

Curriculum policy (including Collective Worship) Portsmouth Primary School and Early Years



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1. Curriculum aims

The school follows the National Curriculum and EYFS framework, aiming to introduce pupils to “the best that has been thought and said,” fostering appreciation for human creativity and achievement—an important foundation for **spiritual and cultural** growth.

Our curriculum aims/intends to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils that is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- Support pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support pupils’ physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning
- Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Have a high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils
- Equip pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- Promote the learning and development of our youngest children and make sure they are ready for Key Stage 1

These curriculum aims are underpinned by our values:

Be Kind, Be Respectful, Be Inclusive, Be Safe, Be Your Best and to do these come rain or shine.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#), which all maintained schools in England must teach.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [maintained schools governance guide](#).

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also make sure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- It fulfils its role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals

3.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets, in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including pupils with SEN

3.3 Other staff

Other staff will make sure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

4. Organisation and planning

The following subject areas are planned for and taught within the school: Art, Computing, Design Technology (DT), English, History, Geography, Maths, Music, Personal Social, Health Education (PSHE), Physical Education (PE), Religious Education (RE) and Science. For each subject, there is specific information on the school's website about how the subjects have been designed; how they are delivered; and how they are sequenced. For further information, please refer to the curriculum section of the school's website: <https://portsdownprimary.co.uk/children/curriculum/>

Relationships and health education is taught as part of PSHE (with links to other subjects such as science where appropriate). There is a separate policy.

Portsdown Primary and Early Years weaves Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development SMSC and British Values throughout the children's educational experience via:

- A well-structured PSHE (via the Jigsaw scheme) and RSE curriculum.
- Integrated learning in subjects like science, RE, assemblies, and displays.
- Enrichment opportunities, inclusive and celebratory projects, and exposure to diverse cultures and civic concepts.

These combined approaches ensure that SMSC and British Values are not just standalone topics but are deeply embedded across subjects and school life.

The school employs a large range of resources, including the use of the local environment, history and culture of Portsmouth. Visits, visitors and other experiences are interwoven into the curriculum, alongside the use of resources such as artefacts, concrete resources/ manipulatives (e.g. in maths), computers and other digital equipment to secure and enhance the children's learning.

At Portsdown Primary School and Early Years, our curriculum is designed to give children the skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in the future. We foster curiosity, problem-solving, communication, and resilience, helping pupils understand how their learning connects to future careers and life opportunities from an early age.

See our EYFS policy for information on how our early years curriculum is delivered.

5. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and they will make sure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

5.1 Collective Worship

a. Statutory Requirement

Portsmouth Primary School and Early Years complies with the statutory duty to provide a daily act of collective worship for all registered pupils, in accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988 and subsequent guidance. This requirement applies to all pupils except those withdrawn by their parents in accordance with the law. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from leading or taking part in collective worship.

b. Nature and Purpose

Collective worship in our school is intended to:

- Provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on matters of worth, including moral, social, cultural and spiritual themes.
- Encourage respect for the beliefs and values of others.
- Promote shared values, community spirit, and a sense of belonging.
- Where appropriate, provide the opportunity to worship God.

We recognise that our school community includes pupils and staff from different faith backgrounds and those with no religious belief. Acts of collective worship are therefore inclusive and broadly Christian in nature for the majority of occasions, while also reflecting other faiths, traditions and worldviews.

c. Distinction from Assemblies

Assemblies are gatherings of the school community for information sharing, celebration, or learning. They may become acts of collective worship when they include an opportunity for reflection, prayer or contemplation. Pupils and staff may withdraw from collective worship but not from assemblies.

d. Organisation and Content

- Collective worship may take place at any point in the school day and in any grouping (e.g. whole school, phase, year group, class).
- The majority of acts in each term will be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.
- Themes will reflect a range of moral, spiritual and cultural values, and may draw from a variety of faiths and worldviews.
- Planning and delivery are overseen by a named lead for collective worship, in consultation with the headteacher and governors.
- Governors monitor provision as part of their statutory role.

e. Parental Withdrawal

Parents may request that their child(ren) be withdrawn from collective worship. Requests should be made in writing to the headteacher. The school will work with families to ensure that any withdrawal arrangements are managed sensitively and appropriately.

f. Reference to Guidance

The school follows the Portsmouth Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) guidance on collective worship, which sets out detailed advice on legal requirements, inclusive practice, and practical delivery. This guidance is included in **Appendix 1** of this policy.

6. Monitoring arrangements

Governors monitor coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- School visits, meetings with children, involvement in theme days (such as Rainbow Day), discussions with subject coordinators and reviews of the school's website.

Subject coordinators monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- Planning scrutinies, learning walks, book scrutinies and pupil interviews

Subject coordinators also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- EYFS policy
- Assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives
- Pupil Premium
- PSHE and RSHE Policy

Appendix 1

Guidance on Collective Worship for LA Maintained schools

(Draft V01 Feb 2025)

1. Introduction

Every Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) has a legal responsibility to advise its Local Authority (LA) on issues regarding collective worship.

To support the leadership and management of LA Maintained community schools in meeting their statutory responsibilities with regard to collective worship, this practical guidance document has been written with oversight from the Portsmouth Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) and Portsmouth professional advisor for Religious Education.

Schools with a faith designation should consult their diocese officers for advice and guidance.

1. What are the legal requirements for collective worship?

The legal requirements for collective worship are laid down in the Education Reform Act 1988 (the 1988 Act) and in the Collective Worship Circular 1/94 (1993 – 1994), which basically tries to explain and enhance the 1988 Act. It states that collective worship:

‘Should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes’.

Portsmouth SACRE recognises that the term collective worship is not particularly helpful for many schools today. It is the term used in the 1988 Act, but schools themselves often refer to these acts as ‘assemblies’. This usually helps parents, staff, pupils and other stakeholders to understand that what schools are doing is **NOT** necessarily a religious act, but rather a time to help pupils reflect and learn about things of worth. (See section 2 What is collective worship?)

The delivery of collective worship is guided by law with respect to the following:

- collective worship must be provided daily for all registered pupils (separate arrangements may be made for nurseries and special schools)
- collective worship may take place at any time of the school day
- schools may decide on the age/grouping of pupils, and these may vary from day to day
- the time decided for the delivery of collective worship may vary for different groups from day to day
- generally collective worship should take place on school premises

- The content of the majority of acts of collective worship in a term should be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, reflecting the broad traditions of the Christian belief"
- The content should have regard for the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of pupils
- Parents may withdraw their children from collective worship
- Teachers may withdraw from collective worship
- In a community school the responsibility for managing the provision for collective worship is with the head teacher after consultation with the governing body. In a VC or VA school collective or community worship is largely influenced by the particular faith or belief traditions represented in the school.

0. What is collective worship?

The law has never clearly defined collective worship. We do know however that collective worship is not the same as faith community worship (corporate worship) because a community school is not a faith community as it may contain pupils and staff from many different faith backgrounds as well as those who have no religious beliefs or no faith background. A school community therefore contains a wide range of people with different views on what 'worship' might mean and what or whom may be worthy of worship.

Worship is an old English word which translates to worthiness (The word worship comes from the Anglo-Saxon word - 'weorp' (worth) and 'scip' (ship), which for schools may mean that which it is important for us to promote (e.g. values). Often in the past this has always meant recognising the worthiness of God, but in terms of a school context where there are different beliefs about God, time spent focusing on things of worth could be considered what the law is essentially referring to.

0. How do acts of collective worship and assembly differ?

Collective worship is not the same as an assembly because staff and pupils do not have the right to withdraw from assembly. Assembly may be taken to mean the time when members of the school are gathered together i.e. assembled, to pass on information and move forward matters of secular business (notices). An assembly is a gathering of part, or all, of the school. It may be concerned with administrative matters and other announcements about school life. Schools often gather for achievement assemblies, singing assemblies and curriculum assemblies. These can be made into an act of collective worship through the addition of an opportunity for reflection or prayer at the end of these times. Without it they are just an assembly.

However, an assembly can be part of an act of collective worship or an act of collective worship part of an assembly. For example, an assembly themed around school values, relational practice or behaviour in terms of how to treat others well, would be broadly Christian. What would be key

in this case, would be the opportunity for pupils to engage and personally reflect, and be active in their involvement, participation or response.

0. Is collective worship part of Religious Education (RE)?

Collective worship and RE are separate areas of school life. The legal requirements for RE and collective worship are distinct and should not be confused. Time in assemblies cannot contribute to time allocated or counted for RE. Schools should have separate policies for RE and collective worship. It should not be assumed that the RE co-ordinator/subject manager or leader, is responsible for collective worship, although this may be the case.

The only part of the law which is similar for both areas is that of withdrawal. All other areas including time, the character of collective worship, and determinations, DO NOT apply to RE. However, there may be opportunities for pupils to use their RE work in collective worship or for collective worship to reinforce the learning taking place in RE e.g. at times of religious festivals.

Religious Education must follow the Locally Agreed Syllabus and should aim to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live their lives, so that pupils gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion, belief, views and values, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

0. How does collective worship link to spiritual development?

Collective worship is a special time for pupils to reflect upon life experiences and ultimate questions and, if appropriate, focus on God. It should allow the pupils to be able to make a spiritual response. Schools should be mindful that the term spiritual does not mean religious. It is possible for someone who does not believe in God to become more spiritual.

Ofsted defines provision for spiritual development to include provision for pupils':

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

Collective worship not only plays an important part in pupils' spiritual development but also that of social, moral and cultural development, as well as making a significant contribution to the promotion of fundamental British values (as defined by Ofsted as (democracy, individual liberty, rule of law, respect, and tolerance) and overall personal development.

0. Do parents have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from collective worship?

Portsmouth schools work very hard to ensure that collective worship is inclusive and appropriate for all pupils.

However, in a small number of circumstances, parents/carers may request that their child(ren) be withdrawn from collective worship and the school must comply with their request.

Whilst we hope that parents will advocate that their child(ren) will take part in collective worship as part of their rich experience of school life, we advise that in the first instance schools seek to understand the parental/carer concerns, and often families will want their child(ren) to continue attending collective worship once the school aims and practices have been made clear, through discussion and mutual understanding.

Sometimes, through agreement, children will physically remain in acts of collective worship but simply not participate in specific elements e.g. singing, prayer.

0. What is determination?

The law requires all schools that do not have a religious foundation to provide "a daily act of collective worship" for all pupils in the school, other than those withdrawn at the request of their parents.

Determination is the term used when a school applies to their SACRE to disapply the requirement for their collective worship for an identified group or whole school to be of a wholly/broadly Christian character. This is usually where a school considers that the requirement to provide worship that is wholly or predominately Christian could conflict with the requirement to provide worship that accords with the family backgrounds of pupils.

Before requesting a determination a headteacher must consult the school's governing board, who in turn may wish to seek the views of parents. The headteacher's application may relate either to a clearly described and defined group or to the whole school.

It does not remove the duty to deliver daily act of collective worship, but a school can make a case for it to be of a different faith. However, it cannot be distinctive of any particular denomination of any faith or religion but may be distinctive of a particular faith or religion. Parents continue to have the right to withdraw. The school remains responsible for supervising any child withdrawn by its parent from collective worship.

0. How can schools show sensitivity?

Portsmouth schools are inclusive and very aware of the rich and diverse communities that they serve. It is important that all beliefs, whether religious or secular, are respected.

Pupils do not have to be asked to pray, but they should have the opportunity to reflect and respond to God, if appropriate for them. Therefore, the choice of words and language used by those leading the collective worship is crucial.

For example, if prayers are used a leader can say:

'I am going to say a prayer from the..... faith now and I want you to listen and think about our theme today.'

With awareness, training and support, schools can ensure that acts of collective worship are acceptable and appropriate to their pupils, and do not cause offence.

Many Christian beliefs are shared by other world religions. In collective worship, common themes such as the four golden threads of community, belonging, special and love identified in the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE 'Living Difference IV' are 'concepts' that give expression to human experience and therefore support the special time that pupils have in collective worship to reflect upon life experiences and intriguing questions.

Practical advice and guidance

- Collective worship can take place in groups at any time during the school day and there is no specified length of duration. *This could simply be a time of reflection at the end of the day.*
- All pupils should take part in an act of collective worship daily. *This may be whole school, phase, house, year group, or class.*
- Across a term/year, the majority of acts of collective worship should be broadly Christian; however not all need to be of this nature. *Effectively more than 50%. A significant minority can be broadly of the character of other world religions or view points. There are religious and human values that many religions and life stances (e.g. Humanism) have in common, such as justice, love, peace, charity, sacrifice, morality, saying sorry.*
- Responsibility for collective worship is shared between the head teacher and governors. *Ensure that the collective worship is on the agenda of governors' meetings e.g. monitoring of collective worship, review of the Collective Worship policy, themes for collective worship, visitors to collective worship, pupil voice, withdrawal.*
- Meeting statutory duties means that collective worship requirements compliance should be able to be evidenced. *A Collective Worship policy and long to medium and short-term planning such as setting out organisation/rotas and termly/weekly sequenced themes would cover this.*

- There should be a named lead for collective worship. *This does not necessarily have to be the head teacher or RE subject leader.*
- Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child(ren) from collective worship. *This should be clearly set out in a policy and/or stated in the prospectus or on the school website. EMAS or SACRE may be able to support schools where parents are unclear about the aims and practices of collective worship.*
- SACRE has a legal responsibility to advise its Local Authority (LA) on issues regarding collective worship. *Respond to SACRE surveys or enquiries for information about collective worship, welcome members of SACRE to share in acts of collective worship, participate in collective worship CPD opportunities. These are all noted by the Portsmouth SACRE monitoring group and reported to the full SACRE.*