



**Democratic and Member Support**

Chief Executive's Department  
Plymouth City Council  
Ballard House  
Plymouth PL1 3BJ

Please ask for Asif Siddique  
T 01752 305155  
E [sacre@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:sacre@plymouth.gov.uk)  
[www.plymouth.gov.uk/democracy](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/democracy)  
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## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Monday 5 December 2022  
1.00 pm  
Warspite Room, Council House

**Members:**

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, Acting Chair

Cllr Tina Tuohy, Cllr Sally Cresswell, Cllr Jonathan Drear, Cllr John Mahony, Cllr Chip Tofan

Katie Freeman, Dr Judith Beckman, Lesley Clark, Ben Kerr, Nic Gibson, Dr Catherine Bowness, Ed Pawson, Emma Butler, Alex Parks, Ms Gwen Hughes, AnnMarie AllChurch, Claire Wills, Claire Linden, Sara Wells, Professor David Salter, Father David Bailey (observer), Michael House, Jim Barnicott (observer), Asif Siddique, Jason Pincombe.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf. For further information on webcasting, attending Council meetings and how to engage in the democratic process please follow this link <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/councillors-committees-and-meetings>

**Tracey Lee**

Chief Executive

## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

### **PART I**

#### **Agenda**

**1. Apologies - Chair (Cllr Mary Aspinall)**

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by SACRE Members.

**2. Welcome to New Members - Chair (Cllr Mary Aspinall)**

The Chair will welcome new members to the forum.

**3. Declarations of Interest - All**

Members will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.

**4. Previous Minutes - Chair (Cllr Mary Aspinall) (Pages 1 - 6)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27/06/22.

**5. Chair's Urgent Business - Chair (Cllr Mary Aspinall)**

To receive reports on business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

**6. LA Officer to SACRE Update - Michael House (Pages 7 - 22)**

The LA Officer will update the group regarding previous actions, SACRE related budgets and LA developments.

**7. Ofsted Inspection Updates - Michael House**

The LA Officer will review any Ofsted Inspections that have taken place since the previous SACRE Meeting.

**8. LTLRE and RE Hub Update- Katie Freeman**

The Hub Lead will update the group regarding LTLRE and RE HUB developments.

**9. Holocaust Memorial Day Update- Lesley Clark**

The group will receive and update and discuss supporting activity.

**10. Plymouth Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity - Sara Wells / Claire Linden**

The group will receive an update on recent PCFCD developments.

**11. Members Updates - All**

Members are invited to update the group regarding relevant developments and activity.

**12. Any Other Business - Chair (Cllr Mary Aspinall)**

Any other items to be discussed.

**13. Date and venue of next meeting - Asif Siddique**

The next SACRE meeting will take place at the Plymouth Council House (Warspite Room + Hybrid) at 13:00, date to be confirmed.

**14. Exempt Business**

To consider passing a resolution under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended Freedom of Information Act 2000.

(Members of the public to note that, if agreed, you will be asked to leave the meeting).

**PART II (PRIVATE MEETING)**

**15. RE Advisor role:**

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## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**Monday 27 June 2022**

### **PRESENT:**

Katie Freeman, in the Chair  
Councillor Mrs Mary Aspinall, Vice Chair  
Cllr Jonathan Drean, Cllr Tina Touhy, Cllr Sally Cresswell, Cllr Chip Tofan

Co-opted Representatives: Dr Judith Beckman, Claire Linden, Sara Wells, Alex Parks, Claire Wills, Nic Gibson, Dr Catherine Bowness, Dr David Salter.

Apologies for absence: Councillor John Mahony, Ed Pawson, Ben Hughes, AnnMarie Allchurch, Gwen Hughes, Emma Butler, Lesley Clark.

Also in attendance: Michael House (Education Advisor), Hannah Whiting (Democratic and Member Support Officer), Jason Pincombe (Democratic and Member Support Officer), Asif Siddique (Democratic and Member Support Officer).

The meeting started at 1.00pm and finished at 3.40pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

### **Declarations of interest**

None

### **Minutes from the last meeting**

Minutes agreed from the last meeting on 7 March 2022 by Cllr Jonathan Drean and seconded by Nic Gibson with an amendment to the last meeting to reflect that apologies were sent by Lesley Clark.

### **Chairs Urgent Business**

The Chair discussed the SACRE budget and expressed concerns over the lack of information around financial reporting and absence of single point of contact. This makes budget, planning and decision making process difficult and long winded. It is also difficult to access funds if there is a lack of knowledge around the amount of the funds. The Chair believed that some of the funding could be used in salaries, but Michael House did explain that this is not the case.

Katie Freeman and Cllr Aspinall explained that Holocaust Memorial Day is a really good example of where funding could be used and yet SACRE does not appear to be in a position where they can contribute. They added that the available funding is not

an extra ordinary amount and it will be very useful to know what the total budget amount is and how this will be spent.

Michael House explained that some financial information was provided previously on request, but that in order to fund activities for SACRE, there needs to be an action plan, a development plan and some longer term planning for the budget. Some of it is available to enable members to go to conferences and on training courses, and very little has been spent in the past couple of years.

The Chair explained that she did not feel an action plan was needed as it is not something other LA's are doing, and that it is the role of SACRE to advise PCC. In addition, an action plan would make more work for people who are already stretched.

Cllr Drean asked Michael House to provide a financial report to be presented at the next meeting for members and as an item on the agenda for discussion.

With regards to constitution the Chair explained that she has been involved with SACRE for many years and there are more members now than ever have been, but it is important that all groups are well represented and have an active role in SACRE meetings.

Michael House added that PCC can change the constitution but will need to consult with SACRE first with a sub-group, but this is something a new advisor might be able to push forward. Some of the descriptions of the groups might need changing, particularly Group C.

### **Interim Annual Report/Discussion regarding targets for the SACRE Annual Report**

Michael House explained that this has now been superseded by the Annual Report and gave a brief overview of the report so far. Work is nearly complete for the 2021/22 Report and it will be sent to the Chair and Deputy Chair for approval and then sent out to SACRE members, Schools, DFE and NASACRE.

Michael House explained further that Ofsted had identified some challenges in the quality of RE across the city focusing on insufficient time or challenges to the curriculum, what is of best interest of students in the school, what it means to be scholarly, lack of clarity around religion and non-religion, teaching that does not support students to remember and professional subject knowledge are some of the reasons why schools are not meeting requirements. No further Ofsted inspections that have specifically commented on RE.

With regards to the RE and exams, Michael House added that the usual details are not available because of COVID19, but he has sent survey round to schools and is collating responses.

Chair explained that the agreed syllabus is in line with what the research review suggests. Chair has been working with schools to educate them on this. There is work going on to support teachers.

Cllr Sally Cresswell asked for clarification for the reasons behind the statement that only 50% of schools said active worship takes place each day and Michael House explained that COVID19 did impact this, but it is a recent survey with results coming in over the past 2 months, so it is of concern. He added that not all schools had responded to the survey, so the results might not provide an accurate picture, but this was still of concern. Chair added that collective worship is different to RE and is concerned about including the data regarding 50% if not all schools had replied and suggested that it could be put in as a worded sentence qualitatively instead.

### **Collective Worship – Launching Time to Breathe**

Over lockdown guidance was produced with Devon and Torbay on Collective Worship for a support for all schools but particularly Community Schools and it was sent via email.

Cllr Cresswell asked if there were examples of good practice schools which could be shared and Chair explained that that already appears in the document.

### **Update on complaint made to the DFE**

Ed Pawson provided an update via a pre-recorded video link and explained the chain of events to the group and that advice had been taken to make a complaint to the DFE about an Academy Trust with schools in Devon, Plymouth and Cornwall, who is looking to reduce the time for RE on their timetables. No further update at this time, but will keep SACRE updated.

### **National Updates – The Draft Worldviews Handbook**

Ed Pawson gave an update via a pre-recorded video message as he was unable to attend the meeting. He explained that the author of the Worldviews Handbook was awarded a grant to create a high quality syllabus for the next generation. Groups were created to contribute to this, one of which Ed Pawson is a member of. Further updates to come in future meetings.

Claire Wills asked if there would be an adapted version of the syllabus for SEN teaching and Chair explained that there is a group of teachers working on this and that she would connect them.

### **LTLRE and RE Hub Updates**

Chair will send info to SACRE for the Conference as soon as possible.

Cllr Aspinall asked if Council meetings could be considered when planning this as 2022's Annual Conference was on the same day at Full Council.

The Hub is still very well attended and will be moving to half of meetings being face to face and half as virtual meetings.

### **Update on non-compliance case in the city**

Michael House explained that Plymouth High School for Girls is not a maintained school and has joined the Thinking Schools Academy Trust (of which Plympton Academy is also a member). A meeting has taken place with a member of staff at the school, highlighting the barriers at the school for them being compliant. There not enough hours allocated within the timetable.

Chair expressed concern that over time the situation has become worse and this should be escalated further and SACRE would write to the trust. Chair will seek advice from colleague who has supported with another recent complaint for guidance.

### **HMD updates**

Cathy Bowness explained that the theme for the next Holocaust Memorial Day 2023 would be “Ordinary People”, and explained that this theme does bring challenges in that it is quite wide reaching.

Furthermore, in some cases of concentration camps being liberated, it was Russian Soldiers, which could be extremely sensitive with the war in Ukraine at the moment. It will be a challenge to explain to children why ‘ordinary people’ can carry out such acts.

There has been a website launched showing extraordinary ordinary objects, which is a great resource. Cathy Bowness agreed to send to Hannah Whiting to share with SACRE members.

Cathy Bowness asked if SACRE members could help support and promote the day and its theme and that Plymouth is an ordinary city for ordinary people; it is a diverse city.

Chair spoke on the possibility of working with students around the city on a poetry book, and Lesley Clark highlighted the need to provide teachers on additional guidance for such an activity with the sad and sensitive events that have happened in Plymouth over the past year.

Cllr Cresswell explained that on the last Holocaust Memorial Day, it seemed no schools were in attendance and asked if this was due to COVID19 or if there were other reasons for it, as it is a really important, positive and valuable learning experience for primary school children.

The Chair explained that due to COVID19 restrictions schools struggled to come along to the day but did learn about it in school. With poetry planned for the next Holocaust Memorial Day, it is hoped Primary Schools will be more involved.

### **RE and CW Survey**

Michael House explained that only 10% of schools responded has responded to date (70% Primary, 30% Secondary). As issue is that with most schools being Academies, they do respond less to surveys coming from the Council. It is a snapshot.



Michael explained that 50% explained that they used the Plymouth Agreed Syllabus, 20% Diocese 'Come & See', 20% Own, 10% No Syllabus. And that in Primary schools there is an average 1 hour per week, but in religious schools and schools with a religious character it is higher. In Secondary Schools, the picture is more varied and there is not as much curriculum time. He added that the survey is prefaced by explaining that the identity of the schools will be protected, this is to aim get honest answers and 50% said they did not provide Collective Worship. He added that the healthy child quality mark will provide an ongoing litmus test for what is happening in the city, the Schools get surveyed in many ways.

Cllr Mary Aspinall asked if the schools that had not responded could be chased, perhaps through their trusts or governors. Michael agreed to gently push for a response and can point out that it is within the funding agreement for Academies to provide collective worship and religious education, which he would try to include in all correspondence with schools.

Chair explained that there is an issue with the terms used explaining that in some community schools assemblies are collective worship, so it could be possible that some replies are not accurate due to terms used. Chair suggested that in the future SACRE could look at the survey and have input and perhaps use Survey Monkey and have a test group in future.

Cllr Mary Aspinall suggested that following the survey and other schools not being fully compliant, that perhaps they could be made aware of the Plymouth Centre for Culture and Diversity. Chair suggested an event could be held at the Guildhall to empower teachers, encouraging schools to have 2 teachers running collective worship to support each other and Cllr Sally Cresswell suggested that religious leaders could be invited to such an event too.

Cllr Mary Aspinall to consider this event more and when had an idea of dates to contact Asif Siddique and enquire about Lower Guildhall availability.

### **Agreed Syllabus – what is the picture in schools?**

AnnMarie Allchurch was due to provide an update but was unable to attend. This item will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

### **Membership Updates**

Michael House explained that this is an ongoing issue and will be looked at when the constitution is reviewed with issues such as the language used for Group C and whether or not there needs to be representation from Councillor's who are independent or from the Green Party.

### **Plymouth Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity Update**

Thanked the Councillors for their Community Grants which continue to support the Centre with their work each year.

The Centre is still looking for new speakers.

Chair explained that when speaking to other areas of the country, people are very jealous of the resource Plymouth has in the Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity.

### **Discussion and election of new SACRE Chair**

Chair, Deputy Chair, Michael House and Hannah Whiting all confirmed that there had been no nominations received for Chair and Vice Chair.

Chair asked that everyone seriously consider putting themselves forward to be Chair or Vice Chair and explained the support that would be available.

Cllr Mary Aspinall put herself forward to be a temporary Chair until the Autumn meeting when this would be revisited. SACRE Members agreed unanimously.

### **Updates from Members**

None.

### **AOB**

Chair explained that SACRE Members need input into the recruitment of a Religious Advisor, and could this be discussed next meeting.

Chair thanked Ed Pawson for his continued support in the absence of an advisor.

The Chair expressed that it has been an honour to Chair SACRE and thanked Hannah Whiting and her colleagues for the support they have provided whilst she has been Chair.

Cllr Jonathan Dreaan thanks the Chair and Deputy Chair for their steerage over the past few years, which have been difficult.

### **Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

1pm Monday 14 November 2022, Warspite Room, Council House.

# Plymouth SACRE

## Guidance on Collective Worship 2020

### Time to Breathe

This guidance aims to support schools in Plymouth to develop a collective worship policy to ensure that pupils have effective and reflective experiences in collective worship. It offers an explanation of the legal obligations, including the right to withdrawal, and explains the rich opportunities that assemblies offer students for spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development.

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## 1. Why take Time to Breathe?

Schools are reminded, regularly, that Collective Worship is a legal requirement, but here are some reasons why, even without this requirement, it is good to take ***Time to Breathe*** in schools.

### **What collective worship brings to our school:**

- A time when school comes together as a community
- A time to balance the 'what' of academic pursuits with the 'why' found in spiritual reflection
- A time for spirituality and stillness, connecting the inner with the outer
- A time to reflect on stories of inspiration, struggle and hope
- A time for sharing and reflection, where any prayers are inclusive and invitational
- A time when the school family gathers to support each other

- A time to communicate and live out the shared values and expectations of the school

## 2. The legal requirement for collective worship

The legal requirements for collective worship in schools is set out in circular 1/94. Although this legislation is several decades old, it still stands as the default expectation in all schools without a religious character. It says:

**‘Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, 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’.**<sup>1</sup>

**‘(T)he majority of acts of worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’**<sup>2</sup>

1. All maintained schools and academies, whether or not they have a religious character, are required to have daily acts of collective worship as part of their curriculum. Schools with a religious character provide denominational collective worship in line with their foundation and are not subject to the requirement to provide ‘wholly or mainly broadly Christian’ acts of collective worship.
2. All registered school pupils (5 - 18) are required to take part in an act of collective worship on each school day (unless they are withdrawn). Pupils in special schools should take part in an act of collective worship as far as it is practicable.
3. Collective worship may be held at any time during the school day.
4. Separate acts of collective worship may be arranged for different age or school groupings.
5. Collective worship must take place on school premises, but governors of aided and religious foundation schools may, on special occasions, arrange collective worship elsewhere.
6. In any one term in a community or a non-religious foundation school or academy, acts of worship should be ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’. That is, most (or all) of the acts of worship must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any one Christian denomination. (See ‘wholly or mainly ..’ below)
7. Collective worship must be appropriate having regard to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the pupils.

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<sup>1</sup> DfE Circular 1/94 (paragraph 50)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/281929/Collective\\_worship\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281929/Collective_worship_in_schools.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> DfE Circular 1/94 (paragraph 62)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/281929/Collective\\_worship\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281929/Collective_worship_in_schools.pdf)

8. Where worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character is inappropriate, the Headteacher and governors may apply to the local SACRE (and in the case of academies will need to refer to the terms of their funding agreement), for permission to arrange worship for all or some of the pupils that is not wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character (see 'Determinations' below).

9. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship (see 'Right to Withdraw' below).

10. Teachers cannot be compelled to lead or participate in collective worship, but it is the responsibility of the headteacher and governing body to ensure that it takes place.

Every school under Local Authority control must have a policy for collective worship that is drawn up in accordance with the law, and reflects as far as possible the consensus of views of the various stakeholders i.e. staff, governors and the community.

All academies, in accordance with their funding agreements, must have an act of daily worship and will be inspected under Ofsted criteria that look to make judgements about spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) and so collective worship may play a part of their decisions.

Within the legal framework the responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with:

- the headteacher after consultation with the governing body in community schools
- the governing body in consultation with the headteacher in VC and VA schools

The Diocese of Exeter also produces guidance on planning collective worship for Church of England schools<sup>3</sup>. The Diocese of Plymouth will provide guidance for Roman Catholic Schools.

### 3. How can schools introduce collective worship?

Plymouth Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) hopes that all teachers, regardless of their beliefs or worldview, will feel able to participate in (and possibly take a lead in) acts of collective worship that are genuinely open and inclusive.

Schools without a religious character are secular spaces, but this does not mean they are non-religious spaces. A secular space is where all beliefs are given respect, where no single religious or non-religious worldview takes precedence over another.

As a secular space, the school is a forum where expressions of religious and non-religious beliefs, together with dialogue and discussions about and between different faiths and worldviews, can take place. Plymouth SACRE encourages open and respectful exchanges about different religions and worldviews.

We favour a **broad** definition of worship which allows children to reflect upon their shared human experience and feelings of joy and sadness, thankfulness and need, their reflections on shared values and concerns and the exploration of the spiritual area of experience.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://exeter.anglican.org/schools/christian-ethos-siams/collective-worship/>

As with all areas of the curriculum, collective worship should provide a valid educational experience. There is also the need to respect the different beliefs of teachers, parents and children. Worship can only be inclusive if it has a broad definition to include those who both do, and don't have a belief in divine beings or powers.

#### 4. What does 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' mean?

The Act states that the Collective Worship organised by the school is to be '*wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*'. We should note that this means that most school worship should reflect Christian **beliefs**, not necessarily Christian **worship practices**.

These beliefs encompass:

- an underlying purpose to creation and human responsibility for it (*e.g. an interest in the environment and stewardship of the earth's resources arises from this belief*)
- human beings' responsibility before God and yet the failure to meet those demands fully (*e.g. opposition to prejudice, cruelty, violence, arise from this belief*)
- the uniqueness and value of each human being and the possibility of new beginnings (*e.g. value of human life, concern for self-knowledge, co-operation, respect arise from this belief*)
- the teachings of Jesus, who promoted concern for the needs of others (particularly minorities) in the form of gratitude and forgiveness, and who opposed hypocrisy, exploitation and the harsh judgement of others

These Christian beliefs are reflected in the life and teaching of Jesus, but also give rise to values which are in harmony with the broad spiritual and moral concerns that are shared by the world's religions and other worldviews.

In selecting *broadly Christian* material or any other material, it is important that schools ensure that acts of worship are 'inclusive'. It must be remembered that it is not the role of the school to nurture religious faith. Assemblies that raise the beliefs suggested provide opportunities for '*broadly Christian*' collective worship, as well as stimulating all young people to reflect, to feel awe, to learn to be still and to consider the direction and meaning of their lives.

#### 5. Content and presentation

Plymouth SACRE's approach should help schools to facilitate a version of collective worship that eases and promotes a polite and vigorous expression of beliefs and a dialogue between them. It should emphasise a community ethos that celebrates all that is shared.

The unifying element for each act of collective worship will be a central theme focusing the attention of all taking part on a single idea. Examples of suitable themes for collective worship are: the school's agreed shared vision and values, school or local

events, a topic explored by one class, the lives and experiences of people past and present, current religious festivals, national and international days etc.

The methods used to present particular themes may include:

- Spoken word: story, poetry, interviews, discussion, readings from the Bible and from other religious and secular literature and choral speaking
- Music and singing: hymns, popular songs, chants, or singing games
- Visual stimuli: pictures, posters, artefacts, natural objects, religious objects, personal objects, works of art, or film clips
- Performance: dance, music, mime, drama, role play, or puppets
- Music: either performed or played
- Preparing and sharing food
- Silence: stilling, reflection, contemplation, meditation and, if appropriate, prayer

In today's plural society, a creative silence may well be considered to be more inclusive than vocalised prayer. It can give an opportunity for prayer<sup>4</sup>, without insisting on it. People can be guided to be still, to quieten their mental chatter and to discover their deeper self, the ground of their being, that place which some spiritual writers identify as the dwelling of God. If done well, such acts of collective worship could encourage a less frenetic, more peaceful ethos in a school.

### Planning for Collective Worship

One pattern that schools may use is to **Gather - Engage – Respond – Send**. This gives a useful structure for collective worship (see Appendix 3 for more details).

The use of Windows, Mirrors and Doors (WMD)<sup>5</sup> helps children to think, reflect and consider their actions. WMD is a very successful way of giving children a process to think through big issues.

Windows: What is the big issue? What are we looking at?

Mirrors: What does this mean to me? What is the impact on me?

Doors: What am I going to do about it? How does this impact my community?

## 6. The right of withdrawal

We hope that, by adopting an inclusive stance, collective worship (assemblies), will be broadly accepted by a wide variety of people. Many parents see the provision of acts of worship by a school as part of its expression of care for the well-being of its pupils. However, there may be occasions when a parent insists on their right to withdraw their children from collective worship.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from attending an act or acts of collective worship<sup>6</sup>. Parents should make their wishes known to the headteacher who will arrange

<sup>4</sup> Please note that all prayers should be inclusive and invitational, not instructional

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.crackingre.co.uk/htdocs/crackingre/secure/teachSupp/donut.html>

<sup>6</sup> DfE Circular 1/94 (paragraph 85)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/281929/Collective\\_worship\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281929/Collective_worship_in_schools.pdf)

that any pupils who are withdrawn will be supervised appropriately during the acts of collective worship.

Schools should ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from collective worship are aware of the programme and its intention to be open to and respectful of all pupils' personal beliefs. They should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents (or pupils themselves if they are aged 16 or over), and it should be made clear whether it is from all or some specific acts of collective worship. No reasons need be given, though parents may make arrangements for *alternative religious worship* to take place for their child, provided that such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school and provided the effect would not be to replace the statutory non-denominational collective worship in the school.

Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from collective worship without influence from the school, although a school should ensure parents or carers are informed of this right (for example on the school website) and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the collective worship programme. In this way, parents can make an informed decision. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected.

If parents and the school agree that the pupil should be allowed to remain physically present during the collective worship, but not take part in it, nothing in the law prevents this.

Pupils should not be withdrawn so that they may participate in other activities. Schools have a duty to supervise pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.

## **7. Determinations**

A determination allows a school to be able to organise its collective worship in a way that is appropriate to its pupil make up, and lifts the legal requirement for collective worship to be wholly and mainly Christian.

The 1988 Education Reform Act allows the requirements for 'broadly Christian' worship to be lifted in respect of some or all of the pupils in a school where appropriate. Before considering this, a school should consider carefully the guidance laid out in this document which shows ways in which the requirements for 'broadly Christian' worship in a multi-faith school can be met without a determination.

If a headteacher wishes to apply for a determination, they must make an application to SACRE. Before doing so the headteacher must consult the school's governing body who in turn may wish to seek the views of parents. The headteacher and governors should take care to safeguard the interests of any parents of children for whom broadly Christian collective



worship is appropriate. In considering whether to apply for a determination the headteacher should take into account the number of withdrawals from broadly Christian worship that have been made.

The headteacher's application may relate either to a clearly described and defined group or to the whole school.

The Headteacher, or their representative, will be asked to attend a SACRE meeting to put forward their reasons for application for a determination. On reaching a decision, the headteacher will be notified, in writing, and informed of the date from which the determination can take effect.

SACRE is obliged by law to review the determination at least every five years, and schools will be notified of this review by SACRE.

In considering an application for a determination the following criteria will be used by SACRE:

- The number of withdrawals from broadly Christian collective worship (this is the primary consideration by SACRE)
- The family and faith backgrounds of the pupils in the school, including those for whom broadly Christian worship may be appropriate as well as those for whom it may be inappropriate
- That the proposed alternative worship will be educational in nature and affirm the values of the school community, will be nondenominational and will not attempt to indoctrinate or evangelise

## **Links to further support for collective worship**

Guidance for schools from:

[Newham](#) SACRE

[Bristol](#) SACRE

[Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich](#)

## **Guidance on collective worship for school governors**

Collective Worship and Religious Education: [a guide for governors](#)

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to members of Devon, Torbay and Plymouth SACREs for their input and in particular to members of the collective worship working party:

- Katie Freeman - Bickleigh Down Primary School and Plymouth SACRE (Chair)
- Corrine Guntrip - Ellacombe Primary School and Torbay SACRE (Chair)
- Tania Hawker – Pilgrim Primary School and Plymouth RE Hub
- Claire Hulbert - Payhembury Primary School and Devon SACRE member

- Shelley Moss - Churston Ferres Grammar School and Torbay SACRE
- Ed Pawson - Devon and Torbay SACRE RE consultant
- Jeremy Roberts - Devon (Chair) and Torbay SACRE
- Belinda Twiggs - St Michaels Primary School and Devon/Torbay SACRE

For further information and support contact Ed Pawson at [efpawson@gmail.com](mailto:efpawson@gmail.com)

## Appendix 1 – The framing approach

Plymouth SACRE recommends a '*framing approach*'. When children or adults share a text, artwork, piece of music, or saying they should introduce the piece with words which clearly identifies the tradition from which it comes so that a safe boundary is created from which all can freely respond to it.

For example:

'I/we are sharing this reading from the Gospel of Mark in the Bible. While this has special meaning for Christians, we can all listen and respond in the way which is right for each of us.'

'I am sharing this reading from the Gospel of Mark in the Bible. While this has special meaning for me as a Christian, I hope you will hear something in it which is helpful to you.'

'I/we am/are sharing this hadith which is important for many Muslims so that we can understand what it says and let it affect us in the way that is right for each one of us'

'I am going to tell you this fable from Aesop's fables which have particular meaning for many people and are also strongly connected to stories from Hinduism and Buddhism. Let us all reflect on what this story says about greed.'

2. After leading the group to a period of calm silence, we recommend saying: '*Now we can use this quiet that we have made to reflect, meditate or pray according to our own beliefs.*

Plymouth SACRE believes that this is the most appropriate way to provide the opportunity for all to worship including those whose tradition focuses on worshipping God, without compromising anyone's integrity.

3. When festivals are celebrated SACRE recommends that children and adults present and share aspects of the festivals of their own traditions. It may be that if a culture of mutual respect is developing some children will still feel unsure about public recognition of their affiliation with a faith tradition. This may be the case particularly if there are very small numbers in the school or if the child has witnessed negative responses to their tradition during their life.

4. SACRE recommends that adults and children make decisions about collective worship and choose the content and format together, using these guidelines.

5. Individuals or groups need to be mindful of sensitivities of members of the whole school community in the choices they make and in the way they present material.

6. The teacher with responsibility for collective worship needs to ensure that there is a balance of material from different traditions through a term.
7. When members of local faith communities are invited to lead collective worship it is important that they comply with points 1 and 2 of these procedures.

## Appendix 2: model draft policy for collective worship

This is an example policy that sets out what a school policy might look like. It would need to be adapted to your particular school, and would also have different emphases if your school is a faith or community school. Phrases in italics are recommended for faith schools only.

Insert : Name of School

|                           |           |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Required Review Frequency |           |
| Next Review Due:          | July 2021 |
| Committee Responsible:    |           |
| Document Location         |           |

| Version | Approved By | Date of Approval | Key Changes |
|---------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
|         |             |                  |             |

### Philosophy of collective worship at xxxxxx: (Some quotes you might like to use)

"The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me a continual spiritual journey"- Leo Buscaglia

"To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God". William Temple (1881-1894)

"Stillness is the altar of spirit" Paramahansa Yogananda(1893-1952)

"Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light" *Albus Dumbledore* (J.K. Rowling)

xxxxxx School is a Community school/Church of England Voluntary Controlled School. Collective worship is an important part of the school day as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a school community. It is attended by all students, staff and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in.

### Collective Worship and the Law

In accordance with legal requirements (School Standards and Framework Act 1998) an act of collective worship, taking into account of the age, aptitude and background of the pupils, is provided daily for all pupils except those withdrawn by parents. The school expects that withdrawal will be only made following discussions with the head teacher, followed by written confirmation of withdrawal. Special arrangements will be made by governors to supervise children withdrawn from acts of worship. In addition, staff have the right to withdraw from the act of collective worship.

“The arrangements for the required collective worship may, in respect of each school day, provide for a single act of worship for all pupils or for separate acts of worship for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups.”

*The School Standards and Framework Act 1998*

### **Rationale**

Inclusion is important to our vision and we aim for acts of worship to be inclusive of all pupils. There is an expectation that all pupils will be present. Careful planning and preparation ensure that there are clear learning intentions for all pupils at different levels of understanding. Collective worship is first and foremost for the educational benefit of all pupils. It is a shared activity that allows for a variety of responses and provides an opportunity for those of any religious faith or none to focus and reflect on stimuli which allow the human spirit to respond with integrity. The school is committed to respect the integrity of the backgrounds from which pupils come.

*The school will also offer the opportunity to explore, reflect upon and respond to the mystery and meaning of the Christian faith.*

At ..... School Collective Worship we aim to:

- Strengthen and support the school community and celebrate each unique individual member ( Church school might add – ‘as *made in the image of God*’.)
- Give expression to reaffirm and practise the values of the school community
- Allow reflection and response to fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings
- Celebrate and give thanks for achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals
- Contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- Foster and enable a concern for the needs of others – recognition of the vulnerability of self and others
- Lead pupils to a deeper knowledge and understanding of different faiths and world views
- Provide members of the school community with the opportunity to;
  - *A Church school might say – ‘Praise and reach out to God’*
  - Experience stillness and quiet
  - Experience a variety of forms of music, art, drama, story that lead to personal reflection

- Provide a foundation for a mature understanding and practice of worship in the future

***At ..... we arrange Acts of Collective Worship/assemblies in the following ways;***

| <b>Day</b>       | <b>Time</b>      | <b>Grouping</b> | <b>Place</b> | <b>Leadership</b>                             | <b>Theme / pupil's role</b> |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Monday</b>    | 3:00 –<br>3:20   | Whole school    | Hall         | Head teacher                                  | <i>Value of the term</i>    |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | 9:10 –<br>9:30   | KS1 or KS2      | Hall         | Key stage assembly led by teacher or children | <i>Open the Book</i>        |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | 10:15 –<br>10:30 | Whole school    | Hall         | Head teacher<br>Music teacher                 | Singing assembly            |
| <b>Thursday</b>  | 3:10 –<br>3:30   | Whole school    | Classrooms   | Class Teacher                                 | <i>Value of the term</i>    |
| <b>Friday</b>    | 3:00 –<br>3:30   | Whole school    | hall         | Deputy Head teachers                          | <i>Celebration Together</i> |

### **Leadership, Planning and Evaluation of Collective Worship/Assemblies**

There is a Collective Worship planning group led by the Headteacher as collective worship Coordinator and including representatives of the children, parents, teachers, and governors. This group meets regularly to plan, monitor and evaluate Collective Worship. The calendar for Collective Worship draws on *the Church year* and the school values.

Collective Worship will be treated like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing and evaluation. All those leading collective worship are asked to plan their act of worship in as much detail as they would any other learning activity. Staff are given appropriate training and mentoring to equip them in their roles as worship/assembly leaders.

All pupils attend an Act of Collective Worship/Assembly each day. These are organised on a rota and include whole school, phase-based and class-based worship.

A record is kept of Collective Worship. The Worship Coordinator is responsible for keeping this record.

The Collective Worship Planning Group is responsible for monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship. Children, teachers, and governors are all involved in evaluation of Collective Worship. The group reports to the Headteacher and the Governing Body.

**Special services**

We join together as a community at special times, e.g. Leavers' service, special times of celebration such as Red Nose Day and Poppy Day of Remembrance.

**Music and art as part of our act of worship**

Music is played before and after our assemblies to highlight that this is a special time for us to be together. We use music as part of our act of worship where appropriate to the theme as we see music as a medium able to evoke deep, intense feelings that are a part of an individual and theirs alone; memories, emotions of visual images.

The music, instrumental or vocal, may be selected to enhance the atmosphere for worship, stillness and reflection or to inspire thought and talking points in the areas of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

This listening time is also used to introduce children to;

1. Music of a variety of styles, cultures and traditions
2. A range of composers and famous works
3. Recognition and appraisal of a range of musical elements

**Visitors to school**

Visitors leading collective worship must be given clear instructions concerning age and ability of the pupils, purpose of occasion and appropriate delivery (content and material used).

The school will ensure that checks are made about connections with the school e.g. parent, charity representative, clergy from another denomination, adviser, colleague before the day

There will be a sharing of the aims and objectives of the visits and links made to the overall scheme for Collective worship.

The visitor's method will be reviewed before another invitation is extended.

A follow up session will be linked where considered appropriate to the developing theme.

Visitors should report to the office to announce their arrival. All visitors must sign the visitor's book and may not be left with the children unless member of the school staff is present. They will be thanked as they leave the building.

## Appendix 3: organising collective worship

Suggested outline for pupil participation in Collective Worship

| Before Collective Worship   | During Collective Worship   | After Collective Worship  |
|---|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Setting up</b></p> <p>The children will:</p> <p>Selecting and setting up CD<br/>Putting out chairs<br/>Prepare the worship table<br/>The children will ring the bell to call the school to worship.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gathering</b></p> <p>The children will:</p> <p>Saying a welcoming sentence.<br/>Organise school notices.</p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Clearing up</b></p> <p>The children will:</p> <p>Hold doors open for those leaving.<br/>Put away equipment and chairs.<br/>Turn off candles.</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Welcoming</b></p> <p>The children will:</p> <p>Greet the other children at door<br/>Meet visitors at main entrance (and help them to set up).</p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Engaging</b></p> <p>The children will:</p> <p>Introduce a visitor or the storyteller<br/>Take part in Drama activities such as Open the Book.<br/>Support teachers with music, video clips and PowerPoint slides.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recording</b></p> <p>The children will:</p> <p>Record a log book detailing what the school had learnt about in Collective Worship.<br/>Ask the visitor or the person leading worship to sign the log book to say that it is a true representation of what they have learnt.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Planning</b></p> <p>The children will:</p> <p>Choose music and songs to be sung in worship that link to our theme.<br/>Write their own prayers to share at the end of worship.</p>                      | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Responding</b></p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to:</p> <p>Ask and answer questions.<br/>Read or saying prayers.<br/>Leading actions or signing to songs.</p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Evaluating</b></p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to:</p> <p>Use the Imaginor Evaluation grid.<br/>Work together to look at evaluations and plan the next steps for Collective Worship.<br/>Share evaluation findings with Governors and school SLT.</p>             |
|   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sending</b></p> <p>The children will have the opportunity to:</p> <p>Switch off the candles.<br/>Saying the 'Grace' or other closing prayer.</p>  |   |

## Appendix 4: websites to support collective worship

The following websites provide suggestions for schools to supplement their Collective Worship programme. Plymouth SACRE is not responsible for the reliability of these links or for the content of these sites.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <a href="http://www.assemblies.org.uk">http://www.assemblies.org.uk</a>   | Primary and secondary school assemblies with a broadly Christian perspective 'for every season' from SPCK. Contains a section on assemblies to celebrate festivals of a good range of religions and a 'rapid response' feature to help schools address big issues in the news. |
| <a href="https://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/">https://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/</a>   | CW resources to enable schools to explore Christianity creatively and confidently  |
| <a href="https://bigstartassemblies.org/">https://bigstartassemblies.org/</a>   | Big Start Assemblies combine value-based themes with stories from the Bible. They are easy to plan and great fun for KS1 and KS2 pupils.   |
| <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/stories/">http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/stories/</a>   | CBeebies stories for primary school age children that could be used in assemblies – includes 'Seasonal' stories reflecting religious festivals and 'World Stories' reflecting different cultures.  |
| <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/</a>   | Audio programmes from BBC learning for the 5-7 and 7- 11 age ranges. Listen again within 7 days of broadcast or order the CD. Sets of notes for teachers also available for free download.   |
| <a href="http://www.bdeducation.org.uk/schools/teacher/collective-worship/">http://www.bdeducation.org.uk/schools/teacher/collective-worship/</a>           | Collective Worship ideas and advice from the Diocese of Blackburn.   |
| <a href="http://www.cafod.org.uk/resources/worship">http://www.cafod.org.uk/resources/worship</a>   | Reflections on social justice and poverty for worship activities from the Catholic charity CAFOD. Prayers, liturgies and reflections across Church seasons and a wide range of themes.   |
| <a href="http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/">http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/</a>   | Teaching resources from Christian Aid, with assemblies for primary and secondary.  |
| <a href="http://www.creativeproverbs.com/">http://www.creativeproverbs.com/</a>   | Franklin C. Baer's 'Quotations for creative thinking' searchable website.  |
| <a href="http://www.fischy.com/">http://www.fischy.com/</a>   | Music for emotional, social and spiritual health and wellbeing from Fischy Music.  |
| <a href="http://www.hibbert-assembly.org.uk/">http://www.hibbert-assembly.org.uk/</a>   | Good starting points for sensitive assemblies from the Hibbert Trust, including advice to those leading assemblies by the Reverend John Harley.  |
| <a href="https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/schools/jumping-fish-publications/">https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/schools/jumping-fish-publications/</a> | Jumping Fish Ltd® publications support RE teaching, spiritual development, values education and collective worship in schools  |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| <a href="http://www.hmd.org.uk/">http://www.hmd.org.uk/</a>   | National website for ideas on remembering the Holocaust.  |
| <a href="http://www.humanismforschools.org.uk/">http://www.humanismforschools.org.uk/</a>   | Assembly ideas and humanist perspectives from the British Humanist Association.   |
| <a href="http://www.ibiblio.org/zen/">http://www.ibiblio.org/zen/</a>   | Zen Buddhist site with 'Koan of the Day.'   |
| <a href="https://www.imaginer.co.uk/">https://www.imaginer.co.uk/</a>   | Imaginer's resources, in particular the excellent Roots and Fruits, are highly rated by teachers  |
| <a href="http://www.inspirationalarchive.com/inspirationalstoriesblog/">http://www.inspirationalarchive.com/inspirationalstoriesblog/</a>                           | Archive of mostly Christian inspirational stories – a mixture of material, not all suitable for school assemblies.  |
| <a href="http://www.irinnews.org/">http://www.irinnews.org/</a>   | Humanitarian news and analysis service of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs.  |
| <a href="http://www.lifesavers.co.uk/collectiveworship/">http://www.lifesavers.co.uk/collectiveworship/</a>   | 20 individual worship resources 5 on each of the values generosity, wisdom, thankfulness and justice (helping children to manage money wisely).   |
| <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/">http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/</a>   | Oxfam's downloadable resources for primary and secondary assemblies featuring issues of social justice. PowerPoint presentations, ideas for workshops, assembly scripts etc.                              |
| <a href="http://www.prayingeachday.org/reflect.html">http://www.prayingeachday.org/reflect.html</a>   | De La Salle Brothers ('Christian Education in a Christian Community') collection of reflections and prayers for every day of the year. Click on a date for stories, questions and prayers for reflection. |
| <a href="http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/assembly/">http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/assembly/</a>   | Scripts for primary school assemblies, contributed by teachers.   |
| <a href="https://www.picture-news.co.uk/">https://www.picture-news.co.uk/</a>   | Each week we choose a current news story, provide an image, a thought-provoking question and a variety of teaching resources.   |
| <a href="http://www.reonline.org.uk/">http://www.reonline.org.uk/</a>   | Religious education website with search engine to find materials for use in assemblies.   |
| <a href="http://www.request.org.uk/">http://www.request.org.uk/</a>   | Resources for most of the Christian denominations – not specifically for Collective Worship but can be adapted.   |
| <a href="http://www.retoday.org.uk/">http://www.retoday.org.uk/</a>   | Downloadable resources associated with RE Today publications ( <i>password required - available free to RE Today subscribers</i> ).   |
| <a href="http://www.stapleford-centre.org/resources/assemblies/assemblying-citizens">http://www.stapleford-centre.org/resources/assemblies/assemblying-citizens</a> | Secondary school assemblies for active citizenship and personal development from The Stapleford Centre, a Christian education organisation. Some free samples but requiring subscription for full access. |
| <a href="http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/subjects/assemblies/">http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/subjects/assemblies/</a>   | Mark Warner's Teaching Ideas site contains a range of interesting downloads for assemblies for primary schools.   |
| <a href="http://www.tere.org/index.php?id=59">http://www.tere.org/index.php?id=59</a>   | Catholic Teachers Enterprise for Religious Education assembly ideas for primary schools.  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <a href="http://www.thelinkingnetwork.org.uk">www.thelinkingnetwork.org.uk</a>  | The Linking Network supports schools to develop a positive, cohesive ethos by helping young people to explore identity, celebrate diversity, promote community and champion equality  |
| <a href="http://www.theotherpages.org/">http://www.theotherpages.org/</a>   | Quotations, poems and images for personal and non-commercial use.   |
| <a href="http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218194057/http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/assemblies/">http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218194057/http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/assemblies/</a> | Teachernet resources are now held on the national archives database. This is a bank of over 100 resources written by teachers for teachers. The search engine no longer works but you can access the examples via 'Assemblies A – Z'. |
| <a href="http://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk/">http://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk/</a>   | The National Society's Worship Workshop website. Intended for CofE schools but others may find useful material here for Collective Worship that is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.                               |