

Collective Worship Policy

Date approved:	19 November 2025
Review cycle:	Every 3 years: November 2028
Party responsible:	Student Committee
Linked policies:	Home Learning Policy

Introduction

'Collective worship' is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and as with all academies this is included in the school Funding Agreement under clause 24: "The Academy Trust shall make provision for the teaching of religious education and for a daily act of collective worship at the Academy."

The Swanage School is a community school not designated with a specific religious character, and as such is required by the Act to provide 'collective worship mainly of a broadly Christian character'. The Swanage School also recognises and celebrates diversity and takes an inclusive approach.

Assemblies (as defined below) will take place either as a whole school, a Year Group, or Crew. Whole school assembly will take place between 13.50 and 14.20 on every other Wednesday (Week A), on the last day of term or in exceptional circumstances, at other times of the school day. Year group assemblies take place every day in Week B.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from the 'collective worship' aspects of school assemblies on the grounds of religious conscience. Staff members may also withdraw themselves from assemblies on the grounds of religious conscience. Any decision to withdraw should be made known to the Headteacher.

Definitions

'Collective Worship': The word worship can be defined as either 'the adoration of God or a Supreme Being' or 'to honour, value and praise someone or something of worth'.

In the context of worship in school, the aim is to provide experiences which deepen the inner senses and engender feelings of self-worth and the uniqueness of the individual, giving pupils a purpose and meaning to life, awe and wonder of the natural world, reverence and respect and a sense of belonging to the community.

'Assembly': The coming together of the whole school, a Year Group or a group comprising one or more Crews for the purposes of giving or sharing information, notices, etc and for the act of Collective Worship as described in this document.

'School' refers to The Swanage School.

Principles

In keeping with human scale principles, the school building incorporates a large and welcoming Atrium ('heart space') to enable whole-school assemblies. The school believes that it is important for the whole school to come together to share, support, encourage, reflect and celebrate as one.

The value which the school places on relationships and the development of the whole child, spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in school assemblies.

The school values this important time and believes that it supports and strengthens every aspect of school life. Assembly is an opportunity for individuals within the school community to experience a sense of belonging to the school family, to understand their place in the wider community and in the world we live in.

Aims

Through assemblies the school aims to provide a supportive environment to:

- become increasingly aware of ourselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- develop an understanding of other people's feelings and beliefs
- live in harmony with other people and with the natural world around us
- deepen our sense of awe and wonder
- grow in confidence through presentations, debate and knowledge
- respond freely to religious and / or spiritual stimulus
- acknowledge diversity and enable an environment for the school community to explore its own spiritual, religious or non-religious pathway

Practice

To reflect the work of the community of Swanage and surrounding villages in establishing the school, the following mission statement was chosen:

"A secondary school founded by the community for the community, combining local learning with a global outlook in one of England's finest natural environments"

To maintain and further develop these valued relationships, and to hold true to our mission statement, a diverse range of speakers from within the community and beyond are invited to school assemblies. In this way the school community develops an understanding of other people, their experiences and their beliefs.

A sense of shared wonder is achieved through a calendar of diverse seasonal festivals, recognising the importance of the major world religions, and of the natural world around us. An appreciation of the importance of each day is achieved through the celebration of history and of individuals of note.

Assemblies are also an opportunity to nurture a sense of mindfulness, empathy and an understanding and respect for each other and the environment. Assemblies include music, poems, stories, readings, reflecting, sharing, celebrating and news. Students play an active role in the planning and delivery of assemblies based on a wide range of themes from across the school curriculum and beyond.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of this policy is monitored both day-to-day and more strategically.

1. Ongoing monitoring:

- informal feedback from staff and students after each assembly
- informal feedback from parents, governors and other stakeholders about assemblies

2. Strategic:

- consideration of whether assembly time is meeting objectives, as part of overall governor oversight of curriculum

The governing body will review this policy every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness.