

CLYST VALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

POLICY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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Responsibility: Curriculum, Learning and Teaching
Committee

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POLICY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Assemblies and Worship: Principles

Clyst Vale Community College believes that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of College life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually can be reflected in worship. We value this special time 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.

The legal requirement is that all registered school age pupils 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”. Families who send their children to this College are in the main ‘nominally’ Christian, but we do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that when 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 of Act of Worship

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 the 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, and in so doing promote community cohesion
- Encourage positive and virtuous behaviours, for instance good attendance, behaviour, commitment, dedication, respect for others and the world

Delivery

Clyst Vale staff and governors have regularly debated how best the College could meet its legal requirements. Besides issues of conscience, much discussion has centred on the College’s limited accommodation for large groups which, though it has no significance in law, is a very real practical consideration at Clyst Vale. In effect, the only space available for larger gatherings is the College’s Main Hall, which is also used for dining, PE and formal exams. Though the hall was not an ideal setting for acts of worship it was clear that no other alternative was available, and this remains the present position.

It was agreed by staff and governors that the only ways that the College could balance its legal obligations without extensive disruption to the timetable and learning was

- (i) to hold assemblies on a combined School and Tutor Group basis, and it was decided to establish a list of weekly assembly themes at the start of each College year. This is now provided by the Head of Beliefs & Values (B & V) or an appropriate member of staff.
 - Delivery may take place in via a School /tutor group
 - The themes are produced annually and published weekly in the Student and Staff Bulletins
 - Participation of those concerned is to be encouraged but cannot be enforced.

- (ii) To maximise alternative arrangements for holding assemblies and acts of collective worship, including use of the Sports Hall, the amphitheatre, the Post-16 common room, Dance and Drama studios. It must be recognised that these venues serve other functions, may not be available at all times, do not all have the capacity for a whole Year or School group, and in the former two cases are weather-dependent.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL

- The Principal is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging collective worship after consulting with the governing body.
- The Head of Beliefs & Values (or other designated member of staff) is responsible for planning the weekly themes.
- All Form Tutors promote the weekly themes in tutor time.
- Teaching Staff are required to attend assemblies unless they have formally withdrawn from the collective worship element by putting their request in writing and meeting with the Principal.
- Parents of a pupil 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 College, the College must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Principal.
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006 makes provision for pupils in post-16 education to exercise the right to withdraw themselves from the daily act of collective worship, but not from assembly.

MONITORING

The Principal, members of the SLT and Heads of School have operational oversight of the conduct and effectiveness of assemblies and collective worship.

The Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body has responsibility for monitoring this Policy.