Collective Worship Policy

Statement of intent:

At Burley Oaks Primary School, we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Burley Oaks Primary School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

The main priority is to prevent an emergency from occurring in the setting; however, this is sometimes, unfortunately, out of the hands of the school. In an emergency, staff members at Burley Oaks Primary School will endeavour to take all reasonable actions in order to ensure the safety of pupils.

The procedures outlined in this policy aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils, staff members and visitors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- SMSC policy and planning
- PSHE policy and planning
- RE policy and planning
- Celebrating Difference policy
- Anti-Extremism and Radicalisation policy
- Promoting British Values document
- Inclusion policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Positive Behaviour policy

This policy was agreed in December 2024 and will be reviewed in December 2027

Chair of Governors Christine A Smith Date 10 December 2024

Headteacher Date 10 December 2024

Contents:

1. Legal requirements
2. Definition of Collective Worship
3. Aims of Collective Worship
4. Collective Worship and the curriculum
5. Organisation of Collective Worship
6. Good practice
7. Success criteria
8. Withdrawal

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement 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 the majority of the time. They must also be "appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils". (School Standards and Framework Act 1998). This policy also has due regard to guidance, including, but not limited to DfE (1994) 'Religious Education and Collective Worship'.

Therefore, at Burley Oaks Primary School, our collective worship reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. Not every act of collective worship must comply with this; just the majority so we can include material from other religions and non-religious world views.

We recognise that in asking our children to worship, we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times.

Definition of Collective Worship

For the purpose of this policy, **"collective worship"** is an act which is additional to, and separate from, ordinary school activities. Collective worship is a time when individuals come together, and reverence or veneration is paid to a divine being or power.

To **"take part"** in collective worship implies more than a passive attendance, such that it should have the ability to elicit responses from pupils even though they may not feel able to actively identify in the act of worship on a particular occasion.

Aims of Collective Worship

Collective worship aims to:

- Enable pupils to consider spiritual and moral issues, as well as explore their own beliefs.
- Encourage participation and response via active involvement or through listening and participating in the worship offered.
- Provide pupils with the opportunity to plan, lead or contribute to discussions on key themes and topics, e.g. morality.
- Provide a peaceful environment to enable stillness, prayer and reflection.
- Help pupils to develop an awareness of their community and the spirit of helping others.
- Develop a spirit of community and an understanding of individuals with other beliefs.
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each individual's life stance, whether religious or not.
- Promote a common ethos and shared values.
- Reinforce positive attitudes.

Collective Worship and the Curriculum

Collective worship time is distinct from curriculum time given to any subject, including religious education. However, at Burley Oaks, we aim to enable collective worship and aspects of children's classroom learning to be mutually supportive. Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in line with school policy. To achieve this, it addresses a wide variety of themes and topics, uses diverse stimuli and resources and provides pupils with opportunities to 'respond' at their own level.

Organisation of Collective Worship

The arrangements for collective worship at Burley Oaks comply with the legal requirements of the Education Reform Act as set out in the Guide to the Law. The school will implement collective worship in line with advice given by the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).
Every pupil will participate in the act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn.

A weekly theme for the assemblies is determined in advance for the term by the Head/Deputy Head teacher. The Deputy Head teacher draws up an assembly rota at the beginning of each term. This details the theme for each week, the pattern of assemblies for each week and the person responsible for conducting each assembly. The rota is circulated to all parties concerned. This rota reflects the behaviours we aim to develop within our children as outlined in our school behavior policy and many of the SMSC, Safeguarding and wider world themes explored through our curriculum. The content of all acts of collective worship will be considered to ensure suitability and relevance to pupils of all ages and backgrounds.

The children take part in whole school collective worship on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Key Stage singing assemblies take place on Tuesday; singing is an integral and highly valued part of our collective worship. Our Thursday assemblies are held in classes to facilitate deeper discussions around a stimulus from the Picture News resource packs. The Friday assembly is a 'Celebration Assembly', where the children's successes and achievements are celebrated, at individual, group, class and whole school level. Over the course of the year, each class has the opportunity to share their learning with the rest of the school in a Friday assembly, to which parents are also invited.

Special events are celebrated (harvest, Easter, Christmas) with additional collective worships, to which parents and other members of the community are invited. In addition to the staff of the school, local clergy are involved in conducting assemblies as possible and appropriate. Visiting speakers, including members of the local community, representatives of other faiths and local and national charities are welcomed into assemblies.

Collective Worship is distinct from assembly. We often take the opportunity of pupils gathered together to share announcements and notices. Using a variety of strategies e.g. music, silence etc. we indicate clearly to all present when worship begins and ends. Where prayer is included in our acts of worship, it is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to 'God' rather than Jesus, as this is inclusive of the beliefs of our non-Christian religious pupils. We hope that pupils who prefer not to pray will use these moments to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings.

Good Practice

Acts of collective worship at Burley Oaks:

- are conducted within an educational context
- allow an opportunity to celebrate success
- recognise the wide variety of backgrounds from which pupils come
- are inclusive and allow every child, irrespective of religious beliefs, to be fully involved in a meaningful manner
- encourage the active participation of pupils and other members of the school community
- are part of a curriculum programme which has been appropriately planned
- employ a rich variety of methods of delivery, media, format and participation
- include visiting speakers and groups from the local and broader community.

We use a variety of styles, active and interactive methods and a range of resources in our acts of collective worship. Leaders make decisions about these elements according to what is most appropriate to the content, the ages, aptitudes and the backgrounds of the pupils

Assemblies reflect and refer to both the traditions and liturgical calendar of the Christian Churches (e.g. Christmas, Easter), and the religious traditions and calendars of all other faiths that are represented in the school and the wider community (e.g. Eid, Chinese New Year).

Collective worship will address key themes such as:

- Creation.
- Fall.
- Salvation.
- Justification.
- Redemption.
- Sanctification.
- Faith, hope and love.

Success Criteria

At Burley oaks, we aim to promote rich and meaningful experiences of collective worship that are appropriate to pupils' needs, ages and interests by:

- Presenting displays that promote and enhance spiritual ideas and thoughts.
- Encouraging pupils to reflect and contemplate on their thoughts, feelings and beliefs.
- Using artefacts, secular stories, resources, music, art, drama and guest speakers to engage pupils' interest.

- Involving pupils in different experiences of worship, e.g. silence, prayer, rituals and shared or written prayers.

Withdrawal

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community, whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

- Parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship and are not required to provide a reason for doing so.
- Parents will be encouraged to discuss their decision with the headteacher following a request of withdrawal in terms of:
- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the pupil taking part in.
- The practical implications of their withdrawal.
- Whether the parent will require notice in advance of such worship, and if so, what period of notice is preferred.

Alternative provision will be arranged for pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship and may involve religious worship relevant to their particular faith or denomination provided that:

- The effect of the alternative provision would not replace the denominational collective worship with that of the statutory, non-denominational worship.
- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school.

The alternative provision will be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum.