



LOCATION: CURRICULUM HANDBOOK, DOCUMENT 11

ASSEMBLY AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Date policy first adopted: June 1997

Date reviewed: January 2025

Reviewed By: Catherine Tricker

Date ratified by Governing Body: n/a

Date of next review: Spring 2027

I. Introduction

The position of Collective Worship is covered by the 1988 Education Reform Act, School Collective Worship) Parents and Carers and The Education (Special Schools) Regulations 1994 (See the extract.)

“Arrangements shall be made to secure that, so far as practicable, every pupil attending the school will attend daily collective worship and receive religious education, or will be withdrawn from attendance at such worship or from receiving such education, in accordance with the wishes of his parent.”

At Abbey Court, the policy for Collective Worship has an affinity with these points.

At Abbey Court, we believe that:

- School worship has to do with worth and celebration.
- It is the recognition and celebration of values and ethos of the school and fosters a sense of belonging.
- It reflects the quality of the relationship between the teacher and pupils whilst recognising knowledge and understanding of the pupils and their developmental needs.
- It gives opportunities for all pupils to have time to share their feelings and be listened to.
- It celebrates diversity, whilst ensuring a sense of shared values and community.
- It enables pupils to experience a time of inner reflection.
- The themes and concepts that need to be grasped by a pupil are learnt more from a community situation with people surrounding them than from the targeted approach used mainly in the class situation.
- It gives every child a voice, no matter what their communication type may be.

2. Aims

For pupils at Abbey Court, the aim of Collective Worship is to participate in communal activities that are essential to their social, moral and ethical development. Although whole school

assemblies can be of value, the main format will be departmental or class-based so that the focus can be age-appropriate and based on themes that may arouse their interest.

3. Objectives

- To celebrate all that is good and wonder at the world in which we live.
- To appreciate the positive nature of life itself.
- To provide opportunities for sharing experiences which are significant and meaningful to pupils whether they are positive or not.
- To provide opportunities for personal development through a variety of formats, e.g. music, silence, singing, and dance, including providing opportunities for experiencing a variety of religious contexts.
- To provide a regular opportunity for considering shared concerns and responsibilities.
- To provide an opportunity for Collective Worship during which pupils will be invited to participate in a manner with which they are individually comfortable.
- To allow the pupils to make a choice on what to study in this time which is important to them.

4. Styles of Teaching

At Abbey Court the challenge in Collective Worship is to ensure that positive experiences are provided that are appropriate to the individual abilities of the pupils.

The opportunities for Collective Worship are loyal to and reflect the values learnt in school i.e. Collective Worship reflects the moral and ethical ethos of the school and is a time when these issues are reinforced.

Pupils will be invited but never compelled to contribute in an atmosphere where everyone should feel free to respond and participate in ways that they feel are appropriate.

Collective Worship will be presented and experienced through a variety of expressive forms, including art, drama and storytelling.

The format of assemblies can be used to augment the collective act of worship.

Pupils and staff gather together for a weekly assembly, which includes an act of worship within it.

On the days when an assembly is not held, each class undertake a collective worship session within their class.

5. Styles of Learning

Pupils will learn from those around them.

Pupils will be motivated by having others who will listen to what they have to say and how they wish to communicate it.

Pupils will respond to an atmosphere of sharing and celebration and of being part of a community.

Pupils will have the opportunity to hear from members of the community about different topics, in both assemblies, collective worship but also on educational visits.

6. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

A log of Assemblies is kept for each term for each site (Primary, Secondary, and Further Education) to record the coverage and experiences that have been on offer.

Where appropriate, individual recording of achievement will be in line with Abbey Court's PARR policy. (Achievements may be cross-curricular in nature.)

A proforma planning/recording sheet may be used. (See Appendix 2)

7. Curriculum Planning

The content of assemblies relies heavily on the experiences and interests of the pupils. As such, the “curriculum” is based on meeting the aims and objectives within relevant contexts for the pupils. The content of the assemblies should be by the agreement of the staff and, where possible, the pupils but will necessarily be flexible to respond to events that may not be planned.

The content of assemblies is agreed upon at the start of each term on a departmental level with class-based Collective Worship planning on a termly basis by class teachers.

So that a member of staff may withdraw from the assembly at the point at which it becomes Collective Worship, this will be demarcated with the lighting of a candle and will always conclude the assembly. The length of this session will necessarily depend upon the content, but will usually be between 5 and 10 minutes in duration.

8. SEN

For many pupils in Abbey Court, the understanding of religion will involve concepts that are difficult to grasp. When a pupil has limited comprehension of their own identity and confused ideas of the tangible world around them, they will have to come to terms with themselves. Once this has begun to be achieved, they will be able to build up personal relationships with others.

9. Equal Opportunities

All pupils will be given access to Collective Worship unless requested not to do so by their parents. Please refer to Abbey Court School's Equal Opportunities Policy.

10. Health and Safety

All staff involved with Collective Worship should be cognisant of Abbey Court School's Health and Safety Policy. When working with larger groups, particular consideration should be given to fire safety issues, making sure that aisles are not blocked for example. Also, safe seating arrangements and the use of dangerous equipment, etc., need to be given thought.

11. Cross-Curricular Links

Collective Worship provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on the experiences that pupils have had and share these with others. It is intended to affirm and celebrate the work that has been carried out in all areas of the curriculum as appropriate.

12. Integration

Opportunities are taken for integrated sessions with other schools for shared community experiences.

Visits from people within the local community, such as a community policeman or a representative from a specific religion, are used to support assemblies wherever possible and appropriate.

The assemblies provide a regular opportunity for the pupils of Abbey Court, including the students in the FE department, when appropriate, to join together as a community.

13. Management and Administration

The role of the RE subject leader is detailed in Abbey Court School's RE and Subject Leader Policies.

14. Staffing (including Teaching and Non-teaching Staff) and Resources

All teachers are responsible for taking Collective Worship unless they have requested for personal reasons/beliefs not to do so. The member of staff taking an assembly is responsible for sending the RE lead the songs they use, so these can be recorded.

Resources linked directly to religious education may be borrowed from the RE Resources.

15. Evaluation and Review

The RE subject leader will review the Collective Worship policy after ongoing monitoring and consultation with staff.

The Policy will also be reviewed in light of any changes in legislation, the Medway Agreed Syllabus, Guidelines from Medway SACRE, Health and Safety requirements, or Abbey Court School's organisation.

Appendices:

1. Assemblies / Collective Worship (taken from Abbey Court's Staff Handbook)
2. Planning / recording sheet

ABBAY COURT SCHOOL

Assemblies / Collective Worship

Collective Worship

Each class has a short act of worship (as indicated on the class timetable) unless an Assembly has been held.

Themes for Collective Worship are agreed at Departmental Meetings in consultation with the RE Subject Leader.

Assemblies

A Primary and Secondary Department Assembly is held weekly. Timings for these are shown on the timetable.

The RE subject leader carefully plans assembly coverage across the school, creating a rota which is shared with all teachers. As much as possible this links to religious festivals and observation days. It also covers topics regarding values common to Christianity as well as other world faiths, such as friendship and environmental issues.

A rota for Assemblies is organised within each Department and topics are agreed at a Department Meeting.

Appendix 2

ABBAY COURT SCHOOL

Term:	Department:
Theme for Term: 1 st half - 2 nd half -	Date:

Focus/ Reflection:	Content/ Resources	Providers (e.g. Class/visitor)	Group (Primary, Secondary, FE, Key Stage)