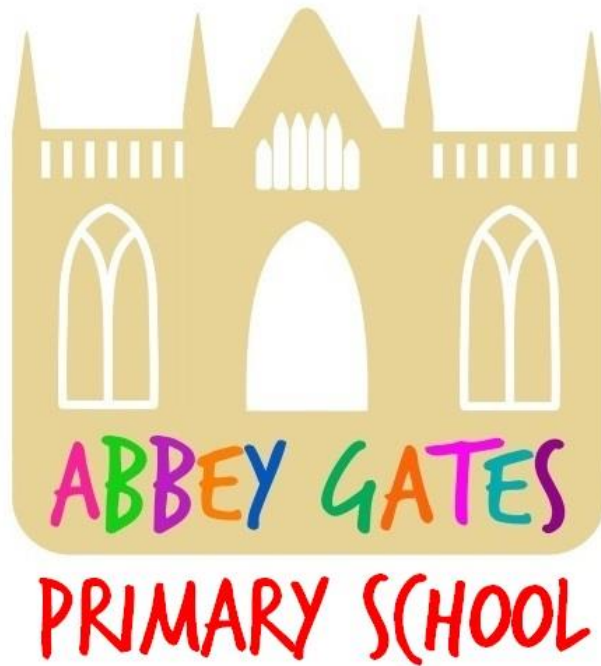


ABBEY GATES PRIMARY SCHOOL



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Last review: Autumn 2024

Next review: Autumn 2025

Philosophy

Abbey Gates Primary School is a Community school. Worship is therefore an important part of the school day as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a community. It is attended by all students, staff and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in.

At Abbey Gates Primary School we recognise that Collective Worship is an important opportunity to provide opportunities for our students Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

What is Collective Worship?

Collective worship is:

- An educational activity which is inclusive, involving pupils of any faith and none as a school is a community of people holding different beliefs
- Different from corporate worship, which is the shared experience of people belonging to a particular faith or denomination

Aims:

Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils and staff in the school to reflect together on:

- What is important in life
- What it means to be human - exploring a range of beliefs and ideas and how the behaviour of some people gives an example of the best a human can become
- Ideas of right and wrong - applying these to current personal, school, and external issues
- Contributes to the way in which people live and work together as communities, both in school and beyond
- Reflects ways in which people in different places and times have experienced, responded to, and expressed issues of belief and behaviour.

By providing good quality collective worship, a school can build an inclusive ethos around shared purposes and values, which contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of each child. In doing so it contributes to a thriving learning community and to the development of an awareness of British Values. Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

What is best practice?

Collective worship at Abbey Gates Primary School will offer opportunities for the whole school community to:

- celebrate together and share common values
- develop a reflective approach to living and thinking deeply
- foster a corporate identity and build community
- affirm the individual and the community
- deepen every individual's capacity for emotional responses
- awaken empathetic responses
- look beyond the material and the physical
- share experiences and possibilities of the transcendent

- challenge and question their own thinking and the views of others.

It may include:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Film/video
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

A note about Prayer:

There is no specification anywhere about what collective worship should include. Where prayer is used it is important to ensure that:

- There should be no expectation that children will pray.
- Words introducing any prayer-like activity are given as an invitation rather than an instruction.
- Any invitation to pray is made for the benefit of those pupils for whom it is appropriate.
- The use of silence gives space for prayer or reflection or both.
- The words need to be owned by the speaker and/or grounded in a religious tradition
- Everyone can be included in a personal reflection on the theme or story or words of a prayer.
- There is an expectation that everyone will be still and listen to the words a prayer, without expectation of participation.

Legal Status of Collective Worship

Collective worship has been a legal requirement in maintained schools since 1944 and for academies and free schools, is set out in their funding agreement. It can take place at any time of the school day, in any place within the school and with any age or school grouping of learners and schools are encouraged to take advantage of the flexibility this affords.

The law requires that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character" for most of the time. They must also be "appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils".

Teachers do have the right to withdraw from Collective Acts of Worship.

In inviting the school community to worship, we must be mindful of the varied backgrounds that the school community come from, and it is therefore never the practice of our schools to preach to or seek to convert. The faith background of all is to be always respected.

A note on the DfE circular 1/94

The DfE states that collective worship is to provide opportunities for pupils to:

- worship God
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- encourage participation and response
- promote community/shared values
- reinforce positive attitudes

A note on Assembly and Worship

Collective worship is not the same as an assembly, though can take place in the same gathering.

Collective worship may take place as part of an assembly or be held in class groups for a shorter period of time. Some examples of appropriate times for Collective Worship include during:

- Talking Points (RSHE) sessions
- Sticky Question sessions
- As part of Take Five Practices
- During RE lessons or other lessons as appropriate

The areas mentioned above provide opportunities to draw children together to take a moment to reflect (for example; when thinking about families - take a moment to be thankful for the Abbey Gates family etc).

Rights of Withdrawal

At Abbey Gates Primary School we seek to be an inclusive community however we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children for Collective Worship. This school expects that withdrawal will only be made following parental discussion with the head teacher/RE co-ordinator.

The school has a system of suitable supervision for students withdrawn from Acts of Collective Worship. However, no additional work is set or followed in this time.

All teachers, including the head teacher, have the right of withdrawal from the Act of Collective Worship, but the head teacher, should he or she wish exercise this right, maintains statutory accountability for Acts of Collective Worship in Abbey Gates Primary School.

This right of withdrawal doesn't extend to assemblies.