

# Collective Worship

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## **Introduction**

At Tees Valley Education Trust, all curriculum policies are developed in close communication with academy and trust stakeholders and support the overall trust policies. All policies are shared between academies to ensure cohesion and continuity while allowing each individual academy to personalise these in order to best support the unique learning journey of their pupils.

The following policy has been written to support the ethos, vision and values of both Discovery Special Academy and Tees Valley Education Trust. As a special school, the policy reflects the unique character of the academy and needs of the pupils while continuing to uphold the overall identity of the Trust.

The 1988 Education Act and subsequent Acts of the 1990's reinforced the requirements for schools to conduct "daily" acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term Collective Worship.

Collective Worship should be:

"appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes" (DfE Circular 1/94 p 22)

In the absence of any legal definition, schools should interpret Collective Worship in a way which recognises that the school community is a collection of people. Acts of Collective Worship will need to be conducted which are sensitive to the collective character of schools. The school community will include people from a variety of cultural and faith, and non-faith backgrounds reflecting the diversity of society. If Collective Worship is to be inclusive it must be interpreted in a way which is meaningful to the range of communities served by schools.

## **Aims of Collective Worship**

- To enable pupils to explore and respond to a variety of forms of worship, thus enabling those pupils with a religious commitment to deepen their experience of worship, and to allow those without a religious commitment to begin to appreciate what worship means for others.
- To enable pupils to approach the threshold of worship by fostering in them an attitude characterised by feelings such as humility, awe, wonder, appreciation, thankfulness, respect, reverence and elation.
- To enable pupils to consider spiritual and moral issues and the many questions which relate to life.
- To acknowledge the things which have meaning, value and purpose for the pupils as individuals, as well as for the school and the wider community.
- To develop a sense of community within and beyond the school.
- To celebrate achievements, special occasions and special events in relation to individual pupils within school, to the school as a whole, or to the wider community.
- To acknowledge and respect difference and diversity.

**Above all, approaches to school Collective Worship should be sensitive to the needs and backgrounds of the Communities we serve.**

## **Provision**

Collective worship takes place in a variety of groupings in the school hall, classrooms and on occasions outside.

We follow the seasons of the Church year and within this significant festivals and other special days are observed. These always include Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost and other days such as Candlemas are celebrated occasionally.

Whenever worship takes place it is planned to promote thinking beyond the time given to worship itself.

### **Planning and assembly themes**

When planning school worship consideration should be given to grouping some of the times together under a theme. This gives opportunities for teachers to plan well ahead and provides a coherent framework for the year. By setting themes in advance genuine links can be made with religious festivals, school events, national and international occasions, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and the whole curriculum. Knowing themes in advance gives staff and pupils alike the opportunity to participate more fully in both planning and presentation.

### **Definition of Collective Worship**

The term “collective” when used in relation to worship in schools refers to the gathering together of a school group or groups for worship; it does not in any way suggest an act of worship which involves a group meeting to subscribe to any particular faith or denomination of a faith.

Collective Worship does not pre-suppose shared beliefs, and should not seek uniform responses from pupils. Collective Worship caters for a diversity of beliefs and points of view, allowing individuals to respond as individuals.

Acts of Collective Worship should be appropriate within the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. For Collective Worship to be consistent both with whole curriculum aims and the legal requirements for Collective Worship of a “broadly Christian character” it should not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. It is possible for schools to have acts of Collective Worship that:

- are wholly of a broadly Christian character
- are broadly in the tradition of another religion
- contain elements drawn from a number of different faiths.

Providing that over a term the majority of acts of Collective Worship are wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, it is not necessary for every act of Collective Worship to be so. An individual act of Collective Worship need not contain only Christian material for it to broadly reflect the traditions of Christian belief.

In an educational context, a definition of Collective Worship might incorporate some of the following:

- an appreciation of things considered to be of worth (worship) or held in high regard;
- a special personal feeling of reverence or humility;
- an appreciation of the joys and wonders of the world;
- an acknowledgement of the achievement and efforts of others, the struggles and sufferings of other human beings; and
- a sense of transcendence.

## **Suggested themes for collective worship**

**Families**

**Beginnings and endings**

**Happy and sad**

**Gifts and giving**

**Forgiveness**

**Peace**

**Growth**

**Celebration**

**All things new**

**Choices and decisions**

**One world**

**All you need is love**

**Achievement**

**Suffering**

**Looking back/looking forward**

**People who help us**

**Courage and bravery**

**Books**

**Moving on**

**Communication**

**Memories**

**Light and darkness**

**Thank you for the music**

**Promises**

**Friends**

**Neighbours**

**Creation**

**Prayer**

**Thankfulness**

## **Key Christian Festivals including:**

- **Advent**
- **Christmas**
- **Harvest**
- **Easter**

## **Key Festivals from cultures and religions including:**

- **Hanukah**
- **Chinese New Year**
- **Eid ul Fitr**
- **Diwali**
- **Ramadan**
- **Ascension**
- **Epiphany**
- **Whitsuntide**
- **Shrove Tuesday**
- **Ash Wednesday**