

Harrow Lodge Primary School



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

DUE FOR REVIEW:

Summer 2024

RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)

MRS L BYRNE

1. BACKGROUND TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT OUR SCHOOL

- 1.1 It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard for the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”. During any period of time affected by Covid 19, there will be no face to face assemblies taking place due to social distancing rules.
- 1.2 Families who send their children to Harrow Lodge Primary School are in the main ‘nominally’ Christian, but we do have some children from practicing Christian families. In addition there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in asking our children to worship, we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.
- 1.3 The head teacher at Harrow Lodge Primary School is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act) for arranging collective worship. Parents of a pupil have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the head teacher. Teachers may also withdraw from worship.

2. SOME DEFINITIONS

2.1 Collective worship

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring “collective” not “corporate” worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

- 2.1.1 Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

2.2 Worship of a broadly Christian character.

- 2.2.1 The majority of acts of worship must be of a “broadly Christian character”, and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.
- 2.2.2 If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.
- 2.2.3 Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

3. PHILOSOPHY

- 3.1 Harrow Lodge Primary School serves the community of Hornchurch and the surrounding areas. Worship is therefore an important part of the school day as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a community. It is attended by all students, staff and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in.
- 3.2 At Harrow Lodge Primary School we recognise that Collective Worship is important to provide opportunities for our students’ Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

4. VALUES

- 4.1 We believe at this school that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child - spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually - is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

5. AIMS

- 5.1 Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:
 - 5.1.1 Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community.
 - 5.1.2 Grow in understanding of the feelings of the other people in everyday situations and beliefs.

5.1.3 Explore the language which people use to express their feelings.

Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them.

5.1.4 Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school.

5.1.5 Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus.

5.1.6 Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not.

5.2 At Harrow Lodge Primary School we believe that worship should:

5.2.1 Contribute to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of each child.

5.2.2 Support the Social and Emotional development of our pupils through making use of the SEAL programme.

5.2.3 Give expression to, and reaffirm and practise the values of the school community.

5.2.4 Allow reflection and response to the fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals, foster and enable a concern for the needs of others, a recognition of the vulnerability of self and of others.

5.2.5 Provide members of the school community with the opportunity experience stillness and quiet.

6. OBJECTIVES

6.1 We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

6.1.1 Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community.

6.1.2 Celebrate special occasions together.

6.1.3 Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community, the wider world.

6.1.4 Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school

6.1.5 Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society

- 6.1.6 Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....;
- 6.1.7 Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

7. PLANNING, RECORDING AND EVALUATION

- 7.1 Collective Worship is treated like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing and evaluation. The content and methodology of Collective Worship is varied and there is evidence of this in planning and evaluation.
- 7.2 Each term there is a program of themes for Collective Worship and these are often based on our Core Values (Respect, Empathy, Achievement, Aspiration, Confidence and Honesty). These were decided in consultation with our children and staff so links can be made within PSHE+C (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship) lessons.
- 7.3 The themes chosen are broad enough to allow all those leading worship the opportunity to approach the theme from their own perspective if they wish. This will mean that by the end of the theme the students will have had the opportunity to reflect from a variety of viewpoints. Alternatively, class teachers may develop their worship from themes and events that occur on the curriculum during the week.
- 7.4 This pattern is flexible and on occasions it is recognised that teachers may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.
- 7.5 We seek to encourage pupils to voice their views on collective worship and to be a part of the evaluation process. The school council regularly seeks the views of their classmates and reports these findings to the school council.
- 7.6 We choose from a range of methods, including:
- Pupil's contributions;
 - Sacred and secular stories/readings;
 - Dance/drama;
 - Prayer/meditation;
 - Artefacts/natural materials;
 - Visual aids/focal points;
 - Dialogue/creative silence;
 - Visitors.
- 7.7 Songs/music

7.7.1 Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise, with the songs we sing. We are careful with our songs to recognise that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing. We have changed the words of some songs to make them more inclusive. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme.

7.7.2 During this we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

7.8 Prayer

7.8.1 The use our school prayer to unite our children in thinking about our core values and ethos of the school. We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe.

7.8.2 It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

8. SUCCESS CRITERIA

8.1 At Harrow Lodge Primary School, we evaluate our acts of worship against some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils;
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community;
- Positive response to shared experience;
- An atmosphere which matches the theme;
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well-being;
- A sense of occasion;
- Good order;
- Staff affirmation;
- Enrichment of pupil's experience.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

9.1 The governors have a role in monitoring the Collective Worship at Harrow Lodge Primary School against the success criteria in 9.1 above.

9.2 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier, as necessary.