

Burleigh Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

(Created using Hertfordshire County Council's Model Collective Worship Policy for Primary Schools, dated September 2017)

**Reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team:
September 2024**

To be reviewed: September 2026



Burleigh Primary School

Policy History

Date	Writer	To be approved by	Modifications/changes
27.02.2025	SLT	SLT	Various minor amendments throughout

Burleigh Primary School

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN COMMUNITY and FOUNDATION SCHOOLS (without a religious character) (Note 1)

Background to collective worship at our school

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”.

Families who send their children to this school are from a range of religious and 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. In order to respect the diverse backgrounds of our school community, so called ‘acts of worship’ (see paragraph 1) only take place once or twice a week in assembly.

The Headteacher 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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.

Definition

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.

Values and aims

We believe at this school that meeting together for assembly both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value that we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and

intellectually is 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 assembly time, 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 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.

Objectives

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religion and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn...

- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

Planning

In this school, we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. When the whole school meets together (on a Friday) this is generally between 9.05am – 9.30am. Three times a week each key stage group meets together, with the exception of EYFS in the autumn and spring terms. The headteacher usually leads assembly twice a week, with a rota of other staff leading assemblies on other days.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

Success criteria

At this school, we evaluate our acts of worship against some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
- A sense of occasion

- Good order
- Pupil / Staff affirmation
- A sense of challenge
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil experience

Staff non-contact time

We appreciate the need for staff to have some time during the school day set aside for planning and preparation. We also recognise the value of the whole school, including staff being involved in our school worship. Therefore, staff have a rota of non-contact time but all teachers attend the assembly on Friday morning.

Song/music

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise, with the songs we sing. We are careful with our songs to recognise that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme.

Every week we have a singing practice. During this, we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

Prayer

We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts, reflect and be still. When it does take place, it happens in one or two of the five assemblies per week. Nevertheless, pupils are not required to affirm prayers in which they do not believe i.e. pupils have a choice as to whether or not they say 'Amen' at the end of a prayer.

When an assembly does not contain prayer (three to four assemblies per week), moments of silence and reflection may be used as an alternative form of being still and reflecting. This provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach that visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values.

Periodically, we make links with some people who visit us occasionally to lead worship.
(Note 3)

NOTES

(Note 1)

Collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools with a religious character should have policies in line with the denominational ethos of the school.

(Note 2)

See SACRE Guidance and Protocols on Faith Visits and Visitors.

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/re/sacre/#visits>

(Note 3)

See Hertfordshire Faith Communities Directory 2015

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/re/general/index.shtml#Faith>