



Date reviewed: September 2022

Date of next review: September 2025

Approval by Whole Governing Body

Introduction

Sebert Wood School is a Community school. Worship is therefore an important part of the school day as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a community. It is attended by all students, staff and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in. We recognise that Collective Worship is an important opportunity to provide opportunities for our students Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

The Law on Collective Worship

The Education Reform Act of 1988 sets out the law regarding collective worship and Circular 1/94 provides further guidance. The law states that collective worship in schools should aim to:

- provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God
- consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs
- encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of the worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered
- develop a community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes. (paragraph 50)

Collective worship in maintained schools must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, though not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.

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

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. (Paragraph 58)

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. (Paragraphs 68-74)

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 reasons for seeking withdrawal.

(Paragraph 85)

The Definition of Collective Worship

The word worship comes from the Anglo Saxon word 'weorthscipe' and can be defined as either 'the adoration of God or a Supreme Being' or 'to honour, value and praise someone or something of worth'. In the context of worship in school, the aim is to provide experiences which deepen the inner senses and engender feelings of self worth and the uniqueness of the individual. Giving pupils a purpose and meaning to life, awe and wonder of the natural world, reverence and respect and a sense of belonging to the community.

Our aim is to create an atmosphere in which genuine worship may take place and where pupils' own beliefs are valued and each one has the opportunity to respond in their own way.

Children are encouraged to reflect on the ways in which worship affects the values, attitudes and spiritual dimensions of themselves, the learning community and society. It should be a celebration and a time for reflecting on things that have worth and meaning to the community.

The Act of Collective Worship at Sebert Wood School

The 'collective' part can take on different meanings depending on the setting. Due to the size of our school it is not possible for the whole school to gather, so we meet in classes, year groups or Key Stages. The 1988 Education Act defines a school group as any group or combination of groups in which pupils are taught or take part in other school activities: this is not a group reflecting particular religious beliefs. The main point being that all members should be involved in some way in a daily act of worship, unless withdrawn by parents for reasons of conscience.

The aim is to give pupils the message that this is an important time of the school day. No pupil should be kept out of the worship time for interventions, extra reading or tidying up, as this is a shared time when the community affirms its worth and togetherness by exploring its shared humanity.

The school continues to monitor the contribution of collective worship to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the school. The celebration of success and worth is important and should be an integral part of school life.

As with many schools we use the term 'assembly' when they are referring to the 'act of collective worship'. However we are aware of differences between the two activities. We **assemble** for a common purpose such as shared notices/information, listening to a visiting speaker from a community group or charity, giving out rewards and certificates, but this must be seen as separate from our statutory Acts of Collective Worship, as defined within this policy. This policy is distinct from the Religious Education policy as Collective Worship and the teaching of religious education must be seen as separate.

Collective worship is intended to be appropriate for, and to include, all pupils attending a school, regardless of their own personal faith. Collective worship in schools differs from the corporate worship of believers of a particular faith.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from collective worship on the grounds of religious conscience. The child should attend the 'assembly' part of the proceedings, i.e. the general school notices and information, but can then withdraw from the worship. Parents might wish to provide some material from their own faith for the child to study. Teachers also have the right of withdrawal on grounds of religious conscience, but not on grounds of needing some free time.

Rights of Withdrawal

At Sebert Wood School we seek to be an inclusive community however we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children for Collective Worship. This school expects that withdrawal will only be made following parental discussion with the head teacher/worship co-ordinator followed by written confirmation of withdrawal.

The school has a system of suitable supervision for students withdrawn from Acts of Collective Worship. However, no additional work is set or followed in this time.

All teachers, including the head teacher, have the right of withdrawal from the Act of Collective Worship, but the head teacher, should he or she wish exercise this right, maintains statutory accountability for Acts of Collective Worship in Sebert Wood School. This right of withdrawal doesn't extend to assemblies.

Organisation

A timetable for the various phases of the school is circulated each term.

Collective worship will be led by a member of the SLT, class teachers and visitors over the course of the term. When Collective Worship is not timetabled for a phase of the school the teachers will lead a classroom based reflective collective worship.

Planning

We use a thematic approach to planning our acts of collective worship. The format will vary depending on the age of child and location of the sessions. We aim to incorporate a variety of festivals across the year.

We will also incorporate the school's Key Values into assembly time. This pattern is flexible and on occasions it is recognised that teachers may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.

Each person leading worship is asked to plan his or her act of worship in as much detail as they would any learning activity. A variety of resources and links to suitable websites is provided by the worship coordinator and staff are encouraged to share useful resources with their colleagues.

We seek to encourage pupils to voice their views on collective worship and to be a part of the evaluation process. The schools council regularly seeks the views of their classmates and reports these findings to the schools council.

The school's worship coordinator is: Nick Wells

The governor with responsibility for monitoring collective worship is: Jamie Gaskin

Current Themes (subject to review) *School Values in purple*

| | Autumn Term | Spring Term | Summer Term |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2022 – 2023 | Thankfulness <i>Readiness</i> | Helping Others <i>Respect</i> | Forgiveness <i>Resilience</i> |
| 2023 – 2024 | Generosity <i>Readiness</i> | Hope <i>Respect</i> | Courage <i>Resilience</i> |
| 2024 - 2025 | Peace <i>Readiness</i> | Service <i>Respect</i> | Trust <i>Resilience</i> |
| 2025 - 2026 | Truth <i>Readiness</i> | Justice / Fairness <i>Respect</i> | Respect and Reverence <i>Resilience</i> |