

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

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FEARNHILL SCHOOL

CONTEXT

Legal Requirements

1. DFE Circular 1/94 contains the current requirement for a daily act of collective worship, the majority of which should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character that is "reflecting" the "broad traditions of Christian belief" without being denominationally biased. However, headteachers must take into account the students' ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds.
2. This must be provided for all registered students of compulsory school age or above. The term 'registered students' includes those in the sixth form but not students in nursery schools or classes.
3. The act of collective worship can take place at any time during the school day and with any grouping of students the school wishes to use (though not faith groupings).
4. Parents in all schools have a legal right to withdraw their children wholly or partly from collective worship. Any such request must be complied with. (link – see Right of withdrawal, doc).
5. The Education and Inspection Act 2006 makes provision for students in post-16 education to exercise the right to withdraw themselves from the daily act of collective worship.
6. Teachers, including headteachers, have a contractual duty to attend assembly but they have the right to withdraw from collective worship and cannot be discriminated against for doing so.
7. If a school believes that the Christian character clause is inappropriate for the whole school or certain students within it, application can be made to the Hertfordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for a determination order to have the clause lifted or modified.
8. In a County school (or an academy of a non-religious denomination) it is the responsibility of the headteacher, in consultation with the governors, to see that these arrangements are carried out.
9. Given recent guidelines from the DfE and Ofsted regarding a school's responsibility to promote social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and British values, this policy has been revised.

RATIONALE

As well as being a statutory requirement, assemblies at Fearnhill School are an integral tool in delivering our holistic vision for the development of young people as British citizens in a complex, diverse and ever-changing world. They both reflect and nurture the ethos of the school, developing the values and concerns of the whole school community and thus contributing to the development of the whole person's spiritual and moral growth. They also contribute to students' understanding of what it means to be British in the twenty first century.

Collective worship and assemblies;

- reinforce the school's ethos and values
- celebrate and commemorate special occasions and achievement
- show concern for members of the school community

- add to and reflect upon aspects of human life and try to encourage a sense of spiritual awareness
- explore religious traditions and faiths
- show their relevance to current issues and build upon students' own experience
- show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups and individuals within the school.

In short, they aim to offer:

'a purposeful collective spiritual experience which supports the ethos of the school' (Hertfordshire SACRE).

POLICY AIMS

This policy aims to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations for assemblies at Fearnhill School. It also defines good practice and should be a reference document for teaching and support colleagues.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **The Headteacher** is responsible for ensuring the daily act of collective worship is carried out. At Fearnhill this has been delegated to the Assistant Headteacher for Student Development, Behaviour and Welfare, who is accountable to the Headteacher.
2. **The Assistant Headteacher for Student Development, Behaviour and Welfare** is responsible for organising a rota for assemblies, linking content to the whole school vision and ensuring they meet their stated purpose. He/She also monitors their quality, ensuring all staff are aware of their responsibilities and fulfil them.
3. **Teaching and support staff** are responsible for ensuring students arrive on time and enter assembly in an appropriate frame of mind. They also need to model appropriate, respectful behaviour and the values of the school, whether they are delivering content, managing the environment or supervising students.
4. **Governors** are responsible for appointing a member of the governing body to ensure their statutory duty with regard to collective worship is carried out.
5. **The Head of Humanities** is responsible for working with the Assistant Headteacher for Student Development, Behaviour and Welfare to ensure that practice at Fearnhill School meets requirements as recommended by SACRE and is kept under regular review
6. **Students** have the responsibility to engage fully with assemblies and to contribute to all aspects of their delivery under the guidance of teaching staff.

CONTENT AND BEST PRACTICE

Our assemblies may include sacred or secular readings; extracts from stories, poems or plays; student contributions; and music played by students.

An assembly at Fearnhill School is expected to have:

- entry by students in silence
- music on entry linked to the assembly theme (see the Head of Music for advice/resources)
- a theme linked to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of students
- images/visual stimulus
- student participation
- quiet reflection time

The following are features of good practice, promoted and monitored at Fearnhill School:

- Clear objectives
- A variety of groupings over the course of the week (different year groups and houses)
- Wide staff and student involvement no matter what their personal beliefs
- Use of visitors
- Substantial forward planning in terms of themes, leaders, curriculum connections etc.
- Appropriate resources
- Generating the right atmosphere
- A time of quiet for personal reflection/ worship
- Guidance for visiting speakers
- A contribution to the whole school ethos
- A variety of delivery methods

Acts of collective worship should:

- Not be over-dominated by school administration
- Not be over-moralising

In this way, we seek to ensure that all children, regardless of faith tradition, can feel part of the school community and take part in a celebration of common values. The parental right to withdraw a child from receiving RE should be freely exercisable and a school must give effect to any such request. **Parents are not obliged to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal.**

ORGANISATION

The school is totally committed to the principles underpinning collective worship. However the communal space available for assembly is severely restricted at certain times of the year. Therefore, the rota for assemblies is adjusted when exams take place or if there is a major public event.

PROCEDURES

- During the registration period after lunch, year groups should assemble as follows:
 - Monday KS4
 - Wednesday KS3
 - Thursday KS5

There are adjustments to this according to the time of year, so that Year 11, for example, may meet as a single year group during exam preparation time.

- House assemblies are also held each half term
- Students should go to the Hall and sit in alphabetical order in their tutor groups.
- Staff should accompany students and ensure an appropriate atmosphere is established and maintained
- Registers must be taken quickly and quietly.
- Latecomers will sit at the back of the Hall.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring the quality of assemblies is the responsibility of the **Assistant Headteacher for Student Development, Behaviour and Welfare**, working through the structures of whole school monitoring of the curriculum and the school's promotion of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and British values.