



# Fleet Primary School

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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

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**Chair of Governors: Kim Issroff**

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## 1. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time, unless the school has been granted a determination from SACRE. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”. This act of worship can be any length and held at any time of the day.

The head teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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 collective worship. An assembly is not synonymous with collective worship; an assembly is part of the secular curriculum and is not required by law.

## 2. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN OUR SCHOOL

UNCRC Article 12:

You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

UNCRC Article 14:

You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

UNCRC Article 29:

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

UNCRC Article 30:

You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose.

Families who send their children to this school are from a range of faith backgrounds, including Muslim, Christian, Hindu etc. Many children are from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that, as a rights respecting school, when we ask our children to worship we must be considerate of the faith background that our children and staff come from at all times. Therefore it has been our policy to apply for a determination from Camden’s Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), lifting the requirement of worship which should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”. It is the responsibility of the governors and head to apply for a renewal of this determination every five years. The renewal of the determination is due in May 2022. Furthermore, as a fully inclusive community, we recognise a whole host of diversity and therefore celebrate the main festivals of all major religions represented in the school. These include: Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Judaism, and Sikh. We are committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and endorse Article 14: Freedom of thought, belief and religion, and respect the faith background of both the staff and the child’s family at all times. Assemblies and other reflective activities must actively promote fundamental British Values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

## 3. DEFINITION

### **Collective worship**

A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring “collective” not “corporate” worship. ‘Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes’.

(Collective worship in schools- Department for Education)

Worship defined in this way should draw 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.

#### 4. VALUES AND AIMS

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. In particular, school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community and to acknowledge diversity
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in everyday situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Explore and reflect upon the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society

#### 5. ORGANISATION

In this school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. The timing and organisation of the daily act of collective worship can be flexible. As a school we recognise the importance of meeting together to encourage unity, therefore, we ensure that we worship as a whole school twice a week. Other opportunities for daily worship may be organised into Key Stage or Year group sessions. Having a variety of school groupings enables teachers to carefully plan and deliver sessions on subjects that are suitable for particular age groups.

The head teacher or deputy head teacher usually leads the whole school worship, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in our assemblies and will often initiate leading sessions, for example; projects the School council or the Rights respecting ambassadors are working on or other interests of the children.

A timetable is drawn up at the beginning of each academic year, where key events including religious festivals, celebrations and themes for each term, relating to the Rights respecting agenda are determined, so that it is clear what can be covered in worship sessions and when it is appropriate. Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up. We also use this as an opportunity to discuss successes and difficulties in worship and evaluate how we can make future sessions the most effective.

When a festival etc is covered in an assembly, it is noted on this calendar.

We use a range of strategies to engage the children in our collective worship, including: sacred stories/readings, prayers, songs and music, dance/drama, dialogue and reflection. We also encourage visitors to our worship and believe the children can gain a great deal from such visits. We ensure that all

assemblies would be under the control of a member of staff and that visitors leading sessions are aware of our worship policy and expectations.

We sometimes offer an opportunity, during our worship, to pray, if children want to, or to take a moment to reflect on our own thoughts. Pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish. We encourage children to use this time to reflect on gratitude, hopes and fears in a positive light.

While the use of 'bubbles' is used in line with Covid-19 guidance, whole school collective worship will take place over Zoom.

## **6. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The headteacher, RE lead teacher and governing body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if it is considered necessary.