



Fir Tree Junior School Collective Act of Worship



1. Introduction

Fir Tree Junior School is an academy within the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust. In accordance with the 1944 Education Act, 1988 Education Reform Act and as reiterated in the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, schools, including academy schools, must provide daily collective worship for all registered pupils, to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, though not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. To reflect the diversity of religion and belief in our local and national communities, we also include values and reflection from other religions and non-religious perspectives.

2. Purpose of Collective Worship

We believe that collective worship both supports and strengthens all aspects of school life. We value this special time in the school day for the space it provides for pupils to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections. Additionally, it is a time when school comes together to celebrate shared beliefs, values and successes and can relate to the day to day life, aspirations and concerns of the school. We recognise that for many people worship involves a form of Deity or Transcendent Reality, whilst many others do not recognise anything beyond the physical world. What we all share is a common humanity. Our collective worship strives to be inclusive of all views, whilst clearly meeting our statutory duties. Through collective worship we explore the rich diversity of our collective worthship.

3. Aims

The Head Teacher, in consultation with the Governing Body, is responsible for collective worship arrangements and aims to provide collective worship that is inclusive, participative, challenging and educational. It is an opportunity for pupils to consider social, moral, spiritual, cultural issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship and/or reflection or through listening to and joining in the worship and reflections offered; to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.

In addition, we aim to:

- provide a caring and supporting environment for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually
- promote a common ethos with shared values that contribute to individual, school and wider community achievement within the context of collective worship
- develop in pupils a sense of community, within school, the local community and beyond
- reinforce positive attitudes and respect
- celebrate differences and similarities and to encourage respect for beliefs and cultures different from our own
- provide opportunities to reflect on the significance of Christianity and that of other faiths and beliefs through stories, events and festivals and appreciate how these might affect their lives

- encourage pupils to think, to question and to develop a moral code
- create an atmosphere where worship and reflection can take place
- offer experiences and opportunities for pupils to join in with and respond to a variety of forms of Collective Worship, in order for them to reflect on the significance of their own beliefs and those of others.

4. Organisation of Collective Worship

We hold daily assemblies/collective worship which is usually whole school, although it can take place within classes¹. Collective worship can also take place at any time during the school day² and be led by any member of staff, pupil(s) (supervised by a member of staff) or visitor, in consultation with the Head Teacher, ensuring it is consistent with the purpose of collective worship in our school, current safeguarding requirements and adheres to the school's Visitor Policy, as appropriate. There is always a member of staff present to ensure that external visitors' contributions are appropriate to an act of collective worship in a community school.

5. Right of Withdrawal

We seek to be an inclusive community and expect that all pupils attend daily Collective Worship. However, we respect the right of a parent(s) to withdraw their child(ren), as established in the 1944 Education Act and re-enacted in the 1988 Education reform Act. This school expects that withdrawal from Collective Worship will only be made following parental discussion with the Head Teacher, then confirmed in writing, clarifying whether it is from all or some specific acts of Collective Worship. All teachers, including the Head Teacher, have the right of withdrawal from Collective Worship. However, the Head Teacher, should he or she wish to exercise this right, must maintain statutory accountability for Collective Worship.

6. Monitoring and Review

Governors monitor Collective Worship as part of their routine monitoring schedule and aim to respond to pupils' feedback regarding Collective Worship when reviewing this policy which will be at least every three years.

¹ 1988 Education Reform Act

² The Department for Education Circular 1/94