



Collective Worship Policy

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Mayespark Primary School

Collective worship Policy

INCLUSION STATEMENT

Mayespark Primary School is a large multi-cultural school in Redbridge where children and adults are valued and respected as individuals, irrespective of:

- Race
- Religion
- Belief
- Gender
- Ability
- Disability
- Social circumstances
- Philosophical beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Age

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the emotional wellbeing of staff so that every child and adult feels welcomed, fulfilled, safe secure and confident.

Children and adults must be aware of their responsibility to report incidents of inappropriate behaviour which contravenes equality or raises safeguarding concerns.

Mayespark Primary School has a population of approximately 97% ethnic minority children, with most of those children 'belonging to' – with varying levels of understanding and commitment – Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Hinduism. It is important to understand that not all of these children will have experienced the faith or worship of these religions. For many it will be the cultural rather than the religious customs with which they will be most familiar.

Aims and purpose

At Mayespark Primary School (we feel) that worship is an important part of the school day. This is because it gives us the opportunity to come together as a community and to pause from activity, to gather together and to remind ourselves to reflect upon the beliefs and values which bind the school community together. It is attended by all children, staff and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in. Throughout the year there are opportunities for all parents to attend special collective worship sessions led by their child's class.

At Mayespark Primary School we recognise that collective worship is an important time to provide opportunities for our children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In accordance with the values of the school, which are concerned with mutual respect, cultural diversity and social inclusion, collective worship will include all pupils unless they have been withdrawn by their parents (which parents have the right to do).

It is our aim at Mayespark Primary School that worship should:

- contribute to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of each child.

- support the social and emotional development of our pupils through making use of the JIGSAW (RSHE) programme.
- give expression to, reaffirm and practise the values of the school community (respect, happiness, determination, love, courage, honesty, politeness, humility, unity, justice and tolerance) as well as British Values (democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith).
- allow reflection and response to the fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings.
- celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals. In order to reflect our school population and understanding of others we also value opportunities to incorporate Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Jewish festivals into our assembly or celebration timetable. Pupils are not themselves required to 'celebrate' religious beliefs which neither they nor their family adhere to, but to be aware of the reasons for them for others.
- foster and enable a concern for the needs of others, a recognition of the vulnerability of self and of others.
- provide members of the school community with the opportunity to praise.
- provide members of the school community with the opportunity to experience stillness and quiet.
- provide members of the school community with the opportunity respond to Christian language and symbolism and that of other faith groups. In line with legislation that collective worship should be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", we place particular emphasis on the Christian festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter.
- provide members of the school community with the opportunity to experience a variety of forms of prayer. These might include praise, seeking forgiveness, asking on behalf of self and others or quiet reflection.
- to help children to begin to understand the nature and purpose of worship and to provide a foundation for worship in the future.

Legal Status of Collective Worship

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires that 'all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each day take part in an act of Collective Worship'. We seek to do our best to keep the spirit of this legislation seeking to provide as many high-quality acts of worship as is practically possible.

To provide children with variety in their experience of worship, acts of worship may take the form of a whole school act of worship for all students or separate acts of worship for students in different age groups. Collective Worship may be held at any time during the school day.

Acts of Collective Worship at Mayespark Primary School take into account children's ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds including the diverse tapestry of ethnicities, cultures and religions, practices and beliefs.

Principles and Practicalities

When leading assemblies, teachers are asked to note the following principles and practical considerations. The main consideration is of course, that an assembly is properly prepared, presented and evaluated.

Collective worship will include some of the following elements:

- Entry and exit music based on the musician of the month
- a song
- themed story / presentation
- responses from the children
- a period of reflection

1. Variety in presentation is important. Tools to aid delivery can include: PowerPoint, video, recordings, drama (rehearsed or spontaneous), music, dance and religious or other artefacts. Stories can be told as well as read.

2. Good timing is essential, especially with the increasing demands of the curriculum. The entire assembly, with the exception of singing/achievement assembly, including the focus, the supporting song and notices, should not exceed 15 minutes.

Whilst singing and notices may sometimes have to be sacrificed due to the pressures of time, the focal point is the one absolutely essential ingredient in every assembly.

Responses are private, conditional and may well be reflective in nature and are certainly open to subsequent review. Therefore, it is important not to put pressure on the children. Similarly, it is important to phrase statements carefully. Rather than "We believe" or "It is true that...", it is more appropriate to say, for example, "Christians believe" or "Hindus believe". Equally appropriate is the term, "I'd like you to listen to these words."

High expectations of behaviour are expected throughout the assembly. This is made easier when class teachers bring their class into the hall promptly and in an orderly fashion, having walked down the corridor quietly and calmly. It is the school's expectation that children will sit quietly and wait for the assembly to begin, listening to the music being played. This preliminary 'quiet space' is an important aspect of preparing for collective worship. Inappropriate behaviour during an assembly should not be allowed to detract from the content. Offending pupils are to be immediately moved to sit at the end of the line and then sent, either directly after the assembly or at playtime, to apologise to the assembly leader, with further sanctions at her or his discretion.

Organisation of collective worship will either take place in the hall as part of a phase group, vertical group or in the classroom as a class group. Participation by the children will be encouraged.

Parents will be also be invited to the following events:

- End of year assemblies
- Class assemblies

Collective worship will take place in the classroom on days when the children are not brought together in the hall.

Visitors

Mayespark Primary School has a long tradition of inviting visitors to contribute to or lead assemblies. If outside speakers do take part in an act of collective worship, we ensure that they are carefully briefed about the school's policy by the member of staff who has organised the visit. We endeavour to choose visitors who can communicate well to children. We also aim to invite visitors who understand the nature and purpose of collective worship in schools and who will not, therefore, use the opportunity to seek converts. A time of reflection is included within these assemblies, but they are led by a member of staff who has a clear understanding of the school's expectations and a response by the children is left open. Visitors are provided with all necessary practical information (with regard to timing, age-range of children, parking arrangements etc) and publicly thanked for their contribution.

Rights of Withdrawal

At Mayespark Primary School we seek to be an inclusive community however we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children from collective worship. This school expects that withdrawal will only be made following parental discussion with the head teacher followed by written confirmation of withdrawal. The school has a system of suitable supervision for children withdrawn from acts of collective worship. However, no additional work is set or followed in this time. All teachers, including the head teacher, have the right of withdrawal from collective worship, but the head teacher, should he or she wish exercise this right, maintains statutory accountability for acts of collective worship in Mayespark Primary School.