



Upton Cross
Academy



Kernow Learning
Building Excellent Schools Together

Assembly and Collective Worship Policy

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Statutory or Best Practice policy:	Best Practice
Appendices	Yes
School or Trust policy:	School

Meeting your communication needs:

We want to ensure that your needs are met. If you would like this information in any other format, please contact us on 01579 362519 or email Uptoncross@kernowlearning.co.uk

Introduction

At Upton Cross Academy we believe in fostering understanding and acceptance amongst our children. We value the religious backgrounds of all of our children and seek to develop the moral and spiritual potential of every pupil. We feel that assembly and collective worship is an important aspect of school life where pupils and staff can feel part of a team within a community, our school family. We welcome parents and members of the community to take part in assemblies and collective worship and value their contributions. We recognise that legally we are obliged to have a daily act of collective worship and believe that it is important to lead the children in their worship.

Collective worship, as distinct from assemblies, is the only area of academy life which the law requires to take place every school day.

Legal Requirements

(for details see School Standard and Framework Act 1998 and Circular 1/94)

- All pupils must take part in a daily act of collective worship, unless they have been withdrawn from it by their parents.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship.
- Collective worship sessions are to be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', to be within the broad traditions of Christian beliefs, on the majority of occasions.
- Collective worship must be non-denominational in LA schools.

The local 'Open the Book' team lead Collective worship on a fortnightly basis. Teams of volunteers from local churches of different denominations attend fortnightly to deliver *Open the Book* stories, giving children the opportunity to see, hear, and take part in the main stories from the bible. This is part of a national scheme organised by the Bible Society, and *Open the Book* aligns to the criteria used by OFSTED when inspecting collective acts of worship. The educationally sensitive scripts are used successfully in schools with a wide ethnic & religious background and there is no coercive content. The time for reflection is suitable for children of all faiths and none. We actively encourage parents not to withdraw their children from collective worship and encourage parents to speak to staff if they are concerned. We believe assembly time and collective worship is so valuable with regard to community cohesion and providing insight into others beliefs, to jeopardise this with children being withdrawn, but we recognise parents have a legal right to do so.

Aims of Collective Worship at Upton Cross

- To establish, affirm and celebrate the common and shared values of the academy
- To nurture the identity and nature of the academy as a community
- To develop positive attitudes among the pupils
- To provide an opportunity for pupils to worship God



- To enable pupils to explore their own beliefs, values and commitments, and those of others.
- In short to promote the spiritual, moral social and cultural developments of pupils.

Worship is understood as an act of collective worship and can be interpreted very openly and widely as an act which brings a school group to a point where they are able to make a shared, reflective response to a divine being, power, ideal or value of some worth, wholly or mainly within the broad traditions of Christian belief on the majority of occasions.

Collective worship is an essential element in the schools' promotion of the spiritual and moral development of pupils as required by ERA 1988.

Approaches to Assembly and Collective Worship

Daily worship is provided through the following means:

- Whole school acts of worship in assemblies
- Class group act of worship in assembly/classes

Management

Responsibility for Assemblies and collective worship in our school lies with the Headteacher. The Headteacher:

- Provides a rota for leaders of assembly and collective worship
- Provides a sequence of topics for each termly theme
- Establishes and maintains a resource base
- Liaises with the local community in terms of visitors.

Methods

There is a suitable variety of methods for collective worship to enable the experience to be as valid and relevant to the pupils as possible. There is also a ritual element associated with some of these methods to allow the pupils to benefit from the security and pattern of worshipping together.

These will include the following as is appropriate to the nature of the occasion:

Music on entry and exit (Performers or composers are identified)

Singing

Use of prayers, including the children's own

Readings from suitable sources, including the Bible.

Evaluation

Implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and her evaluation will be used in the review of the policy.



Appendix

Beliefs that do not align with the structure of Collective Worship

The school recognises that there are religious and cultural beliefs that may not fully align with the structure of collective worship. The school will encourage parents to discuss this and will aim to ensure that all religions and cultures are respected within the bounds of its statutory requirements.

Muslim attitudes to singing/musical instruments

Singing is not regarded as a valuable asset by Muslim parents. It is felt that singing heightens the emotions, particularly when accompanied by musical instruments. Also, it is felt that singing is seldom useful in gaining a career. Singing hymns is unacceptable for Muslim pupils. Both singing and musical instruments are referred to in the Qur'an as being forbidden ('haram').

Non-religious singing could be acceptable if it does not affect religious, moral or cultural values.

The issue of singing cannot be generalised. The decision will be up to individual parents. The issue of singing/musical instruments remains the same whatever the age of the child. However, some parents may allow their children to take part in primary school as they are under the age of 11.

The school should inform the parents about the nature of assemblies and discuss the issues with them.

Jehovah Witnesses attitudes to assemblies

Children from families who are Jehovah's Witnesses do not observe celebrations like birthdays and Christmas because they are 'rooted in paganism'. Because of this they may exclude themselves or refrain from joining in when such celebrations form part of collective worship or assemblies in school.

They are taught to be tolerant and respectful, recognising the right of others to celebrate, but, in turn, appreciate respect for their decision not to participate.

