



PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Collective Act of Worship

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Statutory Duty of School

- The Education Reform Act (1988) requires schools to provide a daily act of worship for all registered students apart from those who have been withdrawn by their parents (Appendix 1).
- The Headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body.
- Acts of worship must be "wholly or mainly of a broad 'Christian nature' and 'not to be distinctive of any denomination'" and must not be evangelistic in their content or delivery (Education Reform Act Section 7.1). They should make a contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- In providing Acts of Collective Worship the ages, abilities and family backgrounds of the students will be taken into consideration. At Park High we believe that the Act of Worship involves reflection on things of worth; to our community, to each individual and the life we share in school together.

Purposes

1. To share individual experience about living in and responding to the world.
2. To enrich our lives through exploring and sharing people's beliefs in our community.
3. To foster a high regard for truth.
4. To encourage sensitivity to the ideas and beliefs of others and to questions which lie beyond the visible and material.
5. To provide a means by which students can begin to understand the language and nature of worship, including the importance of prayer, meditation and silence.
6. To provide an opportunity to develop the human spirit.
7. To provide an opportunity to re-affirm, interpret and put into practice the values and worth of the school.
8. To explore implicit ethical/religious themes linked to our school ethos, e.g. concern for others, responsibility, charity, a sense of community.
9. To provide the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
10. To provide a time to celebrate the various achievements of members of the community that are held to be of worth.

Implementation

1. Assemblies will be held weekly for each year group.
2. The style and tone of the assemblies will be wholly or mainly of a Christian character over the course of a full term. Themes will take account of the SHAP calendar.
3. Year assemblies will be led by the Heads or Deputy Heads of Year, tutors or tutor groups. Outside speakers may also be invited.

4. While the major Christian festivals will form a focus for assemblies at the appropriate times, significant festivals for other faiths within our community will also be recognised. (Appendix 2)
5. Assemblies will also be opportunities to inform students of sporting and other achievements, to give news of staff and student activities, to reinforce school rules, and to act as a 'platform' on which students' musical and dramatic abilities can be demonstrated.
6. Thoughts for the Day will be provided weekly to support classroom based tutor group acts of collective worship. Opportunities for silent reflection will be encouraged in these times.

This policy should be considered in association with all other policy statements relating to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of students.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy annually.

Appendix 1: Assemblies

Under Section 30 of the Education Act 1944, notwithstanding the provisions of the Education Reform Act, a teacher can be required to attend the secular part of a school assembly but need not engage in the act of collective worship on the grounds of her/her religious beliefs and practices.

Nothing in the Education Reform Act affects parents' rights, as established in the 1994 Act, to withdraw their children from Religious Education (Philosophy & Ethics) and collective worship if they wish. These are in summary:

1. it cannot be a condition of attendance that a student attends, or abstains from attending, any Sunday school or place of worship;
2. if a parent asks that a student should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship or RE given in the school, then the school must comply;
3. a student may be withdrawn from the school premises to receive RE elsewhere, if the parent requests this, so long as the LA is satisfied that this will not interfere with his or her attendance at school other than at the beginning or end of any school session;
4. if the parent of a student wishes him or her to receive RE according to the tenets of a particular religious denomination and this cannot conveniently be provided elsewhere, the LA is required to allow such education within the school provided it does not consider that because of special circumstances it would be unreasonable to do so, and does not have to meet the cost.

Appendix 2: Festivals

A wide range of faiths are represented at Park High:

Christianity
Hinduism
Islam

With smaller numbers of students from other faiths, including:

Jainism
Buddhism
Chinese faiths
Judaism
Sikhism

Rationale for acknowledging festivals

- To recognise diversity in a multi-cultural school
- To give information about the beliefs and lifestyles of others
- To encourage tolerance
- To promote positive self images among all members of our community

Implementation

- A festivals noticeboard with displays reflecting current rotation of festivals
- Focus for assemblies (outlined in policy)
- Identification of festivals from Shap Calendar and their inclusion on the assembly rota
- Annual record of festivals kept and reviewed annually
- "Best wishes" in the headteacher's letter to parents