

# Ealing SACRE Collective worship guidance

Updated November 2023



# What is in this guide

This document from Ealing SACRE provides guidance and advice for schools on collective worship.

Please contact [elp@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:elp@ealing.gov.uk) with any queries.

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# Introduction

Ealing SACRE has prepared this guidance to support the development of policies encouraging the participation of all pupils and staff in collective worship in schools.

## **Requirement for collective worship**

Under the Education Act 1996, all maintained schools must provide daily collective worship for all registered pupils.

There is a limited exception for maintained special schools, who must, 'so far as is practicable', provide daily collective worship for every pupil attending the school. This is set out in Section 10 of the Education (Special Schools) Regulations 1994.

The requirements are outlined in Annex G of the collective worship in schools' guidance (the religious education requirements have since been updated, but the requirements for collective worship are the same). [Collective worship in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook)

All academies must provide daily collective worship for every registered pupil. This applies to academies with and without a religious designation. Any specific requirements will be included in the academy funding agreement.

Information on the requirements for collective worship in English schools is also included in the Department for Education's Governors' Handbook:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

- All maintained schools without a designated religious character must provide a daily act of broadly Christian collective worship for all pupils.
- In community schools and non-faith foundation schools, the executive leader is responsible for arranging this after consulting the board.
- In voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation schools designated with a religious character, the board is responsible for arranging collective worship in accordance with their trust deed or the religious designation of the school, in consultation with the executive leader.

Exceptions to attending daily collective worship include pupils:

- whose parents have exercised their statutory right of withdrawal
- in nursery classes or nursery schools, although nursery pupils in foundation stage classes can participate as long as parents do not object
- in Pupil Referral Units.

## Distribution of religions in Ealing schools

The table below compares data collected by the Ealing Schools Research and Data team in May 2019 on the belief affiliation figures in Ealing schools alongside data about the belief affiliation of the general population in Ealing from the 2011 census and the 2018 Office of National Statistics Survey for Ealing. The data for England from the 2011 census is also included for comparison.

Religion/ Belief	% pupils	% population		
	Ealing schools 2019	Ealing 2018 ONS	Ealing 2011 census	England 2011 census
Christianity	35.7	43.3	43.7	59.4
Islam	31.4	12.9	15.7	5.0
Hinduism	8.6	8.9	8.5	1.5
Sikhism	8.5	6.7	7.9	0.8
Buddhism	0.7	No data	1.2	0.5
Judaism	0.1	No data	0.3	0.5
Other	1.6	4.0	0.6	0.4
No religion	10.2	24.2	15.0	24.7
Not stated	3.2	No data	6.9	7.2

### Terms used in the guidance

There are three main terms used in the guidance:

- Assembly
- Collective worship
- Reflection

### Explanation of terms

The distinction between the terms is described below: Any use, in this document, of the term 'reflection' rather than 'worship' is chosen not to secularise it, but to make the experience fully inclusive.

### Assembly

The 1988 Education Act makes a clear legal distinction between an **assembly** and worship. An **assembly** is part of the secular curriculum and is not required by law. Pupils may not be withdrawn from it and teachers and other staff can be required to attend it. An **assembly** is a gathering of all or part of the school. It is concerned with administrative matters and other announcements about school life. An **act of collective worship** and an **assembly** are distinct activities, although they may both take place as part of the same occasion. Schools often come together for events such as achievement assemblies, singing assemblies and curriculum assemblies. These may include an **act of collective worship** through the addition of an opportunity for **reflection** or prayer at the end of these times. Without such an addition, they remain, purely, an **assembly**.

## Collective Worship

By law, all maintained schools must provide a daily **act of collective worship** for all pupils. Schools should be aware that there are key differences between corporate worship and collective worship. Corporate worship is appropriate to a *corpus* or body of people who have come together because they share the same religious beliefs.

This is not usually the case for those participating in an **act of collective worship** in a school without a religious designation, who although they are part of the same educational community may possess a wide diversity of religious, agnostic and non-religious life stances.

An **act of collective worship** is a special time for pupils to reflect upon key concepts and themes, including significant life experiences and ultimate questions and, if appropriate, focus on God. It has the potential to offer pupils a wider understanding of a variety of forms of religious worship but should not impose forms of worship which are inappropriate to their own faith or belief system. It should allow the pupils to be able to make a spiritual response which is personal to them, stimulated and encouraged by a wide range of materials, both religious and secular which have the potential to promote deep thinking.

## Reflection

A moment offered for **reflection** (and as might be appropriate for some children, prayer) should be part of every daily **act of collective worship**. It gives an opportunity for those present to meditate on the big life questions and share individual concerns, enriched and informed by the materials shared during the **act of collective worship**.

Whether recognised or not, everyone has a need for contemplation, and by setting aside a time each day for this activity schools can help pupils develop the capacity to appreciate introspection. **Reflection** is not religious education and the study of religion and belief in the curriculum is not meant to take the place of daily **reflection**. However, using this time to focus on, for example, special observances in the calendar can in some instances support the RE programme.

## Aims of daily reflection

### Aims

A space set apart from daily routine benefits pupils and staff: they may engage in silent prayer or cultivate greater self-awareness or an abstract, such as inner peace. Daily reflection allows opportunity for considering big life questions and individual concerns, and can help pupils to appreciate introspection.

Gathering for reflection benefits pupils and staff in many ways, including:

- fostering pupils' awareness of universal moral principles including right and wrong, justice and fairness and a proper concern for others and the world;
- affirming and celebrating the values and ethos of the school;
- developing a sense of belonging to and an awareness of different aspects of the school community;
- experiencing the sense of gathering for a special purpose;
- sharing experiences that encourage thought;
- promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including opportunities to silently reflect on or pray about practical issues in becoming an adult citizen of the world;
- reflecting and generating a personal response to situations and issues in the context of personal beliefs and background.

## Where and when?

Daily reflection supports RE in the curriculum but cannot be replaced by it. Schools may organise their weekly programme according to their circumstances: reflection may take place at any time, in any grouping, including class, year or key stage groups, and anywhere on the school premises.

No amount of time is mandated; a 3–5-minute daily act of reflection is perfectly acceptable. It may form part of an assembly, although is not synonymous with assembly e.g. there may be a whole school or key stage themed assembly each week, with reflections on the same theme on the other days in class or tutor groups.

If the reflection is part of an assembly, school notices could be read at the beginning, so pupils can consider the reflection message as they leave. A time of reflection should contain an activity such as silent prayer or meditation, a reading, group recitation of a school invocation, affirmation or benediction, or a period of silence during which individuals may pray, meditate or worship.

Larger gatherings for reflection encourage the feeling of belonging to the greater school community and generate more of a sense of occasion. Smaller gatherings can be tailored to a particular age group. Pupils and staff should understand when they will be entering this special period in their daily routine. As previously noted, these gatherings can take place separately or within the context of an assembly.

Timing for reflection in the classroom can be flexible. Class teachers may dispense with administration and turn immediately to the act of reflection. If so, there should be some way to create a 'space' that mentally removes the children from their normal surroundings e.g., reconfiguring seating, lighting a candle, playing special music or carrying out a stilling exercise. It may be useful to place a notice on the door to prevent interruptions and a name could be given to this part of the day.

It provides an opportunity to share views while learning to listen to and respect others' beliefs. Pupils could create a focus for these acts e.g., a display board for prayers, prose meditations, photos, quotations and reflective artwork. Class teachers often plan reflection for their own classes, personalising the theme within the whole school plan for the week. This does not have to be led by the class teacher as they, too, have the right to withdraw. However, focusing on reflection rather than formal religious worship may encourage the participation of all staff.

## Ensuring inclusion

Pupils can join in reflection in any school grouping, illustrating and supporting the cohesion of the great diversity of groups within Ealing schools. Spirituality can be expressed with or without reference to a divinity, and, in that context, pupils may be encouraged to experience:

Mystery	Experiences of awe, wonder and mystery about the natural world, human achievement and, for some, a divinity
Values	Attitudes and feelings about what matters
Meaningfulness	Making connections or seeing patterns which give life meaning; the feeling of being at one with nature, oneself and/or others and, for some, God
Challenge	Being moved by experiences including love, beauty, goodness, joy, compassion, injustice, evil, suffering, death

Primary-aged children may conflate the meanings of 'reflection' and 'worship'. Older pupils and staff will recognise that the daily 'space apart' can be 'collective', allowing opportunity for seeking an inner dialogue and cultivating a meditative calm. These daily acts can provide pupils with an experience of stillness and reflection which:

- is difficult for them to achieve in their busy day
- is integral to spiritual development
- helps them focus on their developing beliefs and values
- gives them space to consider the mystery at the heart of life
- supports their emotional development
- they can draw on at times of need

Teachers should feel free to speak of their own faith or philosophy, while showing respect for those with differing views e.g. using 'framing', i.e. when using elements from a particular tradition, including text, artwork, song or saying, words identifying its origin should be used. For example:

- 'Today we are going to listen to a story from the Gospel of Mark. While this has special meaning for Christians, we can all listen and respond in the way which feels right for us.'
- 'I would like to share with you a reading from the Qur'an which has special meaning for me as a Muslim. However, I hope you can all find something in it which is helpful to you.'



Similarly, the session might end with a moment of silence introduced as follows:

‘Let’s end with a few moments silence, during which you can each reflect on the topic we’ve been discussing, meditate or worship according to your own beliefs.’

If a headteacher identifies conflict between the legal requirement of providing collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character and the needs of the majority of the school’s pupils, they can apply to SACRE for a ‘determination’ to lift or modify this requirement.

An application form and the procedure for applying are in Appendix 2.

A determination modifies, but does not remove, the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (reflection).

## Developing a school policy

The headteacher and governing board are responsible for an up-to-date policy on the provision of reflection e.g., as in

Appendix 3. It should explain the school’s approach to the delivery of a programme that satisfies the legal requirements and should contain:

1. An introduction recognising the legal framework for the school’s provision.
2. The school’s philosophy on reflection and interpretation of the law, including:
  - links with the school’s aims/mission statement
  - aims for reflection
  - links with other whole-school policies
  - relationship of this policy to community cohesion
3. A description of how reflection is organised, including
  - management responsibility
  - timings/groupings and rationale
  - content and range of experiences to be offered
  - pupil involvement
  - use of visitors
  - a system for recording, monitoring and evaluation
  - resources and their management
4. A development plan i.e. how the school wishes to develop the programme and training and support for staff.

## Developing a plan

Seasonal festivals may be used, explaining their meaning to the community concerned and the experience they generate. The Jewish, Hindu and Buddhist calendars are based on the sun and moon so their dates vary from year to year but festivals occur at the same season. The Muslim calendar is lunar and so most Muslim festivals migrate round the year. The Shap calendar of religious festivals (<http://shapcalendar.org.uk/calendar.html>) produced each year can help schools in formulating their programme.

Examples include:

- During the week of Yom Kippur, a presentation on the Jewish high holidays could include exploration of remorse, how people deal with guilt and a need for forgiveness.
- Pupils might be encouraged to think about times when they or someone close to them felt reborn and relate it to the Christian story of Easter.
- A discussion of finding strength to deal with bullying may be related to the Sikh festival, Hola Maholla.
- Buddhists mark the Buddha's birth, attaining enlightenment and death using the example set by the Buddha and seek to improve their minds with morality, concentration and wisdom.
- Muslims celebrate the festival of Eid al-Fitr at the end of daylight fasting in the month of Ramadan. Pupils can be encouraged to think about looking after the poor, about families remaining together and being thankful for having come through a time of self-sacrifice.
- During the festival of Diwali, celebrated by Hindus, Jains and Sikhs, pupils may reflect on how good triumphs over evil, and how we should be patient during times of difficulty or suffering because things can change for the better.
- Reminding pupils on Darwin day (12 February) of the Humanist importance of being curious, keeping an open mind, not being afraid to ask questions and to think for themselves but to act for everyone.

### Special Schools

Under Education (Special Schools) Regulations 1994, special schools are required to make provision 'so far as is practicable'. This means they must comply with the requirements regarding reflection, barring particular limitations. The example below is from St Ann's School for children with severe learning disabilities (SLD).

Week beginning	Theme
<b>12 September</b>	Going somewhere new/helping new people and guests/new beginnings: Rosh Hashanah/Ethiopian New Year's Day
<b>24 September</b>	Saying thank you: Ramadan
<b>1 October</b>	Saying sorry: Ramadan/Yom Kippur
<b>8 October</b>	Harvest: Harvest festival /World Food Day
<b>15 October</b>	Moon and stars: Eid ul Fitr/creation/awe and wonder
<b>30 October</b>	Fire and water: Creation/awe and wonder/work of and thanks for emergency services/focus on All Saints' Day
<b>1 November</b>	Yesterday and today: Remembrance Sunday/Armistice/Diwali

## Developing reflective skills

The following opportunities may enhance the development of reflective skills:

Focus	Pupils are encouraged to sit comfortably and focus on their breathing, returning to that focus if their minds wander, without getting annoyed at themselves for being distracted.
Pray or meditate	Pupils write their own prayers or affirmations, e.g., in response to an external event.
Consider belief	Pupils can relate their beliefs and resulting thoughts and feelings to speakers from different traditions.
Question	Events in daily life can raise profound questions. Pupils can be helped to explore these through reflection.
Participate	Encourage pupils to present their own ideas.
Wonder	Music, art, photographs, stories, handling small animals are among events that can cause wonder.
Pose questions of meaning	Meaningful questions can be posed for reflection, although answers need not be given.
Be curious	By being curious, thoughtful, sensitive to and respectful of others' beliefs, pupils can learn to consider and develop their own personal and values.

## Monitoring and assessment

The provision for collective worship is subject to inspection and so it is useful to monitor and evaluate it regularly. Inclusive reflection also contributes to the promotion of the public sector equality duty to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't, in this case the protected characteristic of religion and belief. A period for reflection might be highlighted in a report, as care given to the programme reflects other aspects of SMSC. The headteacher and governors must ensure that legal requirements are met, including:

- Is there an effective policy?
- Is there evidence of planning and recording?
- Is there evidence of evaluation?
- How much time is set aside for reflection?
- How much time is set aside for scrutiny of records of these acts?
- How much time is set aside for discussions with those who lead reflection?
- How much time is set aside for discussions with participants?
- Is documentation consistent with observed practice?
- Is reflection well resourced?
- Is INSET provided?
- Do groupings and environments maximise reflection opportunities?
- Is there equal provision for all pupils?

## Guidelines for visitors

Schools welcome the opportunity to invite representatives of different faith and non-religious groups to join a period reflection, led by members of staff. The visitor's role is not to lead the reflection, but to contribute to it in ways previously agreed with the school. A member of staff is present with the visitor at all times and retains responsibility for the reflection period. The school's policy for visitors applies for such visits.

## Right of withdrawal

The DFE Circular 1/94: "Religious education and collective worship," January 1994, paragraphs 83-88 and The Education Acts of 1944, 1988 and 1993 allow withdrawal of children from collective worship, or, as it would be in Ealing, from 'reflection'. In summary:

1. It cannot be a condition of attendance at any maintained school that a pupil attends, or abstains from attending, any Sunday school or place of worship;
2. The school must comply if the parent asks that a pupil be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, including alternative worship provided by a school as a result of a determination by SACRE.

A school is responsible for the supervision of a child withdrawn by its parent from collective worship.

## Exercising the right of withdrawal

The parental right to withdraw a child from collective worship should be freely exercisable and a school must allow any such request. Parents are not obliged to state their reasons for their request.

The pupil withdrawn from collective worship would normally be elsewhere but the parent and the school could agree that the pupil be present remain physically during collective worship but not take part.

Experience suggests that, to avoid any misunderstanding, a headteacher might wish to establish with the parent

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



## Alternative worship for pupils who have been withdrawn

Religious worship can take place according to a particular faith or denomination should parents request it. Governing bodies and headteachers should respond positively to such requests:

1. unless the denominational worship replaces the statutory non-denominational collective worship provided for the whole school;
2. provided no significant additional cost to the school is expected;
3. provided the alternative provision is consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum set out in section 1 of the 1988 Act.

## Teachers

Teachers cannot be required to lead or attend collective worship unless the law provides otherwise i.e. in a maintained school with a religious designation. All teachers, including the headteacher, have the right of withdrawal, however the responsibility for ensuring the school's compliance remains with the headteacher.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: The role of SACRE

The Education Act of 1988 requires every local authority (LA) to set up a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). The SACRE's main purposes are:

- to advise the LA on implementing the agreed syllabus for religious education in schools, to express a view as to whether or not the syllabus needs revision and review it every five years;
- to advise LAs on matters connected with collective worship (daily reflection) in its schools;
- to review and determine the cases, where on application from the headteacher, the requirement for collective worship (reflection) in a school to be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' is not to apply

SACREs may discuss other issues concerning the religious and spiritual development of children in school, and communicate its views to relevant individuals. For further work on SACRE please see: [www.egfl.org.uk/religious-education](http://www.egfl.org.uk/religious-education)

## Appendix 2: Applying for a determination

Advice, documents and sample letters that relate to determinations are available at [www.egfl.org.uk/religion](http://www.egfl.org.uk/religion) and are given below.

Applications for a determination or a renewal of a determination and completed applications should be sent to [elp@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:elp@ealing.gov.uk)

## Examples of parental consultation letters

### (a) For a new determination

Dear Parents/ Guardians

Community schools in England are required to provide a daily act of collective worship. Without a 'determination', the majority of these must be broadly of Christian character. I am, therefore, writing to you about our proposal to apply to Ealing SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) for a determination.

Our pupils come from a wide range of religious and non-religious backgrounds and we wish to provide a more balanced approach to 'collective worship' that meets everyone's needs. Ealing SACRE recommends a 'reflection' approach with no formal worship. We would replace formal worship with a presentation based on a religious or ethical theme which concerns us all, such as 'community' or 'peace'. We would follow this with a moment silently praying, meditating or reflecting on what has just been heard. In this way, in an otherwise busy school day, we can have a moment of quiet which is inclusive, meeting all our pupils' needs.

The school governors support my proposal to apply for a determination so that **[name of school]** can follow this approach. It is educational, promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, and drawing on a range of religious and non-religious traditions. A copy of the guidance document is available on the EGfL website: [www.egfl.org.uk/religion](http://www.egfl.org.uk/religion)

We will, of course, continue to mark the main religious festivals and special days such as Remembrance Day. I very much welcome the opportunity a determination offers our pupils. It will make our daily reflections relevant to everyone, in our very diverse school.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me within the next two weeks.

Yours sincerely,

## (b) For a renewal of an existing determination

Dear Parents/ Guardians

Community schools in England are required to provide a daily act of collective worship; without a 'determination', the majority of these must be broadly of Christian character. Since **[date of first determination]**, **[name of school]** has had a determination, which means that the focus does not need to be predominantly Christian. I am writing to you about our proposal to apply to Ealing SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) for a renewal of our determination.

Our pupils come from a wide range of religious and non-religious backgrounds and we wish to provide a more balanced approach to 'collective worship' that meets everyone's needs. Ealing SACRE recommends a 'reflection' approach with no formal worship. We would replace formal worship with a presentation based on a religious or ethical theme which concerns us all, such as 'community' or 'peace'. We would follow this with a moment silently praying, meditating or reflecting on what has just been heard. In this way, in an otherwise busy school day, we can have a moment of quiet which is inclusive, meeting all our pupils' needs.

The school governors support my proposal to apply for a determination so that **[name of school]** can follow this approach. It is educational, promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, and drawing on a range of religious and non-religious traditions. A copy of the guidance document is available on our school website.  
[www.egfl.org.uk/religion](http://www.egfl.org.uk/religion)

We will, of course, continue to mark the main religious festivals and special days such as Remembrance Day. I very much welcome the opportunity a determination offers our pupils. It will make our daily reflections relevant to everyone, in our very diverse school.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me within the next two weeks.

Yours sincerely,

## Applying for a determination from Ealing SACRE (maintained schools)

The outline of the procedure for considering determinations is:

1. Schools submit applications with relevant documentation: see checklist using the attached application form.
2. A member of SACRE visits the school to observe at least one act of reflection and speak with the headteacher or other member of staff responsible for collective worship.
3. The headteacher or other responsible person is invited to the next full SACRE meeting, at which the SACRE member will report on their visit and make a recommendation as to whether the determination should be granted.
4. SACRE decides whether to accept the school's application.

### Determinations

In January 1994, the Department for Education released Circular 1/94, which states that all maintained schools must provide 'daily collective worship for all registered pupils' and that this 'must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.

[Circular 1/94](#)

It is acknowledged that this may not be appropriate for all pupils in all schools. Maintained schools may, therefore, apply to SACRE for a 'determination'. The determination lifts or modifies the requirement for some or all pupils, while safeguarding the interests of children from Christian families.

### Requesting a determination

Before requesting a determination, the headteacher must consult the school's governing body, which in turn may wish to seek the views of parents. The application may relate either to a clearly described and defined group or to the whole school.

A determination, once granted, lasts for **five years**, and if a maintained school wishes to continue to provide acts of reflection that are other than broadly Christian, then it will need to reapply to SACRE to seek a renewal of its determination.

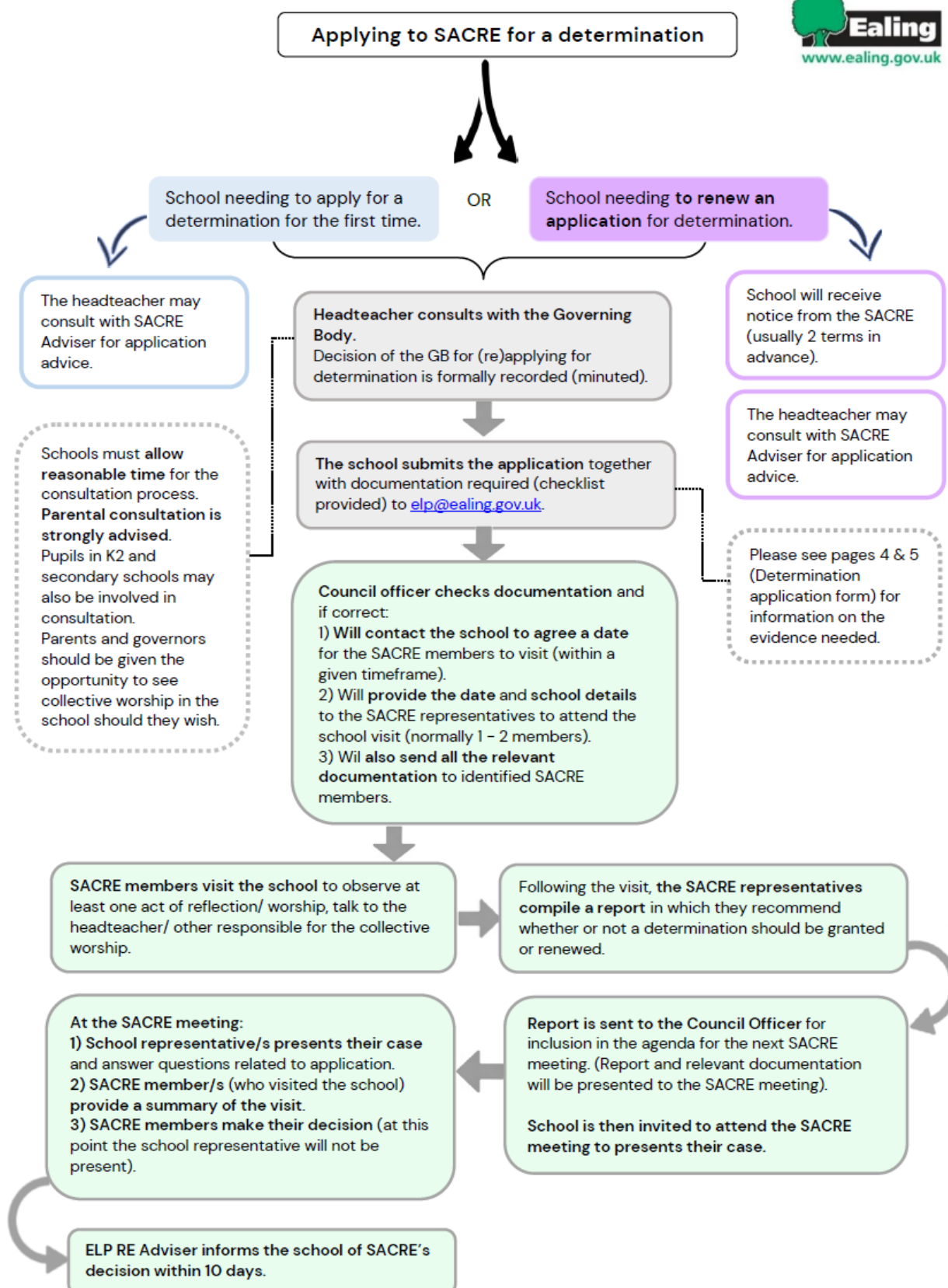


In the following pages are:

- A flow diagram to explain the process
- The determination application form
- Form for SACRE member(s) report on their visit to the school
- Information for academies and free schools
- Further information on the school visit

Sample consultation letters and the separate determination application form can also be found on EGfL: [Determination](#)

**All documentation must be sent to [elp@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:elp@ealing.gov.uk)**



November 2023

## Determination application form (Maintained schools)

This is an application form for a determination to lift or modify the requirement for maintained schools to deliver 'collective worship' that is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. This application form refers to 'collective worship / reflection' in line with Ealing guidance on [Collective worship](#) and can be downloaded from EGfL [www.egfl.org.uk](http://www.egfl.org.uk): [Determination](#). Please focus your application and evidence on acts of **collective worship / reflection** *not* on whole school assemblies.

1	<b>School name</b>				
2	<b>Local Authority school status</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Special</b>	
3	<b>Headteacher's name</b>				
4	Is this application for a renewal of a previously granted determination?	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
	If yes, when does/did the determination expire?				
5	Date of governing board meeting at which the decision to (re)apply for a determination formally approved. Please attach a copy of <b>relevant section only</b> , of the minutes.				
6	Please attach the details of any consultation with parents (strongly advised).				
7	<b>Religious affiliation of families of pupils in the school</b>	<b>Current breakdown</b>		<b>Previous breakdown (if a renewal)</b>	
		<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Baha'i				
	Buddhist				
	Christian				
	Hindu				
	Humanist / atheist / agnostic				
	Jain				
	Jewish				
	Muslim				
	Pagan				
	Rastafarian				
	Ravidasian				
	Shinto				
	Sikh				
	Zoroastrian				
	Other				
None					
8	Is this application being made in respect of (a) the whole school? If so, please describe how you will safeguard the interests of parents of children for whom broadly Christian reflection would be appropriate. (b) one or more clearly described and defined group(s) within the school? If so, please give details.				

9	If this is an application for the renewal of a previous determination, please attach a description of any circumstances that may have changed since the last determination was granted.	
10	Please attach: (a) the school policy on collective worship / reflection (b) details of the arrangements that are in place so that all pupils in the school are being provided with an opportunity for collective worship / reflection on each school day.	
11	Please attach a summary list of (a) acts of collective worship / reflection for the current and previous term (b) please include brief descriptions of at least three acts of collective worship / reflection that have been delivered or will be delivered that represent the range of religious and non-religious content in your programme. (Please do not include complete assembly PowerPoints.)	
12	How many pupils in the school are currently withdrawn from:	
	a) all acts of collective worship / reflection	
	b) some acts of collective worship / reflection – please attach details	
13	How are you intending to feature belief systems, religious and non-religious, that are not represented in your school population within the new programme of collective worship / reflection? Please give details.	
14	Is there anything else you wish to bring to SACRE's attention in relation to your application?	

Title of Document	Question	Tick if attached
Governing board minutes ( <i>relevant section only</i> )	5	
Parental consultation	6	
Collective worship / reflection arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For safeguarding interests of Christian parents</li> <li>Catering for specific groups in school</li> </ul>	8a 8b	
Changes since the last determination was granted	9	
School policy on collective worship / reflection	10a	
Arrangements relating to provision for each school day	10b	
All-school plans for the current and previous term	11a	
Brief descriptions of at least three acts of collective worship/ reflection from this or the previous term that reflect the range of religious and non-religious content in your programme.	11b	

Headteacher's signature	Date

**Thank you for completing this application.**

Please submit to [elp@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:elp@ealing.gov.uk) with all supporting documentation at least three weeks prior to the SACRE meeting.

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**Member(s) visit report for application or renewal of a determination**

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School		Headteacher	
Date of visit		SACRE member/s	

Summary of visit
<p><b>Brief details about the school:</b></p>          
<p><b>Collective worship/reflection:</b> brief summary of the approach in the school</p>          
<p><b>Collective worship/reflection observed:</b> brief summary of what was observed</p>          
<p><b>Conclusion/summary:</b> overview of visit and documentation, recommendation for renewal of the determination</p>          



## Applying for a determination (academies and free schools)

### Collective worship in academies and free schools

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resources/documents/religious-education-collective-worship-academies-free-schools-q/>

An academy's Funding Agreement is drafted to mirror the requirements for acts of collective worship in maintained schools. Each pupil must take part in a daily act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn by their parents, or if in the sixth form they have decided to withdraw themselves. This applies to academies with and without a religious designation.

An academy without a religious designation must provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. A school can reflect the religious backgrounds represented in its community, as long as the majority of provision is broadly Christian.

An academy with a religious designation must provide collective worship in accordance with the tenets and practices of the academy's designated faith. It can also choose to reflect the other principal religions and those found in the local community.

### Applying for exemption from providing broadly Christian collective worship

A maintained school can apply to the local SACRE for an exemption not to provide broadly Christian collective worship for some or all of its pupils, having considered the family background of pupils attending the school. An equivalent provision applies to academies but the academy trust would apply, through the ESFA, to the Secretary of State for the determination.

Such a determination does not mean that the academy would be exempted from providing any collective worship. They would still be required to provide daily collective worship, but of a different character that is more appropriate given the family backgrounds of the pupils in the school. The Secretary of State may approach the local SACRE for its view when considering such an application.

## Applying for a determination (academies and free schools)

### Convertor academies

All schools applying to convert to academy status should be asked as part of the application process if they already have a valid determination already in place. If they do, the academy Project Lead is responsible for sending them an application form, for assessing the application and submitting a recommendation to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for approval/rejection. The process allows for them to approach the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the DfE faith schools team or DfE Curriculum policy team if they require advice. SACRE will provide information to academy convertors about the renewal date for their current determination.

### Application form

The determination application form below should be used for new applications and for renewals. The completed form and supporting evidence should be submitted to the DfE using the [ESFA enquiry form](#)

## Application form for a determination in respect of collective worship in an academy or free school

<b>Name of School</b>	
<b>Pupils to whom this application applies (tick where applicable):</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Some (please state percentage of school roll) .....  <input type="checkbox"/> All	
Reasons for application (please include breakdown of faith background in your application in percentages) of children from families, they believe the determination will apply to for e.g. Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Muslim, etc.	
How many pupils are currently withdrawn from collective worship?	
Details of consultation with governors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evidence of consultation with the governing body e.g. Include a section from the governing body minutes where approval was granted.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of consultation with staff (including evidence):</li> <li>• Details of consultation with parents (including evidence): e.g. correspondence sent to parents and results of the responses</li> <li>• Details of consultation with pupils:</li> <li>• Schools should consider adding the consultation document on their website(s) in order to get maximum coverage for the consultation thus allowing the main groups above additional opportunity to provide feedback.</li> </ul>	
Proposed arrangements for future collective worship: How the school seek to promote community cohesion, for example if they will hold simultaneous assemblies for different religious groups.	
Names and signatures of head teacher and director who can sign on behalf of the academy trust	

The completed form and supporting evidence should be submitted to the ESFA using the [ESFA enquiry form](#)

## Further information on the school visit for SACRE members and school staff

### **School visits for determinations**

The process of application for a determination includes a school visit by one or more representatives of Ealing SACRE. Their task is to ensure that the school provides a suitable opportunity for collective worship or reflection for all pupils every day. During the visit the SACRE representatives will:

- Observe an act of collective worship
- Hold a discussion with the headteacher and other relevant members of staff

The school visit is unlikely to last more than one hour. Following the visit, the SACRE representatives will compile a report for a SACRE meeting to consider, in which they will recommend whether or not a determination should be granted or renewed. The pro-forma on page 9 may be used for the report.

### **Definitions**

The terms 'assembly', 'collective worship' and 'reflection' are not synonymous. They have specific meanings and their correct use is summarised here:

#### **Assembly**

- a gathering of part or all of the school for general announcements
- part of the secular curriculum
- not required by law
- no pupil withdrawal; staff may have to attend
- may include an act of collective worship, if there is reflection or prayer

**Collective Worship (CW)** is a daily act which:

- is mandatory for all pupils in all maintained schools
- comprises pupils who are part of same educational community; they may possess diverse religious, agnostic and non-religious life stances (NB called 'corporate worship' if all share the same religious beliefs)
- may take many forms but always presents pupils with specific concepts, themes and thoughts
- can use structures of religious worship but does not require actual worship
- allows deep thinking and individual spiritual response to the concepts explored

#### **Reflection**

- part of every daily act of collective worship
- allows thinking about the specific concepts, themes and thoughts presented
- encourages the pupil to apply these ideas to their own life
- helps pupils develop the capacity to appreciate introspection
- CW and Reflection can support the RE programme e.g. by focus on special features of the calendar.

Traditionally, Ealing SACRE has used the term 'Reflection' in carrying out its statutory duty in order to enhance inclusivity in a very diverse population.

### **Aspects to be considered by the SACRE representative(s) on the school visit**

The SACRE representatives should be familiar with the paperwork and information submitted by the school to support its application for a determination. The following are suggestions about what might be considered in observing the school and in discussion with the school staff. It is not designed to be an exhaustive list of questions, merely to provide an understanding of the school in this context.

- 1. Number of pupils in**
  - a) The school
  - b) Each year group
  - c) Each tutor group
- 2. Context of Collective Worship/Reflection**
  - a) Within assemblies
  - b) Within tutor, form or teaching group
- 3. Frequency of Collective Worship/Reflection for**
  - a) The whole school
  - b) Each year group
  - c) Each class group
  - d) On the days when a child does not have school or year group CW/reflection, what provision is made within the class setting?
- 4. Location of Collective Worship/Reflection**
  - a) School hall
  - b) Classroom
  - c) Sports hall
  - d) School grounds
- 5. Time of Collective Worship/Reflection**
  - a) at the beginning of the school day
  - b) at the end of the school day
  - c) during the school day
- 6. Duration of Collective Worship/Reflection**

How much time is allowed for the specific act of CW/reflection?
- 7. Leaders of Collective Worship/Reflection**
  - a) Headteacher
  - b) Teacher(s)
  - c) Pupil(s)
  - d) Governor(s)
  - e) Representative(s) of a faith community
- 8. Delivery of Collective Worship/Reflection**
  - a) the spoken word including stories, poems, prayers, discussions, interviews, prose
  - b) the sung word including hymns, pop songs, rhymes

Visual stimuli including pictures, posters, slides, religious artefacts, natural objects, video

  - c) Performance including dance, drama, role play, movement, mime, simulation
  - d) Music: recorded or live
  - e) Atmosphere enhancers including subdued or coloured lighting, candles, incense, drapes, central visual focus



**9. Theme**

- a) Does the school have a weekly, monthly or termly theme?
- b) How and by whom are these themes decided?
- c) To what extent does the CW/reflection provision reflect the theme?
- d) What is the scope for reinforcing the message of the CW/reflection in other situations?

**10. Collective Worship/Reflection content**

- a) Does the CW/reflection reflect the faith groups with which the parents of the school body identify?
- b) How is provision made for those with no religious affiliation?
- c) How is provision made to reflect those faith groups that are not represented within the school body?

**11. In the context of the school curriculum**

- a) Relationship between the CW/reflection programme and the secular curriculum, including
  - RE
  - PSHE
  - Citizenship
  - British values
  - SMSC (Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)
  - Philosophy for Primary Schools (P4P)
  - Rights-respecting agenda

**12. Withdrawal**

- a) Are any pupils withdrawn by parental request? Please explain why.
- b) Is the request discussed with parents?
- c) Is there a substitute activity?
- d) How are withdrawn pupils presented with opportunities for reflection?

**13. In relation to Religious Education**

- a) Does the school follow the Ealing Agreed Syllabus for RE?
- b) Are RE teachers subject specialists?
- c) Do pupils take part in visits to places of worship?
- d) How are non-theistic world views accommodated?

**14. Other issues**

- a) How is potential friction between children from different faith backgrounds managed?
- b) How are children who are not fluent in English included?
- c) Does display around school reflect themes, rights etc.?
- d) Are pupils engaged and responsive?

**Guidelines for observation of Collective Worship/Reflection**

- How is CW/R introduced and differentiated from any previous activity?
- Levels of pupil engagement and responsiveness
- Accessibility
- Suitability of language for ages and belief backgrounds
- Clarity of core theme/thought
- Appropriateness of atmosphere
- Delivery styles used (words, song, candles, artefacts etc.)
- How much time allotted for act of CW/R?

## Appendix 3: School policy on collective worship

A school policy on collective worship should arise out of the ethos of the school and relate to the community represented by the school body. In maintained schools, it may be useful for a working party, led by a collective worship co-ordinator, to devise a school policy.

The following is a list of headings that the policy might contain:

### 1. Background

- (a) An outline of the current policy
- (b) The legal requirements
  - Description of requirements
  - Extent to which the school meets them
  - Details of development where requirements are not yet met.

### 2. The role of collective worship in the school

The contribution made by collective worship to the life of the school.

### 3. Planning

- (a) Explain how collective worship is organised in the school, describing groupings, locations, times, leaders etc.
- (b) Example of the planning proforma used and details of where planning/record sheets are stored.

### 4. The role of the co-ordinator

- (a) The name the co-ordinator.
- (b) The responsibilities of the co-ordinator.

### 5. Equal opportunities

A description of issues to be considered in connection with collective worship

### 6. Resourcing

- (a) Describe current resources.
- (b) Describe priorities for future resourcing to include in the School Development Plan

### 7. SACRE determination

- (a) Details of the current situation with regard to a determination.
- (b) Description of intent to apply for a determination, if relevant.

# Acknowledgements

This document was originally produced by Nora Leonard Ealing SACRE consultant in 2008 and revised in January 2014. In 2021 the guidance was reviewed and updated by SACRE consultant Lesley Prior, and SACRE members: Elizabeth Day, Marianne Izen and Oliver Murphy and was approved by SACRE in 2021.

Design by Mirela Temo, ELP Adviser

A few minor editions were made in November 2023.

## **This document draws on a variety of sources:**

Collective Worship and school assemblies: your rights: Humanists UK

<https://www.humanism.org.uk>

Circular 1/94: 'Religious Education and Collective Worship', Department for Education, 1994

[Collective worship in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Collective Worship Guidelines. Education Department Advisory and Support Service, London Borough of Hounslow

Collective worship guidance for Lambeth schools, Lambeth SACRE [www.lambeth.gov.uk](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk)

Collective worship in Brent schools, Brent SACRE

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/education-and-schools/student-and-school-information/religious-education/>

HMI Alan Brine, inspector for religious education

The Key for School leaders <https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com>

The report of the Religious Observance Review Group, published 2004 by the Scottish

Executive [https://www.childrenspirituality.org/wp-](https://www.childrenspirituality.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/religious_observance_review_report.pdf)

[content/uploads/2018/10/religious\\_observance\\_review\\_report.pdf](https://www.childrenspirituality.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/religious_observance_review_report.pdf)

Worship works: collected guidance for schools, East Riding SACRE

<http://www.eriding.net/search/?q=worship+works>

## **Useful websites to support Collective worship and reflection:**

<https://www.assemblies.org.uk/> Resources to assist CW for world religions and none.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/stories> A useful resource for short animations of children's stories to use to support reflection

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/primary-school-assemblies-collective-worship-ks1-ks2/zmsnm39> Useful, varied and current audio resources

<https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources> Catholic ideas and resources with global themes

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools>

<https://creativeproverbs.com/> Humanist and cultural

<https://www.egfl.org.uk/religion> Copies of this document and other resources for RE and collective worship

<https://www.fischy.com/> 'Songs for good times and tough times'

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/> Good material for Holocaust Memorial Day

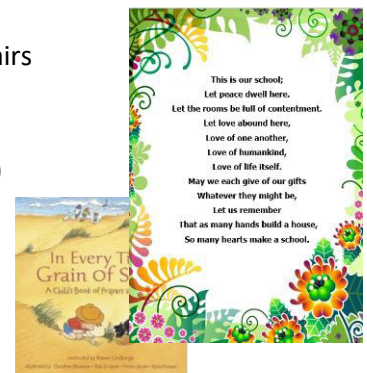
<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/> Very good reference for current affairs

## **Other useful resources to lead a reflection**

School Benediction used in a number of Ealing primary schools (Source anon)

Davenie, C. and Lindbergh, R. (2000) In Every Tiny Grain of Sand, Candlewick  
Culturally diverse poems, prayers and thanks from various origins  
suitable for primary schools

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-7636-0176-8>





# Ealing SACRE Collective worship guidance

