



Cranborne Middle School **Collective Worship policy**

Introduction

The collective worship policy at Cranborne Middle School pays due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken account of the guidance offered by the local authority through its SACRE. Collective worship is a valued and valuable part of school life and is taken seriously, because it shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school. We are also looking at how we can combine some of the techniques used to develop pupil wellbeing and stillness in PSHCE, and the development of philosophical thinking in RE with the requirement to have daily worship so that we enhance the provision within the curriculum.

Aims of collective worship

Collective worship in Cranborne Middle School aims to provide the opportunity for pupils and staff to:

- experience a variety of styles of worship
- celebrate together e.g. festivals, school values, individual achievements
- build a sense of community
- develop a reflective approach to living, which sometimes encourages understanding of, and invitation to prayer
- look beyond the physical, material and measurable
- reflect on human values, and to understand where this links to worshipping God for those who follow a faith
- consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading, presentation and evaluation of worship
- feel safe and affirmed in doing any of the above

Statutory requirements

By law, Collective Worship must

- take place for every child not withdrawn by their parents (post 16 students can withdraw themselves) every day
- be mainly of a broadly Christian character
- take account of the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils
- take place on the school premises, except on occasions, with agreement of governors

Therefore, at Cranborne Middle School our collective worship reflects the broad values of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. Not every act of collective worship must comply with this; just the majority so we can include material from other religions and non-religious world views.

Collective Worship and the Curriculum

Ratified by FGB: May 2021

Collective worship time is distinct from curriculum time given to any subject including religious education. However, in Cranborne Middle School, we aim to enable collective worship and aspects of children's classroom learning to be mutually supportive. Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in line with school policy. To achieve this it addresses a wide variety of themes and topics, uses diverse stimuli and resources and provides pupils with opportunities to 'respond' at their own level.

The Management of Collective Worship

The Headteacher is responsible for the provision of collective worship, supported by and after consultation with the governing body. The following arrangements exist to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate collective worship:

1. Delegated teacher draws up a rota for collective worship themes for each week. This is a member of staff, separate to the RE subject leader, who has collective worship as their UPS whole school responsibility.
2. SLT observes at least 6 acts of collective worship (from a range of formats) per term to ensure that they comply with school policy and the law.
3. Teacher, pupil and, where appropriate, parental views are collected annually to evaluate the quality and impact of collective worship and to identify ways in which it might be improved.

The Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective worship will take place each day as part of an extended tutor time in the morning. This will be 10 minutes each day led by the tutors. They will follow a programme agreed with the delegated teacher, SLT and year leaders. This will be supplemented through the assembly programme, where SLT, year leaders and visitors will contribute to a yearly programme of assemblies that follow the guidance for collective worship as opposed to assemblies that are covering other topics or organisational.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

The content of all acts of collective worship is considered carefully to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils, as well as the balance between Christianity and other faiths. A termly planning spreadsheet lists themes, special occasions and events, but there is flexibility to allow the inclusion of current and topical issues. Visitors are welcomed to lead collective worship from time to time and are given guidance on our worship policy. Leaders from faiths within the area help us to increase the pupils' awareness, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these faiths.

The Act of Collective Worship

We use a variety of styles, active and interactive methods and a range of resources in our acts of collective worship. Leaders make decisions about these elements according to what is most appropriate to the content, the ages, aptitudes and the backgrounds of the pupils. Suggestions for worship activities are included in appendix 1.

Where prayer is included in our acts of worship it is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to 'God' as this is inclusive of the beliefs of our non-Christian religious pupils. We hope that pupils who prefer not to pray will use these moments to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

Collective worship should not be confused with assembly. We often take the opportunity of pupils gathered together to share announcements and notices. Using a variety of strategies e.g. music, silence etc. we indicate clearly to all present when worship begins and ends.

Withdrawal

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Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory. Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship and staff (and students in the sixth form) are also free to withdraw from involvement in this aspect of school life. We request that those who wish to exercise this right inform the Head Teacher in writing so that school records are accurate. We also appreciate opportunities to speak with parents and staff who have concerns about collective worship, always keen to develop our understanding of sensitivities and to overcome difficulties where possible. Those pupils who are withdrawn from worship are cared for by a member of the school's staff; parents may provide suitable activities for children so withdrawn.

Appendix 1 – Suggestions for Worship

Prayer is as simple and honest, as liturgical and responsive as you want it to be. The range of resources is enormous but it's worth remembering that possibly the best resource is the children themselves when they freely write/offer their prayers in their own words.

Singing/music: there are amazing resources available. Kevin Mayhew (www.kevinmayhew.org.uk) is one of the top publishers of resources of music books and CDs. New songs written every year that are appropriate for collective worship. It is important never to get trapped into relying on the old ones from yester-year or deciding that all the old songs are part of the past and not relevant to the present day in school worship. Out of the ark (www.outoftheark.co.uk)music and Redhead Music(www.redheadmusic.co.uk) are both popular resources with schools – go to their websites for songs for Easter or Harvest or everyday assemblies and music for all occasions. They also publish other songwriters for both KS1 and KS2, offering rich material to facilitate excellent musical worship. Although musicians in the school are of great value in supporting worship, there are obvious benefits to using CDs: they can be used in any room or corner in which you may find yourself whether it be the computer area, classroom carpet corner or the hall with the whole school and, of course they can be available simultaneously for different groups gathered in different parts of the school for worship. Using actions and repetitive action routines, often choreographed by pupils themselves, allows everyone, even those who cannot read the words or speak English, to join in and have fun.

Story telling: Schools are good at selecting stories from a wide range of sources, including religious texts, to use in collective worship. It is important to remember that stories specifically from religious traditions are used within faith communities not just to teach moral messages but to communicate something of beliefs about God. When used in inclusive collective worship, their origin should be made clear and that they are sharing the perspective of a particular religious group. That doesn't devalue their use because children and adults who do not share the particular religious faith can still find something of value in a good story. The Bible, for example, can be a rich resource for collective worship. There are so many different children's or youth versions of the Bible appropriate for use in collective worship for all different ages. The Street Bible by Rob Lacey is an example which brings the Bible alive with prose that conveys the meaning with an approach that will resonate with children who want to be surprised by the Bible making such sense and impact rather than old language and irrelevance to life. The Bible offers stories of adventure, journey, poetry or songs of lament, creation, friendship, parables and miracles, fights and famines.

Art: art, religious paintings and pictures offer a rich resource for collective worship, particularly with the ease of access we enjoy through the internet. There is an example of a school which used the painting of I stand at the door and knock to great effect to get children to ponder what it was they would allow into their lives and what it was they would keep out and to which the door would be kept shut. This was a secondary school act of collective worship and it resonated with so many of them as they later discussed what it was that they needed to allow in and keep out.

Visitors provide information on causes and organisations, personal testimony and interview opportunities. They can be an enriching source of ideas. It is wise to brief them carefully and share the school's understanding of collective worship. Some visitors might lead an act of worship; others will

contribute to worship which is being led by someone else.

Stillness/Silence: there are few, if any, moments in which complete stillness can descend on a school community without a test or exam being in progress. In collective worship silence and stillness create powerful moments for thinking and listening. 'Drop thy still dews of quietness till all our strivings cease' is a truth to be experienced by the whole school community as they face the usual busy, urgent, rolling programme of learning and achieving. The gift of silence is a gift that can be learnt and practised in any school and collective worship. It is best learnt when it is not the predictable pattern of every assembly but skillfully used with symbols such as light or water or candle flames and a guided intention of how to use the time of stillness.

Celebrations/Remembrances: Collective worship provides opportunities to celebrate the key festivals that are part of the cyclical yearly pattern of worship. Harvest, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Eid, Divali, Vaisakhi or Passover – celebrations are all important, and so much of living faith is about celebration and fun. Collective worship must represent the fun as well as the stillness and reflection.

Ritual but not habitual: the best collective worship is where there are repetitive symbols, songs or signs that single out the time of collective worship as a special recognisable time for the school community but it should never become so repetitive that it becomes predictable and boring. There is a necessary tension between predictability and creativity, between safeness and adventure during the times that the school sets aside for collective worship each day.

Other activities can legitimately be called worship. Amongst these are:

- reflection on the meaning of life
- pondering ultimate questions
- developing a sense of transcendence
- responding to a challenge
- learning from the experience of others