



# Collective Worship Policy

**Author:** Stephen Price (Senior Assistant Headteacher)

**Status:** Statutory. To be reviewed annually

**Level of approval:** Full Governing Body

**Date written:** December 2016

**Date of most recent approval:** December 2016

**Date of next review:** December 2017

**Ethos:**

Reading Girls' School (RGS) believes that collective worship supports and strengthens many aspects of life, and develops the whole child spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually, while enabling an understanding and appreciation of British values. We value this time in the school day for the space it gives students 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 pupils".

RGS is a secular school, and families who send their children to our school are from different nationalities and faiths. Some practise their chosen religions; others do not; others have no religion. We recognise that in asking our students to worship we have to consider the background that they come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to our students. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times.

**Objectives:**

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment for students 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 everyday 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 a 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
- Mark celebrations of the major festivals of Christianity and of other faiths
- Access topical matters from the media or the locality
- Access literature with implicit or explicit religious teaching
- Enjoy an appreciation of the natural world and human activity
- Appreciate music.

## **Practice:**

At RGS we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. Assemblies are held once a week for each year group, and every student in the school is required to attend (unless formally withdrawn by their parents). In addition, form tutors are required to prompt students within their group on reflective thinking (Thought of the Week) during tutor time, and encourage students to participate in assembly presentations.

Pastoral Leaders lead the whole-school collective worship each week with the support of the Senior Leadership Team. Students are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leading in collective worship at calendared times of the year.

Assemblies are calendared throughout the year, with a key aim being to recognise major religious festivals, known national or international events, both present and historical, and aspects taken from the school calendar. Please see additional guidance on assemblies in Appendix 1.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for Collective Worship Policies and guidelines
- The Senior Assistant Headteacher is responsible for planning the assembly calendar at the beginning of every academic year
- All form tutors discuss with their tutor groups the published Thought for the Week that is part of the pastoral programme, enabling students to reflect further on the topic raised in the weekly assembly
- All teaching staff are required to attend assemblies unless they have formally withdrawn from them by putting their request in writing to the Headteacher
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If parents asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship, the school will provide alternative provision during assembly. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should write to the Headteacher.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Additional guidance on planning and conducting assemblies**

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

- Students' contributions
- Dance/drama
- Quiet reflection
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

#### **Song and Music**

Music is a very powerful means of creating a positive, reflective 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.

#### **Personal Reflection and Prayer**

As we are a secular school and our students follow a number of faiths, students are not required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. As an alternative to explicitly religious content in our assemblies, we provide a time for all students to reflect silently on the ideas raised in the assembly and on the values we share as a school community.

## Appendix 2

### Routine for Assembly

- Classical music must be playing, with a slideshow of daily messages on entry.
- Students to enter and sit alphabetically in Tutor Groups from 8.30am
- Link LT and PL to manage with tutors the lining process, student uniform to be corrected, silence is expected.
- Link SLT to meet and greet at the door, PL to manage seating in the theatre, tutors to meet at seating area..
- **Assembly must start at 8.40am**, all late comers **must be refused entry and held by a member of staff**. It is unacceptable to be late to assembly.
- PL to signal silence (hand up) and start assembly with a greeting. Students must respond with a 'Good Morning'
- Main speaker introduced and then thanked at the end of the assembly by PL and Year Group. They speak for 10 minutes
- Notices given at the end of the assembly
- Every assembly must celebrate students, with students called down to receive certificates.
- Tutor group attendance must be highlighted by the PL
- PL to finish with a moment of reflection.

*'This is the time when we spend a few moments in quiet reflection according to our own personal beliefs, thinking about the individual contribution that we can make to our school community.'*

*'We strive for the strength and courage to be good citizens, to respect others and to fulfil the RGS Way by being kind, proud, determined and the best we can be so that we may share equally the benefits of our community.'*

- **Assembly must finish at 9.00am.**
- Students dismissed in silence by row.