

CRUDGINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY



Revised – October 2015

Crudgington Primary School Collective Worship Policy



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SACRE = Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

1) Legal requirements

- a) The place of collective worship (CW) in schools is upheld by statute since 1944.
- b) The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) affirmed its statutory position with
 - i) the earlier prescriptions on grouping and timing being relaxed
 - ii) confirming what had already become widespread practice in schools.
- c) The 1996 Education Act confirmed the legal requirements.

2) Practical requirements

- a) All registered pupils shall take part in an act of collective worship every day (ERA 6.1) with two exceptions:
 - i) Parents have the right to withdraw their child from CW
 - ii) Pupils in school sixth forms are permitted to decide for themselves whether to attend CW or not.
- b) Since 1988, acts of CW
 - i) must be '*wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*'; and it is deemed to be fulfilling this description if it '*reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief, without being distinctive of any Christian denomination*' (ERA 7:1-3)
 - ii) May take place in a whole school group or in any other pre-existing grouping in the school.
 - iii) May take place at any time in the school day, although it should be on school premises.
 - iv) Must be appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils.
 - v) Are the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governors,
 - 1) The prime responsibility differing according to the type of school and
 - 2) Must be supported by readily available documentation (Education regulations 1981)

3) Implications for the school

- a) The duty to offer daily CW is laid on every school.
- b) The legal framework applies to all local authority maintained schools
 - i) Except those with a religious character
 - 1) Where CW is delivered according to the Trust Deed
 - 2) And usually reflects the faith or denomination of the foundation
- c) Provision in Free schools and Academies is determined by the school's funding agreement
- d) None of this legislation applies to special schools
- e) Only schools in 3b fall within the remit of the local SACRE in respect of CW.

4) Modifications to the law

Where it is felt, for religious reasons, CW that ‘*reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief*’ is not appropriate for its pupils, a school can apply for a determination. The procedure does not lift the duty to provide CW; it allows for the requirement that CW should be ‘*wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*’ to be lifted in respect of some or all of the pupils in the school for whom such is deemed appropriate.

Applications for determinations are made to the relevant body by the headteacher after consultation with parents and the school’s governing body. Traditionally it has been a function of the SACRE to receive and ‘*determine*’ whether such requests are valid, either granting or refusing them and this still applies in the case of community schools without a religious character. The body now responsible for performing this function for Free schools and Academies is the Education Funding Agency (EFA). All determinations last for five years.

5) Working within the law

The legal definition of CW is broad. It offers freedom. There is opportunity for variety and breadth. It allows for creativity in planning worthwhile experiences, outside the formal curriculum structure, which are suitable for all in the school community. These will be inclusive, participative, challenging and educational, drawing on a wide range of religious traditions, without any danger of indoctrinating anyone or compromising the religious, or non-religious, backgrounds of pupils (and staff) whilst giving those for whom it is appropriate the opportunity to worship God. *Every-pupil-every-day* is the non-negotiable.

6) Potential benefits

This legislation sits under the overall purpose of the curriculum, as set out in the 1988 ERA, to:

- a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society;
- b) and prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, as it has become known, is about the nurture of them as human beings and, as such, is the most important job a school is charged with fulfilling. This fact is recognised by OFSTED where SMSC forms a part of every report on every school, and it’s elements are recognisably defined by them. (see Appendix 1) It is a shared responsibility involving the whole curriculum and the whole school.

7) Collective worship supports such development;

It can make values explicit for pupils, challenge their thinking, extend their emotional repertoire, help them to know and celebrate who they are and understand what the school community stands for and aspires to.

Where a school follows a carefully planned programme of CW, productive links can be made with the curriculum, especially, but not exclusively, religious education (RE); in this way pupils can be invited to transfer their learning into another context and share it with their peers. Crucially the distinction between RE and CW must be understood by the school and neither used as a substitute for the other. For everyone in the school to be exploring aspects of the same theme in various settings can create a buzz of interaction between pupils of all ages as well as in class or tutor groups and add to the feeling of shared community and well-being.

To achieve all this, first and foremost, CW must be educational; it must be properly and carefully planned; it should be relevant and engaging, with a sense of occasion and atmosphere; it must be more than *assembly*, despite the common usage of that term which simply means a ‘coming together for a purpose’; it must be treated as time set aside, offering a few moments for reflection, and to be successful, it must be valued. It is then possible for a school to evaluate the impact of CW in terms of potential benefits to pupils’ SMSC development and to the growth of a coherent school community. Pupils can be invited to contribute to this evaluation, adding their own feedback on individual acts of CW or whole themes.

8) Making it Collective worship

It is commonly accepted that CW in the school context is different from the corporate activity of a faith community. CW **offers opportunity** – there is no compulsion. There is no assumption in the legislation that any of the traditional elements of Christian worship should be included, although it is common practice to have some stimulus material such as a story, perhaps singing-especially in a primary school- and some purposeful reflection. In practice, the most appropriate opportunity for CW comes in the quiet reflective time when a thought that is being shared with everyone includes an invitation to pray, for those who want to do so. Alternatively, everyone can be invited to listen to the words of a religious prayer as long as it is rooted in the tradition from which it comes, or pupils may be encouraged to read their own prayers. Whatever the words that are used, the emphasis is on sharing them in a focussed way and inviting appropriate responses according to individual needs, in an atmosphere of openness.

9) Good practice

The CW experience should therefore be inclusive; it should exclude no-one and be appropriate for all. It should involve everyone present to some degree, inviting thoughtful reflection and giving opportunity for response. It should take a variety of forms to inspire and hold pupils’ interest. It should challenge pupils to think beyond their own lives and broaden their perspectives. It is time set aside from the rest of the day and should have an atmosphere that is different. Most importantly, it should have evident educational purpose. It should be planned to nurture pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and well-being. (see appendix 2 for some examples)

10) To summarise, Collective Worship:

- **is collective and educational** (rather than corporate and religiously devotional)
- **offers opportunities to pupils**, different from other learning experiences
- **promotes pupils' SMSC**, encouraging them to know themselves and live for others
- **creates opportunities for pupils to consider their own beliefs and values**, both religious and secular
- **encourages a reflective approach to living**
- **deepens every individual's capacity for emotional response**
- **helps pupils consider what it means to be human**
- **offers a school opportunity to articulate its shared values and build a sense of community**
- **should draw on a rich variety of religious and spiritual sources, reflecting diversity whilst recognising the significance of Christianity**
- **can include elements of conventional worship, if used appropriately, including prayer, music, drama**, but does not have to do so; however, **time for reflection enhances the potential for SMSC**
- **should interest and inspire young people**, whether from religious backgrounds or not
- **should not compromise the family values of pupils**

Best practice in the provision of Collective Worship depends on:

- **a commitment from senior leaders to the value of CW**
- **thorough planning to meet the needs of pupils**
- **educational use of religious and other material**
- **an open approach which gives opportunity to respond**
- **taking advantage of the freedom to provide CW at any time of the day and in any school group**
- **taking every opportunity to interest and inspire pupils**

For examples: see Solihull SACRE publications

Thoughts for the Day: tutor group CW in the Secondary school 19995

Promoting pupils' SMSC development through CW in the primary school 2001