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# Collective Worship Policy

<b>Date ratified:</b>	
<b>Governors/Committee Meeting:</b>	Community, Pastoral & Extended Services
<b>Signature of Chair:</b>	
<b>SLT Lead:</b>	Adrian Anderson

# Fir Vale School

## Collective Worship Policy

### **Rationale:**

Collective worship is a statutory part of school life. The law states that a school should provide an opportunity for a daily act of collective worship that is mainly or wholly of a broadly Christian character. At Fir Vale however, the aim is to do more than simply “go through the motions” of collective worship, and instead to provide something relevant and valuable for our students. As such, although many of the themes for our collective worship will be broadly Christian, others will focus on different topics and religions. Through the collective worship programme we are aiming to give students an opportunity to take a brief moment out of the day to consider and reflect on wider and larger issues, to put these matters into the context of their beliefs and faith, and to grow and develop spiritually as well as socially, emotionally and academically

### **Aims:**

Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for students to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs, to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes. (*Religious Education and Collective Worship Circular 1/94 (para 50)*)

Collective worship is linked to the notion of students’ “spiritual” development. The spiritual focuses on contemplation about ourselves, our place in the cosmos, our responsibilities and the meaning we give to our lives and experiences.

According to OFSTED: ‘Spiritual development is to be judged by how well the school promotes opportunities for students to reflect on aspects of their lives and the human condition through, for example, literature, music, art, science, religious education and collective worship, and how well the students respond’.

Through the Thought For The Day programme the aim is to provide opportunities for stillness, for students being aware of themselves as individuals, for reflection and sharing, for focussing on God, for feeling wonder at beauty, for personal responses. This is meant to be an active process however, as stillness is not content free: it can be a medium for religious expression, focusing on God; or ethical aspects of life, concentrating on loving kindness; or personal, remembering family and friends with affection; or a rational calming process emptying the mind of trivia.

It should perhaps be noted that schools are rigorously neutral institutions, and the collective worship programme is not about promoting a religion or denomination. Students are encouraged to reflect, consider and respond within the framework of their own beliefs. In addition it should be noted that collective worship is not the same as corporate worship. Although all students are engaged in an act of collective worship together, they will all respond in their own way to the same stimulus material rather than all doing the same thing as one uniform body.

*(Bigger and Brown ‘Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural Education’)*

## Guidelines:

The Thought for the Day programme is the school's method for facilitating collective worship on a daily basis in the form classroom. Form tutors deliver the programme with their form class, leading them in responding within a shared moment of silence to stimulus material centred on a particular collective worship theme.

## Responsibility for Action?

Resources are provided for each form tutor to use to deliver the Thought for the Day programme. These resources are in the form of PowerPoint slideshows saved in the shared area of the school network. Each slideshow will normally contain 2 or 3 slides to be displayed on the interactive whiteboard.

Slide 1 indicates the theme for that particular week, which each Thought for the Day will relate to.

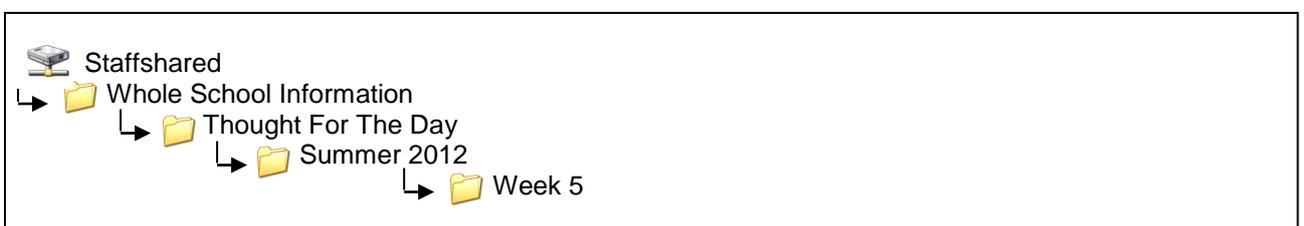
Slide 2 will then contain stimulus material to encourage students to think about and respond to that day's topic. The stimulus material might take the form of a brief story, an extract from a biography, a description of a religious celebration, or some other piece of relevant text. You may choose whether you wish to read this text aloud to your class, or select a student to read it. Some form tutors ask for volunteers to do this, some prefer to ask every student on a rota basis, and some have just 1 or 2 students who are designated as readers for a period of time. On some occasions the stimulus material might take the form of an image or a short movie clip rather than text; in these cases there will usually be instructions on the slide for students to follow. If no instructions are present, simply show the image or movie clip and ask students to consider what the picture(s) show and what links they can make to that week's theme.

Slide 3 will then usually contain a short verse, line of poetry, famous quote, proverb etc. for students to reflect on in a moment of quiet. It may be useful to begin this moment by asking students to "take a moment to reflect on, think about, and silently respond to what they have just read in the context of their own beliefs and faith". You should try and encourage the form to remain silent to show respect to fellow class members who may be praying or thinking about something personal at this time. This is a key moment. The length of time for which you ask students to reflect silently is up to you; it may be 10 or 15 seconds, or a minute. During this moment it is useful for the teacher to model the idea of taking a moment to reflect quietly. Occasionally, some teachers may choose to share their own thoughts and responses to a particular Thought for the Day moment, but this is not obligatory.

After the moment of reflection, the slideshow will sometimes contain questions for discussion that arise from the topic or stimulus material. You may choose whether or not to put these questions to the class and begin a brief discussion, depending on the time you have available and the class's readiness to discuss the issue in question.

## Where are the resources located?

The PowerPoint slideshow for each day is found via the following file path:



## **What about assemblies?**

Assemblies take place on a weekly basis in houses or year groups. These largely follow the same pattern and theme as the Thought for the Day programme and are delivered, on the whole, by members of the SLT. Assemblies are an opportunity for key messages to be disseminated, but are also a time of reflection and a time for students to spend time in stillness in a larger collective setting.

Assemblies can also be an opportunity for special events and occasions within the school calendar. This can be through external visitors – such as members of different faith groups at particularly special times of the year – or sometimes just specific members of staff with responsibilities for whole school aspects of learning and development – such as A,G&T, Global Education or Citizenship and PSHE.

## **Requests for withdrawal from RE, Sex And Relationships Education or Collective Worship**

### **1. Rationale**

- 1.1 At Fir Vale School it is our aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which is appropriate for **all** our students in line with the National Curriculum. We believe that Religious Education, Sex and Relationships Education and Collective Worship make valuable contributions towards the development of the psychical and emotional health of students. However, we also recognise and respect the rich cultural and religious diversity of our school community and work together with families to meet the personal learning needs of each student.

### **2. Implementation Strategy**

- 2.1. On admission to the school each student and their family attends a meeting at which we go through the school curriculum and key expectations regarding learning and behaviour. At the end of this meeting a contract called the Home School Agreement is signed by the school, the parent or parent with parental responsibility and the student. This process gives us an opportunity to discuss the curriculum offer at the school including RE, Sex and Relationships Education and Collective Worship.
- 2.2. If a student requests withdrawal from RE, Sex and Relationships Education or Collective Worship the subject Director of Learning explains that a formal letter requesting this should be sent by the parents to the Headteacher giving their reason. A copy of this letter will be given to the Key Stage Director of Learning.
- 2.3. The Headteacher responds, inviting parents to come to school to discuss the content of class lessons with the appropriate Director of Learning. Meanwhile the student remains in class.
- 2.4. Parents will need to note that students cannot be withdrawn from sex education where this is taught in the Science National Curriculum. Hence any student withdrawn will still receive biological information, but not taught in the context of sexual health and relationships. Parents will also need to note that students cannot be withdrawn from PE as this is part of the National Curriculum.
- 2.5. If the parents still wish to pursue withdrawal from any aspect of the curriculum this is referred back to the Headteacher for a final decision.

- 2.6. If appropriate, the subject Director of Learning or Key Stage Director of Learning and parents meet to make alternative arrangements for the student requesting withdrawal during the identified time. Arrangements will be agreed, communicated with all relevant staff and a record kept centrally.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### 3.1 Governing Body:

- Ensure that the school complies with legislation regarding withdrawal from RE, Sex and Relationships Education and Collective Worship.

#### 3.2 Leadership Team – Assistant Headteacher with Responsibility for PSHE and Collective Worship:

- Ensure that the policy and procedures related to the policy are implemented.
- To raise awareness and guide other staff on the legal position regarding withdrawal from RE, Sex and Relationships Education and Collective Worship.
- To raise awareness, amongst relevant staff, of the cultural or religious motivations behind such requests.

#### 3.3 Middle Leaders: Directors of Learning for Science, PSHE, Humanities/RE & Key Stage Directors of Learning:

- To respond to requests to be withdrawn from RE, Sex and Relationships Education and Collective Worship with sensitivity by respecting the cultural or religious motivation behind the request.