

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Gearies Primary School is a multicultural school, representing a rich diversity of faiths and traditions. One of the school's principle aims is to reflect positively this cultural diversity in the life and work of the school community.

2. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

An act of worship involves honouring God as a divine being. Assemblies involve an act of worship engaged upon by the school community together.

3. THE PLACE OF ASSEMBLIES IN SCHOOL LIFE

Assemblies are an integral part of the school's educational programme. Assemblies can make a contribution to learning about ourselves, each other, and the world around us. It is recognised that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children extends beyond the content of the curriculum. These aspects of children's development are facilitated through the corporate life of each class and of the school, reflected in part through assemblies.

Contained within the daily assembly is an act of collective worship. An important feature of assemblies is that these are special, quiet, reflective times that should feel different from the busy activity of the classroom. Aspects of collective worship include singing appropriate songs, listening to stories and poems, sharing experiences, and reflection during "thinking times". A variety of special times, places, people and events are incorporated. Features of the natural world may also evoke a sense of worship.

We aim for full involvement of children in assemblies, and inclusion of parents and the wider community when possible. Each assembly is also attended by an appropriate number of staff. This helps build a "family" atmosphere, in which each person has a part to play. Thus, by regularly gathering together, we affirm the sense of belonging to the school community that is itself part of an even wider community.

4. HOW ASSEMBLIES ARE ORGANISED

Assemblies are linked by a monthly Values theme. This theme provides continuity, a focus for planning, as well as a context for reflecting on important issues affecting the school. The school's values are reflected in the content of the assemblies, e.g. "developing knowledge and skills" – recognising achievements through the "Learning Star" awards.

Assemblies are normally held in each hall although, on occasions, they can be classroom-based. Music is played to set the atmosphere as children enter. Members of the teaching staff lead assemblies. Visitors are occasionally involved. Year group celebration assemblies are held in the summer term.

Children of statutory school age, in KS1 and KS2 classes attend hall assemblies each day. It is not appropriate for children in the Foundation Stage to attend assemblies daily, but they do attend various special assemblies when the content is particularly appropriate. The Reception classes attend the regular Values assemblies each week.

5. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- All registered pupils of statutory school age in maintained schools should take part in a daily act of collective worship unless wholly or partly withdrawn by parents.

- There can be a single whole school act of collective worship or separate acts for pupils in different age or school groupings
- Acts of collective worship can take place at any time of the school day and, with certain exceptions, should take place on school premises.
- Most acts of collective worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, that is, “reflecting” the “broad traditions of Christian belief” without being denominationally biased. But acts of collective worship should also be appropriate, having regard to pupils’ ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds.
- Teachers have the right to withdraw from collective worship and cannot be discriminated against for doing so. Attending “assemblies” on the other hand, is part of a teacher’s contractual duty.
- It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, in consultation with the governors, to see that these arrangements are carried out.

6. CHRISTIAN CONTENT REFLECTED IN ASSEMBLIES

In assemblies the school will encourage each child to:

- reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of things
- hear stories which suggest that there is more to life than meets the eye
- learn about right and wrong
- hear about incidents in which, and people in whom, goodness or right are exemplified
- reflect upon ideas concerning beauty and that which is pleasing to the eye and ear
- appreciate the range of talents and gifts found within the school community and beyond
- reflect upon the nature of learning and education
- have a positive and responsible attitude to the environment
- search for honesty, integrity, justice and truth
- look beyond the obvious, the immediate and the material
- love and respect self and others

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We aim to ensure that children’s experiences and opportunities in school are unaffected by race, culture, gender or class. The content of assemblies will reflect our multi-cultural society so that children see them as relevant and interesting to everyone.

8. EQUALITY

Assembly planning will take account of the ethnicity, background and language needs of all children. The delivery of assemblies will take account of the needs of children from different ethnic groups, and encourage positive attitudes to ethnic difference, cultural diversity and racial equality. Racism and discrimination will be challenged.

9. REVIEW

This policy statement reflects current practice and thinking. The policy statement was reviewed by in June 2024 and will be reviewed again in three years, in 2027.