



St Edmund's Catholic School

A learning community

A faith community

A vibrant forward looking community

Collective Worship Policy

Ratified by FGB 25th May 2016
Next review: May 2017

Collective Worship Policy

RATIONALE

The aim of the collective worship policy is to provide the opportunity for pupils to:

- worship God
- reflect on values that are based on Gospel Values
- develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- respond to the worship offered.

Church Teaching

'Catholics believe that religious education is not one subject among many but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life. It should provide the context for, and substantially shape the school curriculum, and offer living experience of the life of faith in its practical expression'. STATEMENT OF THE BISHOPS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

The religious aspect of school life has been re-emphasised by recent education reforms and is seen as an important part of the spiritual development of young people. As St Edmund's is a Catholic School, all those parents seeking entry for their children are expected to agree to them taking part in assemblies which follow the usual Christian tradition. The Education Act requires ALL schools to hold an Act of Worship (of an essentially Christian nature) every day.

Statutory Duty of School

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Daily collective worship will be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. The precise nature will depend on the ages and abilities of the pupils. Collective worship at St Edmund's School will be in accordance with the School's trust deed. The Trustees of the school are the Roman Catholic Diocese of Southwark. In addition to daily collective worship, opportunities for collective worship exist at St Edmund's School through:

- House Masses
- Holy Days of Obligation Masses
- Feast Day Masses
- Retreat programme for all pupils
- Sacrament of Reconciliation

Legal Requirements -

- (i) All pupils/students have an entitlement to take part in an act of collective worship every school day which must be provided by the school.
- (ii) The majority of acts of collective worship over any given term should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. This means that collective worship should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any one Christian denomination. In foundation or voluntary aided schools with a religious foundation, worship should be in line with the school's trust deeds/articles of government (see next section).

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- (iii) Parents have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from the whole or part of collective worship and teachers have the right not to attend acts of collective worship. Pupils should not be withdrawn from collective worship in order to take part in other school activities. The Headteacher and the Governing Body are responsible for ensuring compliance and for the health and safety of any withdrawn children on site. Since September 2007 it is possible for Post 16 students to withdraw themselves from acts of collective worship without reference to their parents.
- (iv) Collective worship can take place in separate school groupings and at any time during the school day. The separate school groupings need to be usual school groupings, for example, a class or a key stage or a year group.
- (v) Collective worship should take place on school or church premises
- (vi) Collective worship should be appropriate to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the pupils who attend and take part in it.
- (vii) A distinction is made between an act of collective worship and an assembly.
- (viii) Collective worship is part of the inspection process in Voluntary Aided schools under the *section 48* inspection requirements in relation to compliance with pupils' / students' legal entitlement and the contribution it makes to school ethos and values and to pupils' / students' personal development (including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).
- (x) Collective worship, as with all curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, should contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Collective worship should be planned and delivered to objectives that contribute to a balanced and broadly based curriculum, although it is not 'counted' as curriculum time.

Legal Requirements - Voluntary Aided or Foundation School with a Religious Foundation

- (i) Worship in Catholic schools is primarily responsibility of the Governing Body, rather than the Headteacher, although the Headteacher will implement the Governing Body's policy.
- (ii) The Governing Body have a particular responsibility to uphold the Catholic foundation of the school, which applies especially to worship in the school.
- (iii) Daily Collective Worship must be provided for all registered school pupils on a daily basis, (unless they have been withdrawn by parental request or by sixth formers themselves). It also means that it is illegal to withdraw any pupils from Collective Worship on any other grounds.
- (iv) Parents in Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools may request withdrawal from all or part of Collective Worship. This right must be explained in the School's Prospectus. An entry such as the following may be deemed appropriate:
'Daily Collective Worship is provided for all registered pupils at this school. This is seen as an important part of the school day, particularly as we are a Church school. However, parents do have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. If you wish to exercise this right, please discuss it with the Headteacher.'

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- (v) Teachers at St Edmund's are expected to support the Catholic ethos of the school, which includes attendance at acts of collective worship.
- (vi) It is expected that all teachers will attend daily Collective Worship with their pupils. This is one way for the school to show that worship is central to its life and is important for everyone, not just children. It also makes sense educationally for teachers to know what their pupils are experiencing in Collective Worship. The Governing Body should make this expectation clear to teachers when they apply to the school and should not allow teachers time out of worship on a regular basis but only in exceptional circumstances. (Teachers are allowed at least 10% out of curriculum time for planning, preparation and assessment. This should not be taken out of Collective Worship.)
- (vii) Collective Worship in Church schools may take place in a church building (not just on school premises).

Daily Act of Worship at St Edmunds

The school bases its Daily Act of Worship on a theme of the year, which divides into themes for the term and week.

These offer focus for each assembly which is undertaken within the school in any one week of the year.

Each form tutor is responsible for organising the 'act of worship' during tutor time. In order to help tutors in this task a chaplaincy bulletin is sent to all staff every week, with the theme of the assembly and scriptural references, as well as news and resources.

St Edmund's Day Mass

The School's Feast day is a very special occasion in the academic year. Mass is organised under the direction of the Chaplaincy Team and the RS Staff. Form Tutors are responsible for the conduct and participation of their own tutor groups. All other staff are expected to make themselves available for duties assigned by the SLT or Subject Leader for Religious Studies.

Holy Days of Obligation Mass

On Holy days of Obligation, Mass is organised for key stage three under the direction of RS staff. All key stage three students are expected to attend with their subject teachers. Subject teachers will be responsible for the conduct and organisation of their class.

Reconciliation Service

Each year during Advent and Lent, priests from the deanery come into school to offer every pupil the opportunity of the sacrament of reconciliation.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

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