

## Collective Worship Policy

### Introduction

The following is a brief summary of the legal requirements set out in the Education Reform Act 1988, together with interpretation offered in DCSF Circular 1/94 and subsequent acts.

### Legal Requirements

1. DFES Circular 1/94 contains the current requirement for a daily act of collective worship, the majority of which should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character that is "reflecting" the "broad traditions of Christian belief" without being denominationally biased (cf Education Reform Act 1988). However, headteachers must take into account the pupils' ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds.
2. This must be provided for all registered pupils of compulsory school age or above. The term 'registered pupils' does not include those pupils in nursery schools or classes.
3. The act of collective worship can take place at any time during the school day and with any grouping of pupils the school wishes to use (though not faith groupings).
4. Parents in all schools have a legal right to withdraw their children wholly or partly from collective worship. Any such request must be complied with.
5. Teachers, including headteachers, have a contractual duty to attend assembly but they have the right to withdraw from collective worship and cannot be discriminated against for doing so.
6. If a school believes that the Christian character clause is inappropriate for the whole school or certain pupils within it, application can be made to the Local Authority for a determination order to have the clause lifted or modified.
7. It is the responsibility of the headteacher, in consultation with the governors, to see that these arrangements are carried out.

### What should special schools do about providing Collective Worship?

DCSF Circular 1/94 Annex B expresses the law in relation to the involvement of special school pupils in collective worship. In terms of equality of opportunity for pupils in special schools, unless there are reasons relating to space or equipment that cannot be overcome, then special schools should follow the law in the same way as mainstream schools.

### **Aims of Collective Worship**

- Develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values
- Develop a sense of community within the school
- For all pupils to be able to show their achievements and develop a sense of pride in their work
- Develop a sense of pride in the school

- Develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world

### **Acts of Collective Worship at Stephen Hawking School**

Collective worship takes place on a daily basis, in various forms, at Stephen Hawking School. On Mondays and Fridays there are whole school assemblies where all children are expected to attend. The Monday assemblies are based around themes in order to inspire children and to develop a sense of awe and wonder. These assemblies are also intended to foster some understanding of the amazing things that happen in the world around us. The assemblies on Fridays are to promote community relationships and each child's sense of pride in their own work and the work of others. In addition, all classes hold morning acts of collective worship as part of their 'good morning' sessions. During these sessions the class has the opportunity to encourage relationships within the class and to understand that they are part of a supportive group. In some classes children also take part in sessions where they celebrate the achievements of themselves and others. These sessions may be daily or weekly and will follow the same aims as other acts of collective worship.

In addition to the daily acts of worship the school holds assemblies to celebrate key events in the year: Christmas, Eid, Spring etc. These assemblies follow the same format each year so that all children begin to develop and understanding of what is happening. The school also holds 'special assemblies' to celebrate children's lives (See bereavement policy).

### **Withdrawal from Assemblies**

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of any collective worship. Parents do not have to give a reason if they do not want their child to attend collective worship in school. The parent's right to withdraw will be stated in the school's prospectus.