

# Diocese of Leeds



## **Collective Worship**

### Guidelines for Governors

## **The Role of the Governing Body Regarding Collective Worship**

Governors should be aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to Collective Worship taking account of the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, Education Act 1996 and the School Standard Framework Act 1998.

### **The Legal Framework**

There must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can either be a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in different school groups (i.e. a group or combination of groups in which pupils are taught or take part in school activities)

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship and this must be made clear in the policy statement on Collective Worship and in the school prospectus. However, a Catholic school will make it clear to parents that worship is central to the life of a Catholic school and both formal and spontaneous acts of worship take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

The governing body makes arrangements for Collective Worship in a Voluntary School after consultation with the headteacher. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring requirements are met.

In a Catholic Voluntary Aided School, governors must take account of the Instrument of Government which states that acts of worship shall be consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church. Foundation governors, appointed by the Bishop have particular responsibility for seeing that the Catholic character of the school is reflected in Collective Acts of Worship and are in accordance with the Instrument of Government.

Governors should also be familiar with any guidelines issued by the diocese.

While the Section 10 OFSTED inspection team is required to report on whether the school fulfils its statutory responsibility for Collective Worship, the content of Collective Worship will be inspected by the Section 23 Inspector.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and should not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum. It must be distinctive and be able to be identified as such if it is to meet legal requirements.

As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. a church, "on a special occasion".

## **Other Responsibilities**

Governors will be familiar with all documentation regarding Collective Worship issued on their behalf and will be actively involved in the process of Collective Worship development in the school (after consultation with the headteacher).

Governors should ensure that there is a development plan for Collective Worship, which is appropriately reviewed as part of the whole school development plan.

## **Policy for Collective Worship**

The diocese has provided a model policy for Collective Worship which governors are encouraged to consider. Any policy should include the following:

- The School Mission Statement.
- A definition or description of the nature of Collective Worship.
- The place of worship in the life of the school.
- The aims of Collective Worship.
- The principles of Collective Worship.
- The organisation of Collective Worship (pupil groupings weekly pattern, venues etc.)
- The planning, content and delivery of Collective Worship.
- The recording, monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship.
- Resources available for Collective Worship.
- Voluntary worship and retreats.
- Guidelines regarding the celebration of the Eucharist.
- The management of Collective Worship (who is responsible and areas of responsibility).
- The rights of withdrawal.<sup>1</sup>
- Policy monitoring and review.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

In Voluntary Aided Schools it is the overall responsibility of the governors, in consultation with the headteacher, to ensure that legal requirements are met and that opportunities for quality Collective Worship are being offered. This may be delegated to the headteacher or the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship. Those responsible will ensure that the acts of worship are in accordance with the school's Instrument of Government and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

In order to ensure that effective monitoring of Collective Worship takes place the following questions need to be addressed:

- Is the monitoring of Collective Worship part of the school development plan?
- Is the monitoring/improvement of Collective Worship of importance to the governing body and therefore an item on the agenda?
- How will the monitoring process be used to further develop Collective Worship?

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<sup>1</sup> Parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of worship, however, the school is under no obligation to provide alternative arrangements and the fact that worship is central to the life of the school will already have been made clear.

### **What is to be monitored?**

The school may have a document on curriculum monitoring which could be appropriately adapted for Collective Worship. In the absence of such a document the following may be considered:

- Is sufficient time set aside to ensure that monitoring can take place? This may include observations of collective acts of worship, discussions with those who lead worship, discussions with those who experience worship (e.g. pupils, staff, parents, governors and other members of the school community).
- Is the observed practice of Collective Worship consistent with policy?
- Is Collective Worship adequately resourced in terms of leaders, materials, visual aids etc.?
- Is there a record of, or requirement for, staff development and in-service training?
- Are the various environments and groupings for Collective Worship maximising opportunities for worship?

A school audit for Collective Worship is also provided. This may assist governors as well as the Collective Worship co-ordinator to monitor Collective Worship in the school.

### **Evaluation**

Once the monitoring of Collective Worship, as described above and/or in the school audit, has been completed, it will naturally lead to an evaluation of the current position and plans for the development of Collective Worship within the school.