/	Downloadable resources associated with RE Today publications (<i>password required - available free to RE Today subscribers</i>).
http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/subjects/assemblies/	Mark Warner's Teaching Ideas site contains a range of interesting downloads for assemblies for primary schools.
http://www.tere.org/index.php?id=59	Catholic Teachers Enterprise for Religious Education assembly ideas for primary schools.
http://www.theotherpages.org/	Quotations, poems and images for personal and non-commercial use.
http://www.lifesavers.co.uk/collectiveworship/	(helping children to manage money wisely) 20 individual worship resources 5 on each of the values generosity, wisdom, thankfulness and justice.