



Astrea Academy Trust

INSPIRING BEYOND MEASURE

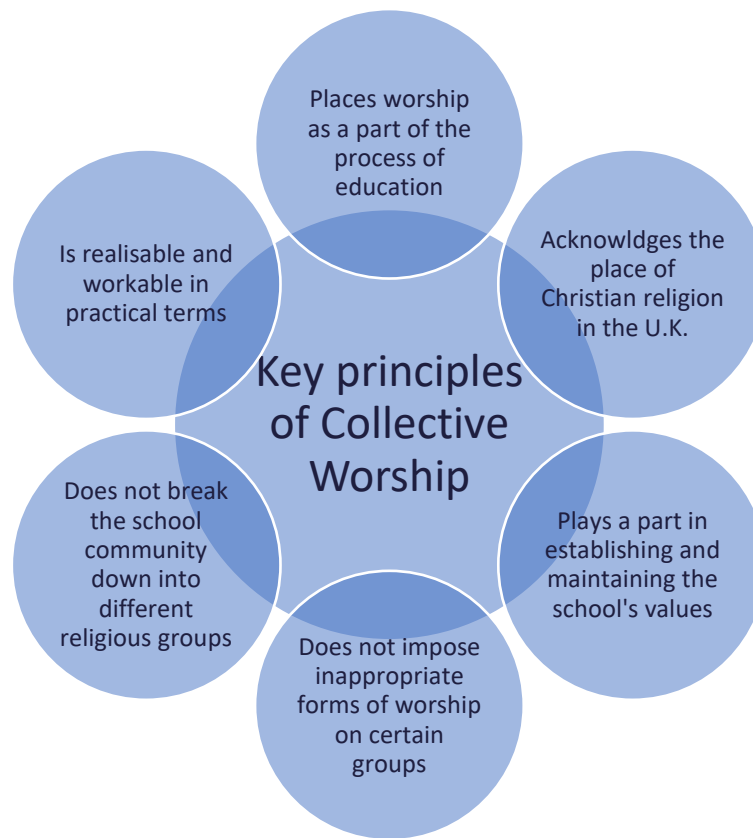
Collective Worship

Guidance on meeting the legal requirement for a daily act

January 2024

What is Collective Worship?

A daily act of Collective Worship is a legal requirement set out in the academy's funding agreement. The legislation applies to all registered pupils and is clear that they should take part in daily collective worship unless withdrawn by their parents. The law specifies that Collective Worship must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", a concept explored more fully later in this document.



NATRE tells us that Collective Worship is about a school's duty to develop pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. This may include learning about interesting cultural traditions and their meaning, listening to stories with a moral message and reflecting on themes such as strength, courage or loyalty. Collective Worship should draw pupils' attention to the values the school wishes to develop both as a body and in each individual. Collective Worship is about the growth of the person, their character and social outlook, whatever their academic aptitudes.

Collective Worship in schools is not the same type of activity as worship that happens in religious contexts.

Corporate Worship	Collective Worship
Worship in a religious context	Worship in an educational context
Properly pursued by practicing members of a faith	Collective – that is – for all
Conducted in line with the traditions of the faith	'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', that is that it should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief, on most occasions, 'mainly'
Promotes thoughts and conscience in line with religious doctrine	Promotes freedom of thought and conscience
Follows established patterns of language, process and actions	Does not force the demonstration of views or behaviour associated with a particular religion
Must be led by a member of the faith and in line with the requirements of the faith	Can be led by different faith groups with different views, so long as they do not indoctrinate
Believes that there is no value to an encounter with a watered down, lowest common denominator version of faith	Is invitational – that is without compulsion to "do" anything

Are Collective Worship and Assembly the same thing?

Collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. Although they may take place as part of the same gathering, the difference between the two should be clear. Collective worship can, nevertheless, be related to the day-to-day life, aspirations and concerns of the school.

What should Collective Worship achieve?

- Foster a sense of fellowship by bringing pupils together to celebrate the shared values of the school and of the community.
- Foster a sense of wonder and awe at the beauty, mystery and power of the world.
- Allow reflection on the fundamental questions of life and move attention away from the concerns of the moment to those things which are of eternal concern to human beings.
- Provide an opportunity for celebration and thanksgiving and the sharing of emotions such as love, joy, hope, friendship, acceptance, anguish, fear, reverence, forgiveness, etc.
- Foster a concern for the needs of other people.
- Provide a time for sharing successes and failures in personal, school and community life.
- Provide the experience of being part of a caring supportive community.
- Foster new insights about life.
- Foster empathy with others.

What is at the core of Collective Worship?

The Church of England describes a successful Collective Worship to be one that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring.

Inclusive

Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. Pupils should be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching. Collective Worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship.

Invitational

Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship should provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. The metaphor of 'warm fires and open doors' captures this idea: the door is open, all are welcome to come in and sit as near or as far away from the fire as they feel comfortable.

Inspiring

Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational Collective Worship, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

In the phrase 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', what does "of broadly Christian character" mean?

DfE guidance advises that Collective Worship "reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief" but also that "the extent to which and the ways in which the broad traditions of Christian belief are to be reflected in such acts of collective worship should be appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes. It is for the head teacher to determine this after consultation with the governing body."

← Consider what extent of Christian belief is appropriate to your school community →

Christian Belief	Learning from Christian Tradition	Sharing Christian Values
One God in the form of the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit.	St George / St Valentine as martyrs of faith	Love and Compassion <i>Loving others unconditionally, showing empathy, putting the needs of others before self, treating everyone with kindness and respect.</i>
	Mothers' Day and the Mother Church	
Incarnation: Jesus took human form whilst retaining his divine nature	Pancake Day and Lent	Forgiveness <i>letting go of anger, resentment, and bitterness towards those who wronged us. Promoting healing, restoring relationships, and fostering emotional well-being.</i>
	The Easter Story	
Atonement: Jesus died on the cross sacrificially to forgive and redeem humanity from sin	Easter Eggs and rebirth	Peace-making <i>promoting harmony, resolving conflicts, and working towards a more just and equitable society</i>
	Advent Calendars and wreaths	
Resurrection: Jesus returned to life, symbolising eternal life for believers	The Christmas Story	Humility <i>Encouraging and uplifting others without pride or arrogance, creating a sense of community and belonging, being supportive, being nurturing.</i>
	St Nicholas and Christmas	
Virgin Birth: Mary's conception of Jesus was miraculous	Boxing Day as a day of giving gifts to the poor and needy	Integrity <i>setting a good example for others to follow, being honest, being trustworthy, and demonstrating integrity in all areas of life.</i>
	The Parables and moral messages	
The Bible is free from error and is the authoritative source of faith		

← Consider what extent of Christian reverence is appropriate to your school community →

Prayer-based reflection	Common Reflection Time to think about our world	Personal Reflection Time to think about ourselves
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a Christian prayer you can join in with, reflect on or just listen to.... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How should people act and why? How should people think about...? What could we all do to make ... better? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who am I? Where do I fit into the scheme of things? Why should I...? Why shouldn't I...?

In the phrase 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', what does 'wholly or mainly' mean?

Within the extent models above, 'wholly or mainly' is taken literally, meaning between 51% and 100% of a term's Collective Worships OR at between 51% and 100% of each time Collective Worship happens.

What does Collective Worship that is 'not broadly Christian' in character mean?

Just under half your acts of Collective Worship need not be broadly Christian. Here is an opportunity to offer Collective Worship that is broadly of the character of another faith and to demonstrate respect for your school community's faiths. Similarly, Collective Worship that explores the values of non-religious life stances such as Humanism or of individuals and groups with no religious affiliations can enrich the experience of pupils and encourage them to think deeply about their own values and commitments.

References

[Collective worship in schools.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Collective Worship and Religious Education governor guide.pdf \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

[Assemblies and Collective Worship in primary schools | TheSchoolRun](#)

[Microsoft Word - \\$0lhq3gb.doc \(southampton.gov.uk\)](#)

[A Fresh Approach to Collective Worship - Diocese of Canterbury \(canterburydiocese.org\)](#)

[collective-worship-guidance-18052021.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

[Factsheet: Collective Worship in schools - Religion Media Centre](#)

Appendix 1

Astrea Academy Trust Statement on Parental Right to withdraw their child from parts of the Curriculum

Astrea Academy Trust Statement on Parental Right to withdraw their child from parts of the Curriculum (Primary)

Astrea Academies deliver a carefully constructed curriculum to all pupils. The curriculum is designed to equip pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding through high academic expectation and achievement as well as through appropriate social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The curriculum in primary academies is divided into four parts:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of your child from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes.

- The Primary Curriculum

Academies are required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to all pupils.

- Religious Provision

All state schools are also required to make provision for a daily act of collective worship and must teach Religious Education (RE) to pupils at every key stage.

- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE)

All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice.

Within this, since September 2020, state-funded primary-phase schools have been under a statutory obligation to deliver nationally agreed Relationships Education and Health Education.

Parents **do not** have the right to withdraw their primary school-aged child from any aspect of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum or any part of any subject which forms the primary Curriculum. These curriculum aspects are the legal entitlement of every child. This includes biological aspects of animal growth and reproduction that are essential elements of the Science curriculum.

Parents **do** have the right to withdraw their primary school-aged child from any aspect of Religious Provision and / or the non-compulsory Sex Education parts of PSHE as detailed below:

Religious Education

Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their primary school-aged child from some or all of the RE Curriculum without influence from the school. The Principal will always seek to discuss this decision with parents, with a view to sharing the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. If pupils are withdrawn from RE, they will remain on school premises. The school has a legal duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost..

Collective Worship

The parental right to withdraw a primary school-aged child from attending collective worship is freely exercisable and school will approve any such request. Parents are not obliged to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal.

The right of withdrawal from collective worship would normally be exercised through the physical withdrawal of the pupil from the room where the act of worship is taking place. Indeed, the school could insist that this is the way the right is to be implemented. If, however, both the parent and the school agree that the pupil should be allowed to remain physically present during the collective worship but not take part in it, nothing in the law prevents this.

To avoid misunderstanding, the principal will seek to establish with any parent wanting to exercise the right of withdrawal:

- the elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part;
- the practical implications of withdrawal; and
- whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and, if so, how much.

Sex Education aspects of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education

Parents are free to withdraw their primary school-aged child from non-compulsory Sex Education aspects of the PSHE curriculum if they wish to do so. This does not cover the biological aspects of animal growth and reproduction that are essential elements of the Science curriculum, nor the mandatory content covered in Relationships Education .

The Principal will always seek to discuss this decision with parents, with a view to sharing the educational objectives and content of the Sex Education syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where Sex Education is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. If pupils are withdrawn from these aspects of PSHE, they will remain on school premises. The school has a legal duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost.