



Collective Worship Policy

Reviewed: Spring 2025

Background To Collective Worship at Dothill

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 most of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils.”

Families who send their children to this school are in the main from non-religious backgrounds though a range of faith backgrounds, including Hindu, Muslim, and some children from practising Christian families are represented. We recognise that in asking our children to worship, we must 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 always respected.

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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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.

Some Definitions

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.

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.

Worship of a broadly Christian character

Most 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.

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.

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.

Values And Aims

We believe 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.

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
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in everyday situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. Dohill's school worship especially develops our pupils' feelings of belonging to a community, which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

Objectives

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

- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....
- 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.

Organisation

	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Monday	Whole School assembly – values based and a rotating theme e.g.: Jigsaw – PSHE; Pupil Parliament; Internet Safety; Mental Health; Safeguarding Squad Curriculum in real life (Deputy Head and Assistant Head teacher)	

Tuesday	Picture News / Class Assembly (KS1/2 opposite)
Wednesday	Picture News / Class Assembly (KS1/2 opposite) Open the Book assembly monthly
Thursday	Singing Assembly (Mrs Maltby and Miss Brotherton)
Friday	Whole school celebration assembly (Headteacher)

Assembly usually takes place at 2:45.

Each half term there is a values-based theme for Collective worship. Those leading worship are encouraged to relate their worship to this theme. The themes chosen are broad enough to allow all those leading worship to approach the theme from their own perspective. Alternatively, class teachers may develop their worship from themes and events that occur on the curriculum during the week.

This pattern is flexible and on occasions it is recognised that teachers may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.

Equal Opportunities (see Equal Opportunities Policy)

Equal opportunities is about ensuring that every member of the school community is regarded as being of equal worth and importance, irrespective of culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, learning abilities, sensory or physical impairment, social class or lifestyle; it is about recognising differences, meeting individual needs and taking positive action, so that everyone has equal access to the educational opportunities offered by the school; it is also about regularly monitoring that each child has the opportunity to achieve.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

At Dothill Primary School we invite governors to attend collective worship regularly.

We seek to encourage pupils to voice their views on collective worship and to be a part of the evaluation process.

This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout school and will be reviewed annually.