



## Collective Worship Policy



**Article 14 of the UNCRC** (freedom of thought, belief and religion) Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

*'I have the right to have my own thoughts and beliefs and to choose my religion, with my parents' guidance.'*

## **Aims and purpose**

The aims and purpose of collective worship are:

- to provide an opportunity for the children to worship their God;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes;

## **Collective worship**

We expect children to respect those of all faiths and none. We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to a God. Collective worship involves all members of the class, age-phase or school coming together and participating in an assembly or class event.

We work in line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. However, we conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.

While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

## **Organisation of collective worship**

We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school. This forms part of each assembly, which is normally an age-phase assembly, although sometimes we also hold class collective thought and worship sessions.

We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully and participate fully.

We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and sometimes candles or other objects that act as a focal point for the attention of the children.

The Headteacher or other members of staff normally conduct assemblies, but sometimes local clergy or other representatives of local religious groups visit the school at different times.

We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the main five faiths, as well as reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum, which is the Hackney Agreed syllabus.

We plan our assemblies as part of a series of themes well in advance of the day they take place. Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies by

showing their work to the other children and raising issues that they have discussed in their classes.

Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of schools. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised. We shall celebrate the successes of all the children in assemblies.

We invite parents to assembly on a weekly basis and we encourage them to attend, as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children. We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

### **Right of withdrawal**

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship.

### **Monitoring and review**

The collective worship policy is monitored by the Curriculum and Well Being committee and ratified on a two yearly cycle.

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