

Policy and Procedure: Collective Worship

Date of Board Approval: April 2018

Review date: February 2019



Definition

R v Secretary of State for Education ex parte R and D (1994) ELR 495.

2.1

“To constitute worship as normally defined in common English parlance.....collective worship in school must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.....it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a being or power regarded as supernatural or divine.....”

2.2

For worship to be regarded as wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.....It must contain some elements, which can be related specifically to the tradition of Christian belief, and which accord some special status to the person of Jesus Christ.....

2.3

Worship which reflected Christian sentiments complied with the act even if there was nothing in the (prayers) which were explicitly Christian.

2.4

The 1988 act is regarded as permitting some non--Christian elements in collective worship without thus depriving it of its broadly Christian character. It must however contain some elements which relate specifically to the traditions of Christian belief and which accord a special status to Jesus Christ.

Rationale

3.1

We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to god. Collective worship involves pupils assembling as a class, key-stage or school.

3.2

The 1988 education reform act, states that collective worship should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, however, we conduct this in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.

3.3

Although we are a Sikh ethos school we recognise the fact that by law the majority of acts of worship should be Christian. We also reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Organisation of Collective Worship

4.1

We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school, which in the main focuses upon an ethos statement or theme.

4.2

We conduct worship in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that this is a period of calm reflection, and expect children to behave appropriately. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings within such an atmosphere.

4.3

SMT members or other colleagues normally lead worship but local clergy or representatives of religious groups may conduct them instead.

4.4

We take the ethos statements or themes from the traditions of various faiths often reflect the festivals and events of the calendar. Sometimes the themes reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. We plan our acts of worship as part of a series of themes in advance of the day they take place. On occasions it may be appropriate to include prayers/collective worship matters of national concern, local events school community issues (e.g. achievement, personal loss).

Right of Withdrawal

5.1

We expect all children to attend acts of worships. 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 1984 education act and restated in the 1988 education reform act.

5.2

The Principal keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship.