

A Policy for Collective Worship at Snettisham Primary School

Introduction

This policy explains the policy for collective worship at this school and how we interpret the legislation set out by the government.

The legal requirements for Collective Worship

The 1988 Education Act stated that:

- all pupils must take part in a collective act of worship every day
- the act of collective worship may be as a whole school or in different age groupings
- it may happen at any time of the school day
- it has to take place on school premises
- the head teacher is responsible for ensuring the legal requirements for Collective Worship are met
- all staff, including the Headteacher have the legal right to withdraw from the Act of Collective worship. The Headteacher remains responsible for finding someone suitable to organise and lead the acts of worship
- all parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship, wholly or partially. The school's responsibility for the child's health and safety is still paramount.

The aims of Collective Worship at Snettisham

The government requires all schools to provide an act of collective worship. At Snettisham we acknowledge that our school community is not a 'worshipping community' in the same sense as a local church. However, we provide daily acts of collective worship which we believe help children understand some of the features of worship in a believing Christian community. These are:

- praise
- reflection
- celebration
- thanks
- saying sorry
- sharing

We have chosen these elements because we believe they are also important features of our everyday life in school and are therefore appropriate responses for all pupils and staff in our community.

The law also requires us to provide pupils with an opportunity to worship God as part of our Collective Worship. We therefore provide an opportunity to respond in the form of a time of quiet reflection at some point in each act of collective worship. This time may involve spoken prayers but more often a time for each pupil and adult present to be quiet and think about what they have heard; this will provide opportunity for each to worship God if they should wish to do so.

The approach to Collective Worship at Snettisham

The acts of collective worship are planned to give pupils a variety of experiences to enable them to reflect on, and respond to, things which we, as a school community, believe are important. These experiences will include:

- the telling of appropriate stories (Biblical, moral, multi-cultural)
- poetry
- music
- tv/video/radio programmes

The organisation of Collective Worship at Snettisham

There is a termly timetable for collective worship which details who is leading the worship and the theme for the week or particular celebration.

The acts of worship follow themes from the 'Values for Life' publication, which support the aims of the school. While staff are encouraged to follow these, allowances are made for marking festivals or other newsworthy events.

Acts of worship are occasionally held in the Parish church e.g. at Christmas, Easter and Harvest. The 'hymn practice' assembly provides an opportunity to look carefully at some of the songs we use and collective worship stems from this.

All parents are advised in the school brochure of their right to withdraw their children from the collective worship provided.

Resources for Collective Worship

These are available in the staff room and from the Headteacher.

Withdrawal

Parents may ask for their child to be totally or partially withdrawn from Collective worship in accordance with the Education Act. They are advised of this right in the School prospectus and asked to contact the Headteacher to make arrangements. Staff also have the right to withdraw. No pupils or staff currently withdraw.

Visitors

Our assemblies are often led by visitors who include Rev Veronica Wilson, BJ Puppets, Open the Book and GenR8. We have produced some helpful guidelines that we will give the visitors so that they are aware of how we conduct collective worship at Snettisham. (Appendix 1)

Appendix 1

Advice for visitors taking assembly

1. School 'collective' worship is different from 'corporate' worship in faith communities. Pupils and staff come from various backgrounds. Be aware you may be speaking to people of different religions or with no religious commitment.
2. As many pupils have no religious background, take care not to *assume* great knowledge of the Bible or other religious stories, church, Jesus, festivals.
3. Do speak about your religious faith if that is why you are there, we want to know what is important to you. However, when expressing personal beliefs, make it clear this is what 'you' believe. School is an opportunity to share, not indoctrinate or evangelise.
4. Collective worship is part of our pupils' *educational* entitlement. Share something important - one simple and clear point from which we can all learn, whatever our background.
5. Please do not:
 - use sexist or racist language – *this will alienate many pupils or staff*
 - be highly controversial – *there is no forum for debate in the assembly situation*
 - speak badly about other faiths – *you may have their representatives present*
6. Please do:
 - make any visuals large – *we all need to see*
 - remember sight reading is an adult skill - *capital letters are worst to read*
 - check on hymns or songs – *are they suitable for pupils to sing or just hear?*
 - remember you have limited time – *we have to go to lessons!*
7. If you want helpers, let us know when you arrive and we will give you an idea of how best to organise this. Selecting from the audience can be very time consuming, unless done as pupils come in.
8. Introduce prayers or thoughts in a way which does not compromise pupils or staff but offers time to think OR pray e.g. *Let's be still and quiet. Time to pray or think. Please listen carefully while I say / read a prayer*
9. Don't be afraid to discuss with us what you want to do. We will try to give you feedback on what you do. If we get something wrong, please let us know too.
10. If you have not been to assembly at our school before and want to come on a visit, please ask and we will arrange this for you.