



Collective Worship Policy

2015-2016

PRINCIPLES:

Birches Head High Academy believes that collective worship supports and strengthens every aspect of life, which includes British values in developing the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually. We value this time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”.

Families who send their children to our school are from different nationalities and faiths. Some practice their chosen religions other do not. In addition there are children who are from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.

AIMS:

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of the other people in every day situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person’s life stance, whether it be religious or not
- Mark celebrations of the major festivals of Christianity and of other faiths
- Access topical matters from the news or the locality
- Access literature with implicit or explicit religious teaching
- Enjoy an appreciation of the natural world and human activity
- Enjoy the use of music

PRACTICE:

At Birches Head High Academy we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. Assemblies are held once a week for each cohort where every pupil in the school is required to attend. In addition Personal Tutors are required to prompt students within their group on reflective thinking (Thought of the Week) during tutor time, encouraging student to participate in assembly presentations.

Members of the Senior Leadership team and Pastoral Leaders lead the whole school worship each week. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leading in collective worship at calendared times of the year.

Assemblies are calendared throughout the year around which encompass some religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar, these are published on the whole school calendar.

Please see additional guidance on assemblies in Appendix 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for Collective Worship Policies and guidelines
- The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher: Student Services and Student Services Director: are responsible for planning the calendar at the beginning of every academic year, this is discussed with the Senior Leadership Team
- All Personal Tutors follow the Assemblies reflective on the Thought for the Week/Collective Worship programme and adopt their own ideas on what this means to them personally
- All Teaching Staff are required to attend assemblies unless they have formally withdrawn from them by putting their request in writing and meeting with the Head Teacher.
- Parents of a pupil have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Headteacher. .

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: September 2016

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON PLANNING AND CONDUCTING ASSEMBLIES

In planning our assemblies, we choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Dance/drama
- Quiet reflection
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors
- SMSC

SONG/MUSIC

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. Music from a variety of cultures and types is used on occasions. Music should be selected carefully to match the theme.

PERSONAL PRAYER/REFLECTION

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. We feel that, whilst prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer, and as an alternative the use of regular moments of silence provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.