



Nether Green Junior School

POLICY FOR
ASSEMBLY AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Author: Governors

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Rationale

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, 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”.

The school conducts Collective worship in accord with the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act and the local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/education/about-us/sacre/resources.html>).

Aims and Purpose

Assemblies and collective worship play a crucial role in promoting and developing the school ethos, values, attitudes, beliefs, relationships, aspirations and achievements. Collective worship normally takes place during assembly. On days when children do not attend assembly, the class teacher ensures a time in class for reflection. Assemblies provide an important time for the school to celebrate group and individual achievements, talk about school rules and give notices and information. Children will also learn about personal social and life skills and about their world past and present. Children will also learn about others and their beliefs.

In an educational context, worship reflects the values, aspirations and faith of the people worshipping. It is a time when the whole school or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. 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.

Whenever possible we follow the principles that:

- Assemblies should be inclusive
- Assemblies should be educational with curricular links.
- Assemblies should contribute to the religious education of pupils.
- Assemblies should have a sense of occasion.
- Assemblies should use materials that cover a variety of religions and cultures.
- Assemblies should, on occasions, involve people from the local community.

We ask pupils to consider and reflect on beliefs, teachings and practices and engage with social, moral, cultural and spiritual issues in ways that are appropriate for pupils of all backgrounds, ages and aptitudes. Collective worship is ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’ in that at least half of our collective worship will have a bias found in Christian values. We will consider other religions and secular perspectives which reflect our school and local community; global and local issues; and recognise a variety of important days/celebrations from a wide range of religions and cultures.

Collective worship may ask pupils to consider the beliefs and practices of religions and other worldviews, but does not ask pupils to engage in repeating beliefs or practices, in order to ensure appropriateness for all pupils. References to the beliefs, practices and teachings of faith are accompanied by giving pupils opportunities to make sense of the topics from their own perspective. For example children may be asked to think quietly about what the topic means to them, and for those who believe in God to turn their thoughts to prayer. Collective worship must be appropriate for and include those of all faiths and none.

Organisation

An assembly with collective worship will take place daily, sometimes in larger groups and sometimes in class groups. It may have a specific focus or be a time for reflection of current issues/topics/learning.

This time is usually led by the head teacher, member of the senior leadership team or member of school staff and the school encourages input from visitors into school.

We invite visitors of local faith groups to support the collective worship which reflects our school community. This will include visitors from different local churches who represent the Christian faith (no more than one per half term) and also representatives to represent other faiths. The plan for assemblies will ensure a wide coverage of beliefs even if visitors are not available to visit the school.

Invitations to visitors will also include specialists to support elements of the curriculum, to inform children about events and activities they can become involved in, for example the Road Safety group, Activity Sheffield.

All visitors into school are expected to work within the policies of the school whilst visiting and abide by the code of conducts for visitors to the school. Faith Visitors who support collective worship will be expected to abide by Guidance and Code of Conduct for Religious Believers Visiting Schools.

As part of assembly and collective worship, music is played as the children enter. Children's attention may be drawn to the composer and style of music. There will be a wide range of music including classical, jazz, opera, music from other cultures, and contemporary music. Christian songs are used as part of some of our collective worship e.g. Christmas carols.

From time to time some children may attend a club or receive additional help during assembly and collective worship. Time missed will be monitored by the class teacher and if a regular session is organised the parents/carers will be informed.

An assembly which will include collective worship will usually last about 15 minutes.

Three days a week there will be a whole school assembly. This will usually be led by a member of the senior leadership team but some may be class led / teacher led or led by visitor/s in school. This assembly will typically include:

- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Music
- Artefacts and Visual Aids
- Dialogue and Pupils' Contributions
- Visitors
- Stories
- Film
- Creative Silence/ time for reflection/ thought/ (child choice)
- Time to share messages and school information.

In some of these assemblies children's achievements will be celebrated.

Also included will be regular reminders for the children about our high expectations of behaviour.

One day each week the assembly will be for just Year 3 and 4 or Year 5 and 6. This will usually be led by the Head or deputy head teacher and be similar in format but more focused on the age group.

One day each week the assembly will be Class Life Skills (PHSE) time. This will be led by the teacher and focus much more specifically on individual class needs and the Life Skills scheme of work. It will allow a period of reflection on an issue chosen by the class teacher.

The themes covered and discussed in assemblies are shared with parents/ carers each week in the school newsletter.

Right of Withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent or carer can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship. This should be done in writing and the parent should make it clear which elements of the assembly they do not wish their child to be involved in. Parents or carers do not have to explain or give reasons for this. The school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. The Head teacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from collective worship. Staff may also withdraw from collective worship.