

Assemblies and Collective Policy

1. Introduction:

All maintained schools provide daily collective worship for registered pupils (apart from those who have been **withdrawn by their parents**). This is usually provided within a daily assembly.

We understand worship to be a specific act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly. We expect everyone to take an active part in the assembly.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, we normally base our assemblies on lessons and themes from the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school.

While most acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect the traditions of other religions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

2. Aims and Objectives:

The aim of the collective worship policy is to provide the opportunity for pupils to:

- worship God
- reflect on values that are of a broadly Christian nature and on their own beliefs
- develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- respond to the worship offered.

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

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. Daily collective worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. The precise nature will depend on the family background, ages and abilities of the pupils. However, if it is inappropriate for some or all of the pupils to take part in Christian collective worship, the head teacher may apply to the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for a determination to have this requirement lifted.

4. Implementation:

Collective worship, whether in assembly or class time, will:

- be acceptable to the whole community, staff and pupils
- include a variety of elements at different times
- involve the pupils.

We hold a daily act of collective worship. This forms part of each morning assembly, which can be either a whole-school assembly (although sometimes we also hold separate key stage assemblies) or a class or phase assembly.

We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time, and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful, to listen carefully to the teachings, and to participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, and sometimes candles and other objects, to focus the attention of the children.

The assemblies are normally conducted by the teaching staff, but are sometimes led by outside guests.

We take the theme of our assemblies from traditions of the Christian faith, themes from school and we observe the festivals and mark the events of the Christian calendar. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies are related to topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. The assemblies are planned well in advance of the day they take place.

Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in the assemblies by showing their work to the other children, considering issues, and by raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued, and all achievements are recognised. Gainsborough Primary is a successful school, and we shall continue to celebrate the successes of all our children at our assemblies.

We regularly hold assemblies to which parents/carers are invited. We encourage their attendance as this promotes community spirit, and shows the school and the families working together in support of the children's learning and achievements.

Governors attendance at our assemblies is always welcome.

Right of Withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent/carer can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the assembly. Parents/carers do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The Head Teacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.

5. Inclusion:

Gainsborough Primary School aims to be responsive to all aspects of diversity and to increase the learning and participation of all pupils within the school and its locality. We have inclusive values which are shared between all staff, pupils, governors, parents/carers and the wider community, in a secure, accepting, collaborative and stimulating environment. Everyone is valued and diversity is seen as a rich resource to enhance and support the learning of all.

This inclusive culture is reflected in all school policies and practices. We ensure that classroom and extra-curricular activities encourage participation of all pupils, drawing on their knowledge and experience outside school. Teaching and support are integrated together, enabling all pupils to overcome barriers to learning and participate fully in school life.

Inclusion is achieved through analysis and assessment of children's needs, by monitoring the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' achievements and by setting targets for improvement. Learning for all children is given equal priority and available resources are used to maximum effect.

Disability Equality Scheme:

Gainsborough Primary School is committed to include the views and needs of pupils, staff, parents/carers and members of the public within our Disability Equality Scheme. The scheme embodies good practice and aims at eliminating discrimination against disabled people within the school community.

We have a commitment and obligation to work and consult with all stakeholders in identifying barriers within our school for disabled people; eliminating and reducing these barriers by the implementation of an action plan which informs and is embedded in our whole school Disability Equality Scheme. The consultation process has been the corner stone in assisting our school in recognising its general duty to promote disability equality. Therefore, transparency, consultation and active engagement lie at the heart of this scheme.

Gainsborough Primary school welcomes its general responsibilities under the new disability Equality Duty to having due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people;
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- Eliminate harassments of disabled persons that is related to their impairments;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of a disabled person's impairments, even where that involves treating the disabled person more favourably than other people.

The scheme sets out the steps that the governing body takes to ensure improved outcomes for disabled pupils, parents/carers and staff in all aspects of the school life. A representative steering group has been set up to develop and monitor the scheme.

6. Assessment, Recording and Reporting:

A collective worship/assemblies theme list is updated every term. Parents/carers are regularly informed about 'open' assemblies.

7. Resources:

A range of resources can be used to support the theme, focus and format of the assembly. We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all of our themes. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and computer software to support topics and there are various websites which support our themes.

8. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation:

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of a named school governor, who is also responsible for religious education. The governor concerned liaises with the Head Teacher before reporting to the governors. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

Updated: May 2016