



Ashford Oaks Primary School

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Collective Worship Policy

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Introduction

Ashford Oaks Primary School is an inclusive community school that serves children aged 3-11 years old. We are a family school where everyone is loved and valued. Looking after each other, working together and respecting each other is at the heart of the school rules and values, this is demonstrated by all stakeholders.

Our children come from a variety of faith backgrounds and bring with them different beliefs and values which determine the ways in which they lead their lives. It is also recognised that some come from homes which do not practice any religion. The act of collective worship provides an opportunity for all our children and staff to share in a unique sense of belonging, whilst retaining their own integrity and identity and contributing to their spiritual development. It is clearly distinguishable from everyday activities of the school and is appropriate to the needs and interests of the children. The act of worship makes a positive and significant contribution to the ethos of the school, the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and everyone feels secure in contributing and participating as appropriate.

Collective Worship and the Law

We comply with legal requirements by providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils/students on the school roll, unless they have been withdrawn by their parent(s) 'on grounds of conscience'. Pupils should not be withdrawn from collective worship in order to take part in another school activity. Teachers also have the right not to attend or lead acts of collective worship. Collective worship provides a daily focal point in school life for the transmission and development of all that our school stands for in terms of its beliefs, values, moral codes and community ethos. The majority of our acts of collective worship are 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' whilst recognising the religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural insights provided by other principal religions and life-stances represented in Ashford, Kent and in Great Britain.

Collective Worship at Ashford Oaks

At Ashford Oaks collective Worship is held daily either as whole school, phases, years or classes. We make a clear distinction between assemblies and Collective Worship. Administrative issues for example reminders of up and coming events etc. are dealt with first, followed by the Collective Worship which is distinguished by:

- playing music and/or lighting a candle or candles to mark the beginning of collective worship;
- putting in place a focal point for collective worship (e.g. a bowl of flowers or a picture or a religious artefact as appropriate to the theme of the act of collective worship);
- singing a song or a hymn;
- having a moment of silence.

Purposes

- To foster a sense of community.
- To offer a time for contemplation and reflection.
- To promote the spiritual growth and development of the children.

- To celebrate what has meaning, value and purpose for individuals, the school and the wider community.
- To provide a context for consideration of moral, ethical, social and cultural issues.
- To appreciate similarities and to celebrate difference and diversity.
- To reflect on key issues to do with life and living.

Equal Opportunities

Ashford Oaks is an inclusive school, which celebrates the cultural diversity of each individual child. Our ethos and values ensure that all stakeholders are respected and looked after. We ensure that all children feel secure in sharing their own religious beliefs and practices, including acknowledging non-belief, and they are treated with sensitivity and respect. The organisation of collective worship offers different styles of leadership and grouping, which promotes equal access to the act of worship.

Many world faiths contain a diversity of doctrines and care is taken not to make overgeneralisations, e.g. we use the term “many Hindus believe” rather than “Hindus believe”.

Children are made aware through story and discussion that all religious traditions promote tolerance and justice. Staff are aware and model appropriate ways of handling, displaying and storing religious artefacts.

Behavioural expectations

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment for Collective Worship is based on trusting relationships between all members of the school, class, adults and children alike, is vital. To enable this, it is important that respect for each other’s views and beliefs and those of the believers of that religion is encouraged at all times and that any artefacts are handled with respect and care.

At Ashford Oaks we have high behaviour expectations where during Collective Worship;

- Children enter the place of worship in silence to suitable music.
- Children participate actively in community singing as appropriate.
- During the opportunities for reflection, children sit still in silence, engaging in their own way with this reflection.
- Children listen actively and interact positively.

Resources

A wide variety of multi-media resources are used to support collective worship including the use of interactive whiteboard and downloadable internet resources as well as books, artefacts and music. Resources are available for Collective Worship in the R.E cupboard. Staff are aware and model appropriate ways of handling, displaying and storing religious artefacts.

Visiting speakers are used as “experts” to contribute to collective worship, for example leading prayers during Ramadan. Children provide a valuable resource by relating their own experiences of worship.

Withdrawal

We acknowledge the rights of parents to withdraw their child(ren) from Collective Worship and those of teachers to withdraw from 'assembly', only from the element of an assembly that is deemed 'collective worship'. We do not, therefore, anticipate any requests for withdrawal. We do, however, have a procedure in place to deal with any questions or concerns from parents about this or withdrawals which, should be raised with the Headteacher.

Role of the Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that the requirements of the law are met in relation to the act of collective worship. S/he ensures that the policy is followed and reviewed every three years. S/he has the responsibility for the management and organisation of resources and parental involvement.