Roselyn House School and The RHISE Service

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

AND GUIDANCE

**MISSION STATEMENT**

**Moving forwards together to a positive future**

**Aspects of this policy are adopted through the PSHEE, SMSC and CCC Curriculum Policy.**

This policy outlines The value and purpose of collective worship in the life of ROSELYN HOUSE SCHOOL and gives practical guidance to those leading

**The nature and purpose of collective worship**

**Why do we have collective worship in school?**

It is, of course, a legal requirement but we believe that its value extends so much further.

Collective worship can both reinforce and contribute to the ethos of the school, in addition to offering a unique occasion in the school day to pause and explore life beyond the prescribed curriculum and offer a time of reflection and calm for our young people in order to provide a positive setting through which to begin the school day.

It encourages members of the whole school community, teachers, learning support mentors and learners together, to challenge assumptions and reflect upon issues which transcend normal day to day experiences, thus broadening understanding and contributing to our search for knowledge and meaning of who we are. By enabling students to acknowledge the value of diversity in terms of race, gender, culture and differing abilities, it fosters inclusion and breeds tolerance.

It provides an opportunity for the whole school to be brought together as a community and develop respect for others.

**Government guidance circular 1/94 states:**

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.

At Roselyn House School and The RHISE Service we have themed based collective worship. These themes are planned in advance and represent areas of life which are relevant to the young people or based around a particular celebration event. They have spiritual, moral, social and cultural reference. Often these are organised by senior members of staff within the school, but can involve any staff and often involve group or individual participation from the students. Students are encouraged to join in where appropriate. There is also a system of reward for participation. This encourages students to follow the school’s behaviour policy, to develop in confidence and to be mindful of others. There are often challenges for students in order to gain additional reward. Friday afternoon is a celebration of student’s achievement through the week and certificates are given out for students to take home. The Headteacher’s Award is given for Learning Achievement throughout the week and work displayed on the Headteacher’s Board.

**Whose responsibility is it?**

At Roselyn House School and The RHISE Service the arrangements for collective worship are the responsibility of the Headteacher and co-ordinated by the Deputy Headteacher, Mr Birkenhead.

Withdrawals

In accordance with legal requirements, Parents/ Carers have the right to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship on religious grounds. Parents/ Carers should make their wishes known to the Headteacher who will ensure that any students who are withdrawn are appropriately supervised while the act of collective worship takes place. Students can be withdrawn wholly or partly from acts of collective worship only by parents/ carers. Staff at the school cannot withdraw students from acts of collective worship for other activities. However, if their behaviour is deemed as inappropriate then they will be asked to leave and supervised elsewhere by a member of staff.

**Determinations**

Collective worship at Roselyn House School and The RHISE Service is aimed to be appropriate to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the students within our school. They are determined to be fun, informative and thought provoking.

**When is it assembly and when is it collective worship?**

Assemblies can incorporate collective worship, but there is a distinction between the two. A report on sporting achievements may come under ‘assembly’ but using the students’ sporting achievements to explore and reflect on human potential, determination, loyalty, courage could be the stimulus for a ‘worshipful response’ and therefore could constitute collective worship.

There are ‘special’ end of term assemblies to celebrate achievement and in addition following Sports Day in the Summer Term, where an engraved trophy is presented to the overall winner. There is also a Literacy trophy at the end of the year for the student has made the most progress.

School notices are often delivered at a brief grouping after lunch.

What makes a good act of collective worship?

At Roselyn House School/ The RHISE Service we believe:

* When it involves staff and students alike
* When everyone feels included and is engaged
* When there is strong eye contact between the person leading the worship and the audience
* When it is relevant, useful or informative to our students
* When it is humorous
* When it is thought provoking
* When it asks you to question/ think about moral values
* When it promotes positives
* When it changes prejudice
* When students are rewarded for participation
* When students are realising the ‘theme of the week’
* When the act itself extends into discussion throughout the school day/ week.

**What OFSTED has to say . . .**

Characteristics of the best acts of worship included:

* a good variety of stimuli including drama, music, literature, artefacts and pictures, which captured and sustained the attention of students of all ages;
* relevant content which promoted the spiritual growth and development of the students;
* questioning which elicited thoughtful and extended responses;
* opportunities for quiet reflection as well as prayer;
* and the involvement of the students in the planning and presentation of worship.”

**At Roselyn House School/ The RHISE Service we structure our acts of worship where:**

* We meet together in a variety of groupings, including form groups and class groups.
* We have a ‘theme’ which provides a clear focus on important issues or concepts such as morals, community, forgiveness, sharing, peace etc.
* We attempt to connect with our students through themes and approaches.
* We offer time for reflection at the end of the act of worship which helps provide a calm atmosphere before students are dismissed to lessons.
* We encourage students to talk about the ‘theme’ throughout the day/ week usually at break times so as not to distract from lessons or if it can be incorporated into Spiritual, Moral and Social planning of lessons then this is appropriate.
* We encourage students to guess the ‘theme’ and reward with additional points.
* We always applaud the person who delivers the act of worship and thank them after.
* We take part in focus days/ weeks/ month.

**Our guidelines for acts of worship are:**

* **Plenty of participation**… both active and passive, by students and adults. This is a time for building up the sense of community and promoting the ethos of a school. It is clearly important therefore, that staff as well as students are in attendance.
* **Wide variety of approaches**... dramatic, readings, pictures, photographs, stories, music, dance, silence, reflections, songs, prayers, mime, visual images and artefacts that could used as a focus for worship.
* **Variety of leaders**… every member of staff is invited to contribute to the theme of their choice and on occasions, usually within ‘focus weeks’ we include visitors from outside the school – local people from faith and community groups, representatives of charitable activities, involved agencies with the school, representatives from minority groups and parents/ carers.
* **Faith***… we* include various *‘*faith’ stories, teachings and perspectives and we mark special days and seasons within religious calendars.
* **Themes** ... which are relevant to the everyday lives of our students which are pre planned.

Some appropriate themes suitable for development over a week or longer

Achievement

Adventure

Aggression and hate

Aims and ambitions

All Saints

Ambitions

A time for everyone

Autumn

Barriers

Beauty

Beginnings

Big and small

Blindness & sight

Books

Bravery

Bridges

British Values

Building relationships

Care and caring

Challenge

Change

Charity

Children

Choice/Choices

Christmas

Citizenship

Communication

Communion

Compassion

Conservation

Courage

Creation

Culture

Day and night

Democracy and Government

Desert Island Discs

Differences

Disability

Discipleship

Discovery

Diversity

Dreams

Easter

Education and learning

Education and life

Enjoyment

Epiphany

Experience

Exploring the future

Exploring the past

Faith

Fame

Fantasy

Films I have seen

Finding your way

Food for thought

Forgiveness

Freedom and responsibility

Freedom and slavery

Friends/

Friendships

Gifts

Giving up and going on

Global issues

God and gods

God’s world

Good and evil

Good news

Green issues

Growing

Guiding light

Guilt and suffering

Handicaps

Happiness is…

Hardship

Harvest

Haves and Have-nots

Health

Helping Hands

Heroes and heroines

Hobbies

Holidays and travel

Homes and families

Homelessness

Hope and despair

Human vices

Human virtues

Humility

Humour

I believe…

Illusion and reality

Imagination

Influences and

indoctrination

Invitations

Jesus

Journeys

Joy and happiness

Joy and sorrow

Justice and fair play

Just thinking about it

Key people

Language

Laws and rules

Leaders and leadership

Learning

Leisure

Lent

LGBT issues

Life and death

Life’s challenge

Life’s ups and downs

Light

Listen

Living and loving

Living with tomorrow

Love and hate

Memories and reflections

Messages and messengers

Method and madness

Miracles

Mothering Sunday

My favourite music

My favourite poem

Myself and others

Neighbours

New life

News

New school year

New year resolutions

Obedience

Obstacles

Old age

Old and new

One world

Opportunity/ies

Optimism and hope

Parables

Parents and children

Passover

Past and future

Peace (and tranquillity)

Personal qualities

People I have met

Pilgrimage

Places of worship

Planet earth

Poetry

Power and spirit

Praise

Prayer and meditation

Prejudice

Preparations

Pride

Proverbs and sayings

Race

Rebirth

Red letter days

Relationships

Responsibilities

Reward and punishment

Rhyme and reason

Riches

Rights and responsibilities

Roots

Sacrifice

Saving life

School and community

School and opportunity

School and tradition

Science

Seeing the light

Serving and service

Signs and symbols

Sound of silence

Special books

Special interests

Special people

Special places

Stepping stones and stumbling blocks

Stories from the lives of great leaders

Stories from the New Testament.

Stories from the Old Testament

Strain and stress

Strength and weakness

Success and failure

Taking risks

Talk, talk, talk

Thanks

Thanksgiving

The apostles

The Arts

The future

The good things in life

The message

The natural world

The outsider

The still, small voice

The unexpected

The world about us

Things to avoid

Treasures

Turning points

Us and them

Victory and defeat

Views of education

Visits and visitors

Voices

Voices from the past

War and peace

Wealth and poverty

Wealth, money and riches

What God doesn’t

tolerate

What’s it worth?

Why are we here?

Windows

Wisdom

Wise and foolish

Witness

Wonder and awe

Words, words, words

Work and play

Worship

Youth

**Breaking down a Theme**

One theme can deliver a variety of foci for collective worship. It is important not to exhaust a theme, but equally important not to overlook the opportunities it may offer. The easiest way to ‘break down’ a theme is to brainstorm it with colleagues, selecting those aspects most suitable for promoting school issues and concerns, whilst taking account of the ages, ability and aptitudes of the students.

For example a brainstorm on the theme of ‘Love’ might include:

* Sacrificial love
* Love of neighbour
* Agape
* Erotic love
* All types of family relationships
* Relationships which include trans people
* Love of possessions
* Hedonism
* Love of God
* Unconditional Love
* Love of Self
* Same sex relationships

Some aspects on this list may not be considered appropriate but others may form the basis of a week’s collective worship. Future planning may therefore use the same theme again but explore a different aspect. Materials from religious and non-religious sources may be used to support the theme.

**Strategies for collective worship**

Any strategies used in a classroom situation can be applied in an assembly/ acts of worship. It is very important to vary the strategies that we use so that our students do not become bored with the same diet and disengage. Using a variety of strategies enriches the stimulus material and so makes the opportunity for response (perhaps worshipful) more likely.

The following is not an exhaustive list of possible strategies, but it may encourage leaders to try something new. As in a lesson, a particular strategy should only be used if it actually enables students to reach the intended outcome.

**Artefacts**

There are rules of respect and sensitivity to observe when using artefacts, but they are excellent windows into a faith. Use them as you would in the classroom – to stimulate interest, to provoke questions, to illustrate an aspect of faith, to provide a sensory experience. An artefact may provide a focus for worship but they should not be used only as a ‘display item’ without students understanding what it is and its significance.

**Bible / Sacred Text**

Looking at the Bible or other sacred text, exploring its significance to believers, may be the focus for acts of worship or assembly. At times, it will be useful to read directly from the text, at others it may be appropriate to retell a story in your own words. It is useful to explore concepts and issues found in the Bible and other sacred text which have some relevance, relationship or impact on students’ lives today.

**Buzz Groups / Pairs**

Allowing students to talk to each other in assembly/ collective worship gives every student the opportunity to participate. This may require patience if you have never tried it before, but once the skills and the process have been learned and practised, it is a very effective strategy. Give students only 2–3 minutes to talk about a given subject (favourite things, why they like their best friend, who they turn to in times of trouble etc.) Feedback will include obvious answers which you can supplement. Their experiences provide the bridge to their understanding of the concept you are exploring.

**Current News**

As you read the newspapers cut out and preserve ‘gems’ for the future. If you are addressing a current issue use a video clip (BBC’s Newsround) or newspaper cutting. Remember:

1. you should select a piece that can be easily read, understood, talked about.
2. you will need time to think it through
3. ask yourself: ‘Why do I want to share this with my students?’ - your aim
4. be aware that your selection may or may not directly affect your students
5. introduce the article with a general chat about what is happening
6. focus on the article read / show / talk about
7. encourage reflection by asking for their impressions. For example: What would be their response in a similar situation? What do they think will / should happen next? Who else should be involved? Use question and answer technique or as you speak, write up questions on OHT, for the students to discuss in pairs.
8. if you have given yourself enough time, you may be able to add another dimension by using a reading/ quote/ religious teaching to further explore or reflect on the issue.

**Discussion Groups / Pairs**

Give students 3–5 minutes and visit each group. They can discuss issues such as the world we live in, what matters to me, forgiveness means... etc. The discussion itself and/or the points raised may constitute a worship/ ‘reflection time’.

**Everyday Objects**

Using ordinary everyday objects as visual aids can be particularly effective and it is surprising just how many opportunities there are using this particular strategy. The next time you have an assembly planning meeting with other members of staff, bring along 10 items you’ve picked up around the home or classroom. Consider how you would use each item separately in different acts of worship and see what you come up with. Here are three examples and a few objects for you to think about:

1. a bruised apple doesn’t mean it is all bad (good and bad in everyone)
2. a tube of Smarties contains lots of different coloured shells, same chocolate (one world, lots of different people essentially the same)
3. lots of different sizes and shaped candles, light them and the flame is the same (we may look different but our spirit is the same)
4. safety pin
5. infant’s dummy (soother).
6. can of drink
7. soap
8. orange
9. balloon
10. party poppers

**Gifts and Talents**

A visitor, a member of staff or a student talks or is interviewed about their outstanding talent. This is not an occasion to explore how we use talents, but an opportunity to recognise positive aspects of life and humanity. Qualities such as courage, determination, perseverance, or things that are good, honourable, true, noble, loving, right, pure, just, or things which bring joy, happiness, contentment and hope – all deserve acknowledgement and praise.

**Guided Imagery**

‘Stilling’ and ‘Relaxation’ are the skills which need building to have success with this strategy. It is extremely effective and powerful, but there are ground rules and if you have never used this strategy with a class/group before you need to be careful and do not expect too much. It can be done in whole school assembly but students need to have developed the necessary skills for this is a classroom situation first.

**Improvisation**

Most students will be happy to volunteer at primary level, but this tends to lose its appeal with some students once they enter secondary school. A stock of costumes, hats, masks etc. for them to wear whilst the ‘story’ is told does enhance the activity. Students will take their ‘cue’ from your structured narrative.

**Music**

This in not only useful for creating atmosphere when students are entering or leaving the assembly hall or room. It can be used to great effect to explore concepts and themes. As music is very important to youth culture there is a danger that your audience may not consider your choice of music as contemporary. It is a good idea to involve the students in music choices and presentation.

**Overhead Projector**

This is an extremely valuable piece of equipment to have in the assembly hall or classroom. It can be used to display the words of hymns or songs to be sung. It does however present many more opportunities. The smallest illustration in a book or picture postcard can become visible to all. You can write up answers to questions or comments that the students have made; use it for shadow puppetry, creating on the spot poems or prayers; use it to project an image which acts as a focus throughout the assembly. Some commercial resources are now featuring OHTs in their packs or illustrations which could be photocopies onto transparencies.

**Posters**

In small groups, posters are fine. For larger groups it is worth having a poster put onto an OHT though you must be careful with copyright. Use as you would in a classroom – including: What does the image say to you? What did the artist intend? What is being said? Why is this image important and to whom? Encourage students to consider, reflect on and think about the issues raised through the poster.

**Poetry and Prayer**

Use either children’s own prayers or poems or some of the good examples available. Many poems are not only humorous but address issues of concern for today.

**Power Point**

Power point presentations can offer a less threatening ‘introduction’ to leading assemblies as you need to rely less on a ‘live’ presentation. Sequences of slides, together with reflective music, with an occasional word screened to encourage reflective thought can be enriching.

**Students as leaders**

Work with students as part of a presentation team, or as their director, or simply as their facilitator. Given ownership of what they are going to talk about/ present, students will often respond very positively. They may feel more confident in front of their class or own year group rather than the whole school.

**Puppets**

Can be as elaborate or as simple as you choose to make them, including using people, paper bags and shadow puppets.

**Reflection Diary**

Each student keeps a diary and writes their thoughts in it, based on a focus for reflection. This is private, only to be shared with the teacher, and therefore great care needs to be taken with confidentiality and security.

**Story**

Use a good story to symbolise or illustrate an issue or a point, (a modern parable) for example, to explore the nature of God. Stories can be told in so many ways and it is worth trying out a few methods – using role play, puppets, masks, straight reading from a book, or dramatic retelling using your own words. If you think some key words might not be understood – explain them before you begin the story.

**Stunt**

These should not be overdone or the element of surprise will be lost. Set something up that comes as a complete surprise. You may consider following this up with a simple reflection rather than an elongated elucidation. For example: cutting off the someone’s tie to illustrate ‘Is seeing believing?’ or a member of staff “heckles” over something – dealing with conflict.

**Tableau**

Position students in a ‘frozen’ position to illustrate a scene from a story or a particular situation. If you wish characters can ‘unfreeze’ to tell you who they are, what it happening to them, where they are and how they are feeling.

**Toys**

Use children’s toys to help illustrate a story or to explore a particular concept. These are particularly useful for younger children but baby toys may be equally appropriate props in the secondary school, given the right circumstances. Students easily relate to toys and they are good aids for understanding. For example, a jig-saw with a piece missing – life is not complete for some people without their religious life; teddy bears – special friends you can tell anything to, like prayer to God.

**Visitors**

As with any visitor, clear guidance should be given as to what is expected of them. They need to know what support they can expect from the school too, and what the constraints are. If you ask a visitor to lead one assembly in a series of five on the same theme, ensure that they know what else is being done so that they do not duplicate. Do not overdo the charity requests for fund-raising. Look at breaking down prejudice by representing a protected characteristic or minority group.

**Video**

Depending on your theme, select any video which will illustrate your point. Use ‘sensory deprivation’ (listen to the dialogue with covered screen or watch the scene without the sound) to focus on a particular aspect. Or select a clip which you can talk about / discuss. For example, there are numerous scenes in ‘Toy Story’ which cover many dimensions for SMSC development.

# Creating the right atmosphere and attitude

Planning obviously plays an essential role in providing positive collective worship experiences but to ensure quality we must create the ‘right atmosphere’ and the ‘right attitude’. The right atmosphere will aid students’ ‘feel good’ factor and with a positive attitude towards assembly and collective worship students are more likely to respond in a positive way.

**Reviewed: June 2023**