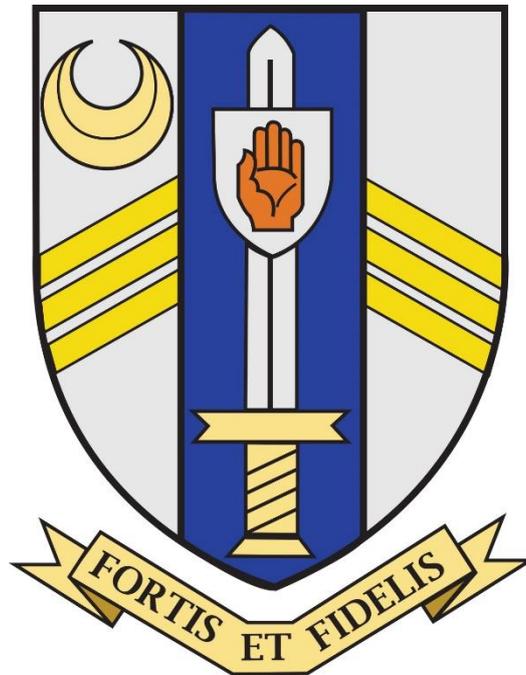


Sir John Nelthorpe School



Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

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Consultations / Training	Teaching staff / Governors

Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

Member of staff responsible: deputy headteacher

PRINCIPLES:

Sir John Nelthorpe School believes that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school week for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age students 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 students”.

Families who send their children to this school are in the main ‘nominally’ Christian and in addition, there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. 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.

AIMS:

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in every day situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person’s life stance, whether it be religious or not

PRACTICE:

At Sir John Nelthorpe School we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. There are assemblies each week for students in the school based on a rota. In addition form tutors lead tutor groups through “Thought of the week” and reflections during tutor time.

The headteacher or other senior staff/–Learning Coordinators lead the year group assembly each week. Students are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership at certain times of the year. Assemblies are sometimes discussed at

School Council meetings and they are invited to submit ideas and get other children involved.

The school year has been divided into weekly themes, which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, PSHCE themes and aspects taken from the school calendar. Staff leading assemblies can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body.
- The Assistant Head (Learning) is responsible for planning the calendar of themes and “Thought for the Day” activities on a termly basis. This is discussed by the Senior Leadership Group and the Guidance team which also provides an opportunity for Learning Coordinators to give feedback from Year Teams about assemblies.
- All Form Tutors follow the PSHCE programme in tutor time.
- All Teaching Staff are required to attend assemblies unless they have formally withdrawn from them by putting their request in writing and meeting with the headteacher.
- Parents of a student have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the headteacher.
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006 makes provision for students in post-16 education to exercise the right to withdraw themselves from the daily act of collective worship, but not from any Y12/13 assembly.
- The deputy headteacher is responsible for ensuring that parents are reminded on an annual basis of the content of this policy via the school website.

DISSEMINATION:

This policy is shared with all staff on the shared network drive. Parents are advised of the policy on an annual basis via the school website.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The School Development and Standards Committee review this policy on an annual basis.

Compliance with PSHCE is monitored by Learning Coordinators on a termly basis and by SLT learning walks as per Monitoring and QA cycle.

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON PLANNING AND CONDUCTING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

In planning our assemblies, we choose from a range of methods, including:

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

SONG/MUSIC

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. Music from a variety of cultures and types is used on occasions. Music should be selected carefully to match the theme.

PRAYER/REFLECTION

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. We feel that, whilst prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts, students should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We do not specifically say "Let us pray..." but may use various forms of introduction e.g., 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian/Hindu/Muslim prayer/poem/reading...' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some students to respond in a personal way if they so wish.