

St John's Highbury Vale C of E Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

At St John's Highbury Vale Christian values are central to our ethos and to our teaching. The aims and purpose of our Collective Worship are:

1 Aims and purpose

- To celebrate our Christian faith through daily collective worship;
- To provide an opportunity for children and staff to worship God together, through prayer, music, singing and reflection;
- To provide experience of reflection and prayer as spiritual resources;
- To develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding;
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs and better understand the views of others;
- To promote the Christian values of the whole school community; establishing a common ethos and sharing of common values to reinforce positive attitudes;
- To offer children, staff and those involved in the life of the school an opportunity to draw closer to God through Jesus Christ, and in doing so build community spirit in and beyond the school;
- To teach children how to worship, providing them with the language of worship and experience of a wide variety of forms of worship;
- To celebrate gifts, talents, achievements and significant occasions, including festivals.

2 Collective Worship

We understand collective worship to be a special act or occasion, whose purpose is to show reverence to God. The divine relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit is where we find our inspiration for our school motto: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13. Collective worship involves all members of the school community coming together and participating in praise, reflection and prayer. We invite everyone to take part in collective worship.

St John's Highbury Vale is a Voluntary Aided Church of England primary school. We base our collective worship on the teachings of the Bible and the traditions of the Christian Church. We also try to incorporate our whole school values into our daily reflections and worship. We conduct all worship sessions in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school community. Children of other faiths or of no faith are respected and included in all prayer. When appropriate, we hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in school and in the wider community.

3 Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective worship is an integral part of our assemblies. Assemblies provide a means of developing an appreciation that goes beyond the material world, fostering a concern for others and providing a forum for exploring shared values.

We hold an assembly every day. They can be either a whole-school assembly or separate foundation/KS1 and KS2 assemblies.

Assemblies offer opportunities for co-operation and the fostering of strong relationships between the school and the local community it serves. The school has close links with Christ Church on Highbury Grove, St Thomas' on Monsell

Road and St Augustine's on Highbury New Park. The clergy from these parishes are a valued resource and are very involved with the life of the school. The clergy are invited to play a part in assemblies and offer pastoral support. We celebrate the Church's calendar by holding special services for significant festivals within an Anglican framework.

We conduct assemblies in a respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time, expect children to behave in an appropriate way and invite them to participate in prayer and songs. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, a candle and other objects to focus the attention of the children. To ensure the correct delivery of assemblies we have devised a checklist; see Appendix A.

Assemblies should always include a period of quiet reflection, prayer, singing and entry/exit music; see Appendix A.

We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the Christian faith, and we also observe the festivals and mark the events of the Christian and, when appropriate, non-Christian faith calendars. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies are related to topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. Assemblies are planned well in advance of the day they take place.

Assembly themes:

- Celebration of achievement
- Class assemblies to the whole school once a term, to share work they have been doing
- Bible-based and focusing on the liturgical calendar, led by members of the clergy
- Global themes and events – led by children
- Creative arts – led by phase leaders
- Worship through singing/music – led by the music teacher
- Exploration of values relevant to the children's lives at school and beyond

Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. Class assemblies encourage children to participate by showing their work to the other children, and by raising issues that they have discussed and learnt about in their classes. There is a termly rota to ensure all classes are able to share their good work. Celebration assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school, including for their attendance. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued, and all achievements are recognised. St John's Highbury Vale is a successful school, and we shall continue to celebrate the successes of all our children at our assemblies.

Parents are welcome to attend assemblies on Tuesdays. We encourage their attendance, as this promotes community spirit, and shows the school and home working together in support of the children's achievements.

4 Right of withdrawal

We expect all children and staff to attend assemblies. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the assembly. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.

5 Monitoring and review

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of the head teacher, the LDBS appointed governor and the foundation governors from Christ Church, St Thomas' and St Augustine's churches. The LDBS governor, as the link governor, will liaise with the head teacher every term and report to the governing body. Other contributors to the monitoring process include pupil feedback, LDBS advisors and the SIAS report.

Policy ratified by the Curriculum Committee on 27th June 2013.

Policy approved by the full Governing Body on 10th July 2013.

Appendix A

Checklist for Assemblies

This also applies to class assemblies – modify as appropriate.

- Make sure you are well prepared – don't make it appear you are reading the information/story for the first time.
- Ensure there is music to come into and insist that everyone enters silently and the music is being appreciated.
- Use visual aids and artefacts when introducing concepts/ issues etc that the children may have difficulty imagining or may not have experienced.
- Reflection: this is the most important part of assembly as it signifies the start of the worship element
 - Light the candle and draw children's attention to it. Turn out lights for effect.
 - Tell them what you want them to reflect upon – draw out the key theme, moral, etc.
 - Pause for effect periodically throughout this period
 - Finish by watching the candle for 15 - 20 seconds in complete silence
 - Complete the reflection by requesting

“Now let's get ready to pray”.

This gives everyone the opportunity to put their hands together or simply to bow their head in an act of respect – bearing in mind some different religions represented in the school.

- Say a prayer or get a child to say or read a prayer
- the Lord's prayer may also be said if you wish
- whole school sing a song (try to make it relevant to the theme of the assembly)
- Blow out the candle
- Dismiss the children to music or singing