

MAPLE JMI SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE ACTS OF WORSHIP/ASSEMBLY STATEMENT

The Legal Position

The Education Reform Act 1988 introduced new requirements for Collective Worship in maintained schools and amends/re-enacts the requirements of the Education Act 1944.

1. All pupils of a maintained school shall, on each day, take part in an act of collective worship. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship and schools must comply with such requests.
2. Collective worship may comprise a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts of worship for pupils in different age or school groups. The act of worship can take place any time during the school day on the school premises.
3. Arrangements for collective worship are to be made by the Headteacher after consultation with the governing body.
4. It is the duty of the Headteacher to ensure that all pupils in attendance at the school take part in the daily collective worship (except those pupils withdrawn by their parents. Teachers may also withdraw from worship).
5. Collective Worship is to be mainly (51%) of a broadly Christian character. For this purpose Christian means the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.

The Headteacher must give due consideration to the following:

- any relevant family circumstances
- the faith of the family
- the children's ages and aptitudes

Values and Aims

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.

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 our collective worship is inclusive not exclusive

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 to ensure our assemblies are inclusive.

At Maple our act of collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which 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 this in stillness.

Through 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 other 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.

Collective 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.

Content

1. To show an interest in and concern for members of the school community.
2. To celebrate special occasions together.
3. To show concern for daily happenings in school life, the local community, and the wider world.
4. To share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school.
5. To explore and review the variety of values, attitudes and standards manifested in society, (e.g. caring, right and wrong, equal opportunities, etc).
6. To reflect upon dimensions of human life, e.g. wonderful, beautiful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful etc.

7. Providing a means whereby pupils can begin to and continue to understand the language and nature of worship.
8. Enriching the lives of all participants through affording the opportunity to learn about the insights, beliefs and practices of people within the community.
9. Giving opportunities for music, singing and personal reflections.
10. To value silence and inner peace
11. Enabling children to explore their own beliefs in relation to those of others.
12. Exploring the spiritual and religious experience of those who worship as members of a faith.
13. Widening the emotional responses of children and deepening their ability to be sensitive to sincerely held religious beliefs. To explore our own emotions and feelings.
14. Encouraging a sensitivity to questions and answers which prompt reflection and enquiry about what lies beyond the visible.

Note: collective worship in the Act states that it be non-denominational.

Organisation/Planning

There is an act of collective worship each day, which needs to incorporate:

- i) Reflection: time which is respected and valued by all present to focus and reflect a particular issue,
- ii) Response: involvement by all is crucial and can include; listening, singing, contributions, repeating a response, movement, dance or silence,
- iii) A sense of something special and separate from ordinary school activities.

They usually take place first thing in the morning or just before the mid-morning break.

The Headteacher and senior staff usually take an assembly each week with the juniors and/or infants.

In most weeks one school assembly is led by a class under the direction of the class teacher. In most weeks one school assembly is led by the music subject leader for Key Stage 2 children. Once a year the whole school makes a visit to our local parish church for an assembly in church. The foci for the visit will vary from year to year.

Visitors, particularly representatives of different religions, are to be welcomed into some school assemblies.

Class teachers, and the Headteacher, make a brief record of their assembly taken in a school assembly book.

1. The Collective Acts of Worship usually follow a theme for one or more weeks. The themes for the term are decided by the Headteacher who is also the RE Co-ordinator. They are discussed with the music subject leader and then distributed to the rest of the staff. Care is taken to keep acts of worship topical, and pertinent to children of primary age.
2. The white board in the hall is used to announce the theme of the week and the music which will be played during that week.

Staff Non-Contact Time

We appreciate the need for staff to have some time during the school day set aside for planning, preparation and to work with individual pupils on their I.E.P's. 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 which includes: -

for Key Stage 2

- the singing practice time during one assembly a week which is led by the music subject leader along with another member of staff.
- Staff are also given leave from the radio assembly taken by Headteacher (or deputy)
- Thursday children's assembly taken by Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

for Key Stage 1

- the birthday assembly taken by the Headteacher
- Key Stage 1 assembly on a Wednesday
- Thursday children's assembly taken by Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher

Staff are not expected to keep children out of assembly on the above days on a regular basis. If children are being kept out for music or special needs requirements on a regular basis parents are asked to give their written permission. All staff and children are expected to attend the Headteacher/Deputy's assembly on Mondays and class assembly on Fridays.

Song/Music

We try to ensure that the songs we sing recognise tradition and variety but whose words make them as inclusive as possible to all.

Prayer

We feel that prayer can be a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to prayers which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian prayer ...' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Resources and Formats

religious stories/readings to include the major festivals of all the major religions

secular stories/readings/poems

dance/drama (class led)

prayer/meditation/songs/hymns/music

artefacts/natural materials

visual aids/focal points

celebration

dialogue/creative silence

visitors representing the community, different walks of life, different religions and other groups (e.g. charities).

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, good listening

a sense of challenge

a place in the overall plan of the school

enrichment of pupil's experience

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