

Collective Worship: a short guide for Ealing schools

Requirement - All pupils in maintained schools, academies and free schools should take part in a daily act of collective worship. This should be wholly or mainly of a 'broadly Christian character' unless the school applies for a 'determination'. (See below.)

In Ealing, collective worship will include a period of reflection as defined in 'Explanation of terms'.

Explanation of terms

Collective worship provides opportunity for exposure to key ideas and themes, allowing pupils to make a personal response, usually using religious or secular materials to promote deep thinking.

Reflection allows pupils to meditate on spiritual concepts, significant questions and individual concerns, informed by the materials presented during the act of collective worship.

An **assembly** is part of the secular curriculum, a gathering of all or part of the school with no right of withdrawal.

Aims of reflection

Reflection can contribute to instilling an awareness of universal moral principles and affirming the values and ethos of the school. It can enhance a sense of the school as a community and the shared feeling of gathering for a special purpose, encouraging thought and promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It can help pupils to formulate their personal response to specific situations and issues.

Where and when

Collective worship and daily reflection may be at any time, in any grouping, anywhere in the school. 3–5-minutes is acceptable, possibly during an assembly, with the theme reinforced subsequently in class groups. It could comprise a silent prayer or meditation, a reading, group recitation or a period of silence. Pupils may be mentally removed from their surroundings by reorganised seating, a lit candle, music or a stilling exercise. Pupils may share views and listen to others' beliefs. A focus may be created using, for example, a display board of prayers, prose meditations, photos, quotations or artwork.

Including all pupils

Spirituality may be expressed without reference to a divinity. Thus, pupils of all ages, whether or not they identify with a particular belief system, may experience mystery, meaningfulness, challenge and values. A period set aside supports spiritual development and may be, otherwise, difficult to achieve. Inclusion is enhanced when the origin of an element from a particular tradition e.g., text, artwork, song, saying is identified and framed.

If the composition of the school body makes broadly Christian collective worship inappropriate, an application to SACRE for a 'determination' to lift or modify this requirement should be made. The school is still required to provide a daily act of collective worship. See Appendix 2 of the full guidance.

Developing a collective worship policy

Appendix 3 of the full guidance describes the structure of a suitable policy on collective worship and reflection. The policy should include the legal framework, the school's philosophy on reflection, the organisation of reflection and a development plan.

Developing a plan

The Shap calendar of religious festivals [The Shap Calendar Group](#) produced each year and the [List of International Days and Weeks | United Nations](#) can help schools formulate their programme for the year.

Monitoring and assessment

The provision for collective worship is subject to inspection and supports the duty to foster good relations between people who may not share the same protected characteristics of religion and belief. Regular monitoring will confirm that legal requirements are being met.

Guidelines for visitors

Representatives of different groups may be invited to join a reflection led by staff but should not lead the reflection. The school's policy for visitors applies for such visits.

Withdrawal

The DfE Circular 1/94 and The Education Acts of 1944, 1988 and 1993 allow for withdrawal from collective worship /reflection. The school remains responsible for the pupil's supervision during that time. A school must allow a parent's request for withdrawal and no reason for the request need be given. Religious worship or secular reflection could be organised, if requested.

Full collective worship guidance (February 2021)



Appendix 1: The role of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Appendix 2: Applying for a determination by maintained schools, academies and free schools, including examples of parental consultation letters, determination form and checklist.

Appendix 3: School policy on collective worship guidance

Full guidance on collective worship DfE guidance [Circular 1/94](#)

Arrangements for special schools (See point 10 in Part II) in

[The Education \(Special Schools\) Regulations 1994](#)

Right to withdraw from collective worship [Circular 1/94](#) page 24 – 25.