

COLLEGE POLICY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Introduction

The 1988 Education Reform Act as amended by the Education Act 1993 states that worship should be “ part of a balanced and broadly based curriculum which

- promotes the spiritual, cultural, mental and physical development of students and of society
- prepares such students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life”

This college Policy for Collective Worship:

- outlines the legal requirements
- defines worship in the educational environment of Haven High
- summarises the ethos of the college
- outlines the student needs and entitlement
- describes the resources available for collective worship
- explains arrangements for withdrawal from collective worship.

This Policy was prepared by the previous Head of RE/PSHE, now Assistant Headteacher, who writes and leads the assemblies in partnership with the Pastoral Heads, for all year groups. She also writes the Thought For the Day package which form tutors deliver.

Legal Requirements

The 1988 Education Act, as subsequently amended by the 1993 Act requires that all students in attendance at the college, subject to the parental right of withdrawal, should take part in an act of collective worship on each college day. The timing and organisation of collective worship can be flexible to meet the needs of the college, but this generally takes place during form period in the morning. The Act states that most acts of collective worship in any one term should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief but should not be distinctive of any particular denomination. The nature of collective worship should be appropriate to the family backgrounds of the students, their ages and aptitudes. The assemblies also respond to specific events allowing students to reflect on their thoughts and feelings about events real to them.

Worship in the educational environment of Haven High Technology College

Assemblies in Haven High are about providing an opportunity for students and staff to feel part of a community, sharing a spiritual or moral experience. Whilst it should be broadly Christian in nature, other religious festivals and celebrations are discussed and acknowledged at appropriate times. Our act of collective worship or assemblies are also an opportunity to respond to moral issues or world events and to work with partners like the local church or other groups. It always ends with a message for students and staff to personally respond to, either silently or openly, during the following week. Students are also given the chance to participate in assemblies and departments will deliver assemblies on themes related to their curriculum.

Assemblies are also an opportunity to celebrate achievements and successes of our young people. For example, our students have helped raise the funds to build and run a school in Gambia. Regular assemblies take place to keep them up to date of this project and allow them to feel connected to it.

Within the college, the requirements of current legislation on collective worship are addressed by:

- a timetabled registration period across the whole college. All students, unless withdrawn by parental consent, attend a Year or group act of collective worship during this period. This is led by the Assistant Headteacher and the appropriate Year Head (or other staff as appropriate) and normally takes place in the College Hall. Outside speakers and partners are involved as appropriate.
- on the other four days of the week, collective worship becomes a form based activity. This takes place in the Form Room during the registration period. Collective worship on these days takes the form of “Thought for the Day”. Although usually led by the Form Tutor, students are encouraged to contribute, therefore reinforcing the corporate nature of the act of worship.

Those members of staff who wish to exercise their right to withdraw from participation in collective worship, are asked to include within each morning’s registration, a one minute period of silence for private reflection and meditation. This may have some spiritual or therapeutic value for some students and should certainly have a useful calming influence on the Form as a whole. We are pleased with the 100% participation of our students and staff as we feel this shows their commitment to spiritual and intellectual development.

Collective worship and the ethos of the college

Participation in the daily act of collective worship should contribute positively to individual student development and to the ethos of the college. Within this ethos, acts of collective worship should:

- provide the opportunity to consider spiritual, moral, cultural and ethical concepts and to explore their own response and beliefs
- encourage students to value themselves as individuals and to promote respect, tolerance and understanding of others and their beliefs
- contribute to the education of all present and be an intentional learning experience
- convey a sense of occasion, an opportunity to learn behaviour in large groups and promote a sense of group identity.

Student needs and entitlement

Collective worship within the college takes full cognisance of the family backgrounds of students, their ages, abilities and aptitudes. Each Term’s acts of collective worship are devoted to the consideration and exploration of a particular theme. The assemblies provide the starting point for themes, with the Form registration period continuing the theme or supporting other aspects of SMSC.

Worship as practised within a community of faith is outside the experience of the majority of students at Haven High Technology College so formal prayer and the singing of hymns are not part of the normal expression of collective worship. However, a short period of reflection is often included, to provide an opportunity for all present to engage in private prayer and further thought.

Resources for collective worship

The “Thought for the Day” booklet is produced on a termly basis.

A “Thought for the Day” on the weekly theme is provided for use in the classroom on the four days following the Year collective worship. Again, this should not preclude form tutors responding to items of news and current affairs which relate to the week’s theme. Similarly, ideas and contributions from students and departments on the theme for the week should be encouraged.

Withdrawal from collective worship

Parents’ rights to withdraw their child from collective worship as established under the 1944 Education Act, are unaffected by the new legislation. Withdrawal of students from collective worship can be arranged on receipt of a written request from a parent or guardian. Students who are withdrawn are supervised by a member of staff in the Learning Resource Centre. If the parent and college agree, the student may be present during the collective worship but not take part in it. This ensures that the student is present for college assembly activities which may follow the collective worship.

Teachers may withdraw from participation in the collective worship but may be required to supervise students who are withdrawn by parental request.

K. Albelda

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