WESTGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

1 Rationale

It is a legal requirement 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 Westgate are in the main non-religious or 'nominally' Christian, but we do have some children from practising religious backgrounds- almost all Christian. As a community, non-denominational school, we seek to comply with the law in relation to collective worship, while reflecting the beliefs in our school, the wider world- including non-religious beliefs.

The head teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the head teacher. Teachers may also withdraw from worship.

2 Definitions

2.1 Collective worship

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring "collective" not "corporate" worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/ or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worth of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

2.2 Worship of a broadly Christian character

As a non-denominational school, we understand the requirement that the majority of acts of worship must be of a "broadly Christian character", and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. We take family backgrounds into consideration. Therefore, it is appropriate at Westgate to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. We focus on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

3 Aims

We believe at Westgate that collective worship supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child, spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in an appropriate manner, religious or otherwise.

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting 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 everyday situations and beliefs
- Become confident and responsible citizens
- 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

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

4 Westgate Way

The Westgate Way has been planned so that over the year, key themes and values are addressed. These are taken from:

- British Values as defined by the DfE/ Ofsted (democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith)
- Westgate Learning Muscles (not afraid to fail; learning from mistakes; working independently; working co-operatively; asking questions; being enthusiastic; persevering)
- The Family of Schools' Equality & Diversity Charter
- Eco-School themes (biodiversity; energy; global citizenship; healthy living; litter; marine life; school grounds; transport; waste; water)
- Investors in Pupils themes (Induction; pupil voice/ participation; roles and responsibilities; learning; behaviour; school/ class management; attendance)
- Key religious festivals from the main world religions;
- Important local, national and international events

Through these themes, we aim to encourage children to:

- Reflect on 'The Westgate Way'
- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school and wider community
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community, the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school

- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society, including the promotion of British Values
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn….;
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

5 Organisation, Content and Structure

At Westgate we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework

Assemblies at Westgate are usually as follows:

Day	Time	Focus	Led by
Monday	10:10	The Westgate Way	Head Teacher/ Deputy Head Teacher
Tuesday	09:05	Either: Singing Assembly	Head Teacher
		Or: Open the Book- Bible Stories & singing	Open the Book visiting group/ Head Teacher
Thursday	10:10	Celebration Assembly: children's achievements in and out of school	Class Teachers
Friday	09:00	Reserve assembly slot for Celebration assembly, if an assembly slot is given over to a class assembly or other special event/ visitor	Class Teachers

Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership through their class assemblies each year, and through other roles in school, eg School Council, School Food Ambassadors, Eco Team.

Assemblies include a opportunity for reflection or prayer and a song, which may be a non-religious song or a hymn.

On Wednesdays and Fridays, teachers plan a short act of collective worship/ reflection in their classrooms as there is no whole school assembly.

Assemblies will typically contain one or more of the following:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/ readings
- Drama
- Prayer/ reflection/ songs/ hymns/ music
- Artefacts/ natural materials
- Visual aids/ focal points
- Dialogue/ creative silence
- Visitors

6 Songs and Music

Music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We draw on a wide range of music and songs, from a variety of cultures and types.

Some but not all of these are of a religious character and wherever possible the song choice is linked to the theme of the assembly.

Every week we have a singing assembly. During this we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a spiritual experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

7 Prayer

Assemblies usually include a period of reflection or silence to provide opportunities for pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish. However, as a non-denomination school, this may or may not take the form of a prayer. When prayers are used, they are introduced in a way which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'Listen to the words of this prayer and if you want to make it your prayer you can say 'Amen' at the end.' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

8 Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach, interest and inspiration which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. All visitors are alerted to this prior to their assembly. We especially welcome visitors who can share their experiences of different faiths with our school.

9 Staffing

We appreciate the need for staff to have some time during the school day set aside for planning and preparation. We also recognise the value of the whole school, including staff being involved in our school worship. Therefore, staff have a rota of non-contact time which includes Monday, Tuesday and Thursday assembly. All teachers from Reception/ Y1 upwards attend Celebration Assembly.

10 Monitoring & Review

Governors and senior leadership team monitor the implementation of this policy through whole school assemblies. Assembly themes are reviewed annually by the senior leadership team. The policy is reviewed as part of a 3 year cycle.

Policy agreed on:	**20/06/2019**	**(date)**
Signed:		**(chair of governors/ committee)**
Signed:		**(Head Teacher)**