

## 013 Collective Worship

**Responsibility:** GH  
**Date:** November 2017  
**Next Review:** January 2020

### 1. Introduction

The school curriculum should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

- 1.1 Since Holmfirth has five whole year groups of around 264 pupils and only two suitable venues (the hall and the gym) where they can meet together, the option of a daily year assembly for each year each morning is not feasible.
- 1.2 This could only be achieved by a series of timetabled assemblies for each year throughout the day, disrupting school timetabling and eroding the curriculum in a wholly unacceptable way.
- 1.3 However, we do recognise the value of a regular gathering of a whole year for purposes of cohesion and community identity.
- 1.4 The policy is that each year group holds a whole year assembly of 15- 20 minutes, in the hall once a week at the beginning of the day (8.45) on a regular day each week. The form period is 25 minutes long and five minutes are set aside to assemble the year group and to dismiss. Assemblies will be themed and have the explicit aim of promoting students' spiritual, cultural, mental and physical development. Extra assemblies can be held in the Gym by arrangement if administration time is required, but assembly speakers must be guaranteed the agreed time. If administration is to be combined with the delivery of a planned assembly theme, the admin should be done first to ensure that pupils are reflecting on the theme when they leave, and the administration must not cut across the assembly delivery.
- 1.5 On the remaining four days each week, discussion is based in Tutor Groups in morning tutor time. The person giving assemblies in any one week, places a comment in the Bulletin for forms to read out in form tutorial time. An exchange of views follows this, led by the tutor. Sometimes private reflections might be more appropriate.
- 1.6 The assembly topic, devised by the person delivering assembly each week, is often based on items currently in the news, or relative to school policies or issues. All items should be capable of being discussed from a range, including religious viewpoints. The school has a programme of themed assemblies throughout the academic year.
- 1.7 Points for thought or discussion for each item are clearly put forward so that tutors may use them in the style most appropriate for the particular year group and particular topic. To avoid a superficial approach to important spiritual and moral issues, each item should be on the Bulletin for at least two days in succession.

Students and staff are invited to contribute items. It is recognised, though, that assemblies of a purely pastoral or administrative nature will exist.

- 1.8 It is also possible for a Tutor to devise his or her own item for discussion, in line with the school policy stated above. Where a Tutor does not feel able to initiate a particular item, the minimal request would be that she/he draw the attention of the group to the item allowing time then for private reflection on the issues raised.
- 1.9 At least once every 2 weeks, a year group assembly is scheduled in the Gym. Even though this is generally used for administrative purposes, it may be used as a further, more formal assembly at the discretion of the HoY, or as an assembly generated by pupils (see 3.3). It is at the discretion of year heads to cancel the administrative assembly if they so choose.

## **2. Flexibility**

- 2.1 We believe this approach allows for both flexibility and individuality, while building on peer group relations and attempting to promote the tutor group as a forum for discussion of matters for serious moral or spiritual thought. It also avoids the divisiveness and apathy that a more public approach to collective worship can generate. This approach also supports the school's restorative practice and the widespread use of circle time.
- 2.2 The period of reflection and discussion in morning tutor time is classified as a daily act of collective worship. Therefore Tutors who wish, on grounds of conscience, to withdraw from this part of the morning routine must be allowed to do so. They would inform the Executive Headteacher who would make every reasonable endeavour to find someone to visit that Tutor's group to fulfil the requirement.

## **3. Policy**

- 3.1 Parents are informed of this policy in the prospectus. They are able to exercise their right to withdraw their children from that part of an assembly or Tutor period which is an act of worship, though in practice this happens only very rarely.
- 3.2 Heads of Year should encourage form tutors to suggest that forms put on an assembly from time to time. Heads of Year, and/or form tutors to consult the rota to discuss availability.
- 3.3 During the main examination period, assemblies will take place in a gym, if possible, though on days of ad hoc examinations, it is likely that formal assemblies will be cancelled.
- 3.4 Assemblies are taken most frequently by SMT or HoYs, but Form Tutors and visiting speakers (including, for example, the Church of England Gideons – who give New Testaments to Year 7 each year) are also involved in the programme. The Executive Headteacher is responsible for producing the annual assembly rota, and the themes are reviewed and updated for each academic year.