



Collective Worship Policy

Policy Approval Level	Governing Body
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Date of Next Review	September 2026

1. OVERVIEW

Families who send their children to Fawbert and Barnard are in the main 'nominally' Christian, with some children from practising Christian families; in addition, there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some 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. Our school is committed to valuing the opinions, beliefs and practices of all and to showing sensitivity to minority groups, therefore our school vision & values shape all that we do:

Respect – Accepting yourself and others for who they are;

Ambition – A desire to achieve your best;

Perseverance – To keep going in spite of obstacles.

We respect our pupils as individuals and along with our school community share high ambitions for them.

2. DEFINITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Collective Worship

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring "collective" not "corporate" worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

Worship of a Broadly Christian character

The majority of acts of worship must be of a "broadly Christian character", and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

However, if we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children and staff into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

Legal Requirements

As stated in the DFE Circular 1/94 Religious Education and Collective Worship para 50-88. Requirements relating to management and organisation.

"All registered pupils attending a maintained school should take part in daily collective worship" (para 51).

"The parental right to withdraw a child from attending collective worship should be freely exercisable and a school must give effect to any such request. Parents are not obliged to state their reason for seeking withdrawal" (para 85)

"Collective worship, subject to the right of withdrawal, is intended to be appropriate for and to include all pupils attending a school" (para 54).

"The timing and organisation of daily collective worship can be flexible. It need not be held at the start of the school day. There may be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups. For this purpose, a 'school group' means any group, or combination of groups in which pupils are taught or take part in other school activities; it does not mean a group reflecting particular religious beliefs, for which different provision may be made" (para 55).

"As a rule, all acts of collective worship should take place on the school premises. County and controlled schools which also wish to hold acts of collective worship off the school premises may do so, provided these are in addition to the daily statutory act of collective worship which must still be held on school premises" (para 56).

"All maintained schools are required under the Education Regulations 1993 to include in their annual prospectus information about parents' rights to withdraw their children from religious worship, either in whole or in part and any alternative provision for pupils who are withdrawn." (Para 123).

3. VALUES AND AIMS

We believe that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. The value we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We are mindful that the school day provides children with the space and tools to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in either traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner that is personal to the child.

Through our collective worship, we aim 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 other people in everyday situations and beliefs;
- ❖ Explore the language which people use to express their feelings;
- ❖ Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them;
- ❖ Develop their emotional literacy in order to respond appropriately to others and their views;
- ❖ Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus;
- ❖ Acknowledge diversity and each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not;
- ❖ Understand the importance of 'Big Questions' and that through asking these questions we are learning more about our community and the wider world;
- ❖ Develop the feeling of belonging – as an individual, as member of a local community, and as a wider citizen of the world.

4. OBJECTIVES

At Fawbert & Barnard Infants' School, we view school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives.

We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- ❖ Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community;
- ❖ Celebrate special occasions together;
- ❖ Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world;
- ❖ Share appreciation of projects undertaken by groups within the school;
- ❖ Acknowledge achievements of members of the school community;
- ❖ Develop their emotional literacy by reflecting upon the many different emotions that humans experience (wonder, joy, sadness, frustration etc.);
- ❖ Reflect on the way in which spiritual feelings can be expressed - through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

5. PLANNING

At Fawbert and Barnard Infants' School, collective worship takes place in a variety of ways, ensuring that this is within a broad educational framework. The school year has been divided into themes, which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up.

- ❖ **Whole School Celebration Assemblies:** during whole school celebration assemblies where pupils have the opportunity to share examples of their work and talk, answer questions about it and share their achievements to the whole school. This not only provides an excellent opportunity to develop oracy skills but also demonstrates to all children that their work and achievements are valued by the entire school community;
- ❖ **Singing Assembly:** a music assembly during which the children practice and perform songs, and gain from singing in a group, which promotes self-efficacy, self-acceptance, social bonding and contributes to a sense of belonging;
- ❖ **British Values Assembly:** assemblies that have a different theme each week, linked to democracy, rule of law, respect and tolerance and individual liberty. These may also incorporate religious festivals and national and international celebrations such as Diwali, Easter, Martin Luther King Jr Day, Random Acts of Kindness Day, International Day of Women and Girls in Science etc.
- ❖ **Seasonal Theme / SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural):** assemblies linked to a seasonal or topic based theme that is relevant to the children. These may also include visitors with a particular focus on heightening children's awareness of future prospects, such as guest speakers including female civil engineers, the local Mayor, local musicians etc. These assemblies link heavily to our PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) learning. For example focusing on Sun Safety, Water Safety, Railway Safety dependent on the time of year etc.
- ❖ **Key Stage Reflection:** specific classroom time where groups of children focus on thinking about and reflecting on events and topics that are specifically relevant to their classroom (for example class charters and values, unpicking playground scenarios, individual celebrations etc.).

For children in Early Years, the first part of the academic year focuses on mainly on Key Stage Reflection and Singing Assembly, and once the children have settled fully into school life they then join the whole school assemblies.

6. CONTENT AND STYLE

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship, and this happens in line with the Inclusive Practice that is seen across the school.

In order to make assemblies and collective worship accessible for all, we choose from a range of methods including:

- ❖ Pupil's verbal contributions;
- ❖ Stories and readings;
- ❖ Dance and drama;
- ❖ Prayer / reflection / meditation;
- ❖ Songs / music (including set entry and exit music for the children to appraise);
- ❖ Visual aids and focal points;
- ❖ Artefacts and natural materials;
- ❖ Visitors and guest speakers.

Reasonable adjustments and bespoke support plans ensure that, wherever possible, all pupils have access to the same level of collective worship.

It is important to appreciate that the majority of children in the school are not raised as practising Christians; therefore, it is neither the right nor responsibility of the school to expect the children to participate actively in Christian worship in school as they would in a place of Christian worship. We try to use a variety of styles of presentation to involve and engage the children as much as possible and make it relevant to their interests and needs. This is reinforced through our school values (respect, ambition, perseverance) which are universal.

7. REFLECTION AND PLEDGE

All acts of collective worship that take place within the school provide children with opportunities through which they can worship God if they want to, and to this end, all will include some time for reflection or prayer. The prayers, which are used, may come from a Christian tradition or they may be taken from another faith. Before any prayer is said it is made clear that although they listen to the prayer, the children do not have to join in and are invited to say "Amen" only if they agree with what has been said.

We have a school reflection pledge that was compiled through discussion with the School Council and all classes through the school. This is used to end each assembly and act of collective worship, and is as follows:

We promise to keep our children safe and happy
We promise to always persevere and never give up
We promise to have a positive attitude and give our personal best every day
We promise to be kind and helpful and spread happiness to everyone in our community
We promise to treat everyone and everything with respect
We say to each other
Thank you for respecting our school, for being polite and using your manners

8. BRITISH VALUES

At Fawbert and Barnard Infants' School, the curriculum actively promotes fundamental British Values. We are working effectively in reinforcing and securing these shared values in the following ways:

Democracy: This is considered foundational and all children are taught and exposed to understanding and respecting the democratic process at an age appropriate level.

Children are actively encouraged to make decisions and know that their viewpoints are important.

All children are consulted and play an active part in class charters and positive behaviour strategies on an individual class level, and the School Council supports decision making on a wider scale.

At Fawbert and Barnard Infants' any perceived injustices that the children may have are dealt with promptly and fairly.

The Rule of Law: The importance of laws, whether those that are imposed at a class, school or country level, are consistently reinforced on a regular basis. School rules and expectations are clear and fair to each individual. The children are taught about the reasons why we have laws and their role in keeping us safe. Children also learn about appropriate consequences.

At Fawbert and Barnard Infants' School everyone is aware that the school rules are there for all children and that everyone is expected to adhere to these, however that there are also times when there are adaptations to rules due to the learning needs of an individual.

Mutual Respect: At Fawbert and Barnard Infants', we place huge emphasis on respecting each other consistently. This core value is promoted in all that we do. Whether it is through individual learning strands, or our whole school approach to inclusivity, all pupils are aware of the expectations placed on them to respect the views and beliefs of everyone around them.

Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs: Fawbert and Barnard aims to celebrate the cultural experiences of all pupils and families, ensuring that these are valued throughout a child's time with us. Children are encouraged to share their knowledge in order to enrich the learning experiences of others.

Differences and similarities between everyone, regardless of culture, ethnicity, language, disability, gender, or any other background are discussed during class and whole school activities. All of this is underpinned through the golden thread of inclusivity, but particularly drawn out during RE (Religious Education, PSHE and PSED learning).