

# **Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy at Phoenix Arch School**

## **Legal Requirements of RE and Collective Worship**

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. The majority of acts of worship must be of a “broadly Christian character”, and those that are, must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”.

In order to encourage all pupils and staff (from Christian, to other religious or non-religious backgrounds) to willingly participate together in collective worship Brent SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) provides a model approach.

Phoenix Arch School has a ‘determination’ from SACRE to lift the requirement of the Education Act 1996 that collective worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”. Phoenix Arch School follows the SACRE Model Approach. This facilitates a version of collective worship that eases and promotes a polite and vigorous expression of faiths and a dialogue between them by providing a clear ‘frame’ through which religious and non-religious material and practice can be introduced.

The second of the National Curriculum’s two aims is: ‘to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life’.

As a school we are sensitive to the needs of our children and consider the background that our children come from. Therefore, the faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times. Phoenix Arch School endeavour to provide as many achievable high quality acts of worship as we can in order to uphold this legislation.

The head teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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 head teacher. Teachers may also withdraw from collective worship.

## Collective worship-definition

Collective Worship is a time when the whole school, or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all pupils an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Collective Worship contributes significantly to the ethos of our school and it is our aim that it is a time when the school community can:

- share common aims and values
- celebrate achievement and special times
- explore together the world in which we live
- develop a community spirit

## Aims and Objectives of RE and Collective Worship

Phoenix Arch School believes that collective worship encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum. It reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school and reinforces positive attitudes. In particular, worship at our school develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth. The caring ethos of the school and the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of the whole child are reflected in our times of worship, when we consider spiritual and moral issues and explore personal beliefs.

Principles for Early Years' education recognise that, in order to learn most effectively, children need to feel **included, secure and valued**. It is important that there are **positive relationships** between parents and adults in the school. A seamless transition between home and school is fundamental to learning within the school setting, and learning needs to build on what children already experience, know and do.

These principles apply equally to every stage of a child's learning.

Effective collective worship in school can provide this connection between home and school, between the values and beliefs a child experiences at home and those experienced at school. Through effective collective worship the child can feel included, secure and valued. The child can develop respect and understanding of the beliefs, values and cultures of other people. Through collective worship each child can contribute to the development of the school's values and to the development of the school as a respectful community.

Effective collective worship provides children with an experience of stillness and reflection which:

- is usually difficult for them to achieve in their busy day
- is integral to spiritual development

- helps them focus on their developing beliefs and values
- gives them space to consider the mystery which is at the heart of life
- supports their emotional development

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

- Develop an awareness of their own beliefs and values as individuals and the beliefs of others, both religious and non-religious and the values of the school community
- Encourage respect for those who have different beliefs and values to our own
- Explore their understand their own feelings and the feelings of other people in everyday situations and beliefs
- Encourage pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural development
- Provide opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate festivals of major world religions
- Develop an awareness of themselves as individuals within the school and wider community
- To develop community spirit and a shared ethos, values and positive attitude

**At Phoenix Arch we take into account children's views. Children created their own child-friendly term for collective worship and mindfulness. We use reflection time positively to develop a deeper understanding of self and others.**

## **PLANNING**

At Phoenix Arch School we combine our acts of worship with assembly and class work helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. Assemblies are conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faiths. To ensure Collective Worship provides opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development it will address a wide variety of themes and topics, use diverse stimuli and resources and provide pupils with the opportunity to 'respond' to their own experience. A variety of teaching and learning styles and active and interactive methods are appropriate in acts of Collective Worship. Any and all of the methods employed in the classroom can be used effectively in acts of Collective Worship.

The content of all acts of Collective Worship will be considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils.

## **The Organisation of Collective Worship**

Collective Worship is organised to provide a variety of groupings and will take place in the school hall or the classroom. Collective acts of worship are incorporated into whole school assemblies, class based weekly sessions and RE lessons.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The head teacher and the governors will monitor and review this policy.

