

Policy Title:	Collective Worship
Function:	Information and Guidance
Status:	Statutory
Audience:	Students, Parents, Governors, Principal, Teachers, Support Staff, Local Authority
Ownership / Implementation:	The Principal and the Governing Body have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
Version:	V1.0
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THE OXFORD ACADEMY

The Oxford Academy is a learning environment at the heart of its community. We promote care and respect, and expect high standards in all aspects of Academy life.

We aim to build a community clearly based on a Christian ethos, recognising the integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution and protect the vulnerable. We are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the Academy.

Our vision for The Oxford Academy is based on the following beliefs:

- Education matters in society: the provision of a well ordered, stimulating learning environment is a common right for all our students.
- The Academy should articulate social and moral values and respect for others, irrespective of their class, sex, race or religion.
- The Academy will promote the highest achievement in youngsters, irrespective of their abilities or self-expectations. Competition and collaboration are both equally important to learning. The aspirations of all our students will be nurtured.
- The Academy will celebrate students' achievements and challenge fixed notions of ability. We will value and reward young people's verbal, practical, academic, sporting, artistic and leadership skills.
- An effective and flourishing Academy should be 'public' rather than 'private', explaining to parents what is being taught and how the curriculum is being interpreted. It should be open to praise and constructive feedback in a genuine spirit of partnership.
- An effective Academy should work closely with neighbouring schools to improve opportunities for students and young people.
- The work of the Academy will be underpinned at all times by its ultimate aim – to improve standards, achievement and the life chances of young people. The Oxford Academy is to be, first and foremost, a place of high quality learning and teaching for young people aged 11-19.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

THE OXFORD ACADEMY

Collective Worship Policy

Policy Aims

Through collective worship in our Academy we aim to:

- provide an experience of worship that will allow students to respond reflectively
- introduce students to Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the church year
- explore a variety of ways of worship and reflection and introduce students to some well known Christian prayers allowing for a range of personal response
- strengthen and support the Academy community giving expression to and reaffirming the values of the Academy
- celebrate the gifts that each student brings to the Academy's community, recognising the uniqueness of each individual
- encourage students to reflect on the puzzling questions that life poses and to respond to the wonder and mystery of the world around them
- foster a concern for others within the school and wider world
- foster an appreciation of the created world and an awareness of our
- responsibility for it.

Legal Framework

There must be a daily act of collective worship for all students which takes account of their age and aptitude. (Education Reform Act 1988). Parents have the right to withdraw students from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these students. As a church Academy however, worship is central to the life and work of the Academy and is regarded as a very important part of student's education whilst recognising the variety of personal responses in an Academy not requiring any faith commitment for students or employees.

Implementation

Collective worship, whether in assembly or class time, will:

- have a clear message that is of a broadly or mainly Christian nature
- be acceptable to the whole community, staff and students

- include a variety of elements at different times
- involve the students
- have a dedicated focus which signifies what is being reflected upon
- provide a dedicated opportunity for students to reflect/respond to the input

In achieving a meaningful act of worship it is important to distinguish between worship and ritual. Rituals are means of enabling worship and include:

- stories and readings
- songs, hymns and music
- dance and drama
- prayer, meditations
- creative silence
- sacred/secular readings
- artefacts and natural materials
- students' contributions

Rituals have a range of relevance whether the person has a personal faith or none.

The Academy will be aware of the timing of religious festivals and any specific requirements relating to them.

As part of our collective worship students will have the opportunity to be quiet and reflect on what has been shared. Students and/or adults will lead the reflective session and they will be invited to put their hands together/hands on their laps and be quiet, calm and respectful.

Act of Worships must have

- a clear message
- a dedicated focus –a lit candle, a vase of flowers, an artefact/picture that reflects something of the theme
- a clear plan to lead the students into a period of reflection – input, questions, relevance to age/stage

- a dedicated opportunity for the students to offer a response to the input, a prayer related to the input or an opportunity for silent reflection
- where there is a prayer, students need to be encouraged to listen, be still and reflective and only if they wish, to join in the 'Amen' response

It is not appropriate to

- make the students repeat a prayer if they do not wish
- join their hands if they do not wish
- say 'Amen' if they do not wish
- always have prayers: intersperse Collective Worship with reflection, silence or discussion

We expect students to

- be respectful
- act in an appropriate manner
- have the daily opportunity for a sense of togetherness which engenders a sense of belonging
- have an understanding that the worship is not done for students but is an experience for all who attend

We expect staff to

- lead where applicable in the agreed manner, including class assemblies
- respond to collective worship in an appropriate manner
- develop links with faith groups and at times, offer them the opportunity to lead assemblies and collective worship in the agreed format for our school

The Right to Withdraw

Parents have a right to withdraw their students from Religious Education (RE) and collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE or collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.

A school remains responsible for the supervision of any student withdrawn from RE or collective worship, unless the student is lawfully receiving RE, or taking part in collective worship elsewhere.

Parents do not need to explain their reasons for seeking withdrawal. The Principal may wish to clarify with any parent wanting to withdraw:

- The religious issues about which the parent would object their child being taught
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- The circumstances in which it would be reasonable to accommodate parents wishes
- If a parent will require any advanced notice of such issue in the future and if so, how much
- The right of withdrawal was established in the Education Act 1944, re-enacted in the Education Reform Act 1988

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.