

North Halifax Grammar School

RE & Collective Worship Policy



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RE & Collective Worship Policy

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1 RE Provision

Religious Studies stimulates an inquiring approach to questions of fundamental importance and relevance to human beings. Religious Studies makes a distinctive contribution to pupils' development by enabling them to reflect upon themselves as whole people. We help pupils understand the significance of religion and its contribution to their spiritual, moral, cultural, as well as academic development. We prepare students for life in a multicultural community.

Religious Studies enables students to:

- Encounter and respond to religion
- Engage in an open and sensitive exploration of religion in a caring and supportive environment
- Develop knowledge and understanding of beliefs, practices and values of world faiths through encountering religions
- To reflect on their own diverse beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues.

Religious Studies develops respect for other people, their beliefs and lifestyles. We promote enthusiasm and curiosity by encouraging a willingness to ask questions and the desire to find out more. The Religious Studies Department stimulates high achievement. All students from Yrs7-11 receive one hour of Religious Education per week apart from Year 9 who have 2 hours per week. Students in Yr11 all take a full GCSE examination in the subject. Results have been excellent. Religious Studies is offered as an option at 'A' Level.

As active learners, students of all abilities are stimulated to realise their potential through a range of opportunities to inquire, question, develop their own responses and formulate their own views to fundamental questions of life, as they encounter and respond to religion. This is achieved through a variety of teaching and learning styles, including the use of artefacts, music, drama, videos, supported self studies and visits, for example to different churches in the local community.

The strength of the Religious Studies team is its committed and motivated members. The Department seeks to support the professional development of all its teachers through opportunities for high quality training. Effective teaching and learning is also supported by the ongoing development of a range of resources and the reviewing of their effective use

Collective Worship

2. The Legal Requirements

The 1944 and 1988 Education Act, provide the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of Collective Worship for all students.

2.1 The Daily Act of Worship may be organised for separate groups of students at any time during the school day.

2.2 Collective worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character though not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.

2.3 Most acts of worship in a school term must be broadly Christian.

2.4 They must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief to an extent and in a way which gives them a Christian character, but as appropriate, having regard to the family background, ages and aptitudes of the students involved

3. The Definition of Collective Worship

The 1988 Education Act and subsequent Acts of the 1990's reinforced the requirements for schools to conduct "daily" acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term Collective Worship. Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for learners to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or 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.

The term “worship” is not defined in the legislation, but it suggests that the term, should have its natural and ordinary meaning” (DFE circular 1/94, January 1994, Religious Education and Collective Worship) The terms Collective Worship and assembly are often used interchangeably, though they are not synonymous; for example, it is possible for learners to take part in an assembly that does not include an act of Collective Worship. Taking part implies more than passive attendance; Collective Worship should be capable of eliciting a response from pupils, though on a particular occasion some of the learners may not feel actively to identify with the act of worship. (DFE circular 1/94, January 1994, Religious Education and Collective Worship)The difference between Corporate and Collective Worship: ... worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common (corporate worship). The legislation reflects this difference in referring to collective worship rather than corporate worship. (DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)

4. Collective Worship in North Halifax Grammar School

Collective Worship recognises that the school community is a **collection** of people, from a variety of backgrounds. Collective Worship is **inclusive** and meaningful to the range of communities served by schools.

The term collective refers to the gathering together of a school group or groups for worship; this is not an act of worship which subscribes to any particular faith or denomination of a faith, rather it caters for a diversity of beliefs and points of view, allowing individuals to respond as individuals. This is mainly of a broadly Christian character.

5. The Aims of Collective Worship at North Halifax Grammar School

- 5.1 To reflect on and support the ethos of the school and celebrate the shared values in the school community
- 5.2 To enable students to consider spiritual and moral issues and the many questions which relate to life.
- 5.3 To acknowledge the things which have meaning, value and purpose for the students as individuals, as well as for the school and the wider community
- 5.4 To acknowledge and respect difference and diversity
- 5.5 To develop a sense of community within and beyond the school
- 5.6 To build positive relationships with families and local faith communities
- 5.7 To develop a sense of shared values and achievements which cross cultural and religious boundaries
- 5.8 To celebrate achievements, special occasions and special events in relation to individual students within the school, to the school as a whole, or to the wider community
- 5.9 To foster feelings such as humility, awe, wonder, appreciation, thankfulness, respect, reverence, etc.
- 5.10 To support the Every Child Matters agenda: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being
- 5.11 To relate to calendar events and significant events in the school and local community.
- 5.12 To provide a learning opportunity.
- 5.13 To provide an opportunity for individual reflection
- 5.14 To enable students to listen and think about the world, themselves and others
- 5.15 To share experiences of challenge, excitement, sadness, thankfulness, hope, forgiveness, appreciation
- 5.16 To encourage appreciation of things considered to be of worth (worship) or held in high regard.
- 5.17 To encourage acknowledgement of the achievement and efforts of others, the struggles and sufferings of other human beings.
- 5.18 Have a sense of occasion

5.19 Have meaning and value. Assemblies seek to develop community cohesion at all levels, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitude

6. The Location and Organisation of Collective Worship

The Principal takes overall responsibility for the organisation of an assembly rota each term. Each week at least two assemblies are scheduled for years 7 to 11 inclusive in the Main Hall. During external examination periods this will vary. Each Year Group is assigned a Whole School assembly slot led by a member of the Leadership Group and a Section assembly led by pastoral leaders. Where appropriate, outside speakers are invited to come to the assembly. Special Assemblies are organised at different times of the school day in order to celebrate special events such as Easter, the start of the academic and calendar year. There are special assemblies, in particular at the end of the year for the presentation of Awards and for other special events. Responsibility for organisation of specialist assemblies rests with the Vice Principal with responsibility for events and calendar. Special Awards Assembly recognises and praises achievement. Assemblies for the Sixth Form are held as and when appropriate as decided by the Principal and the Sixth Form Pastoral Team.

Section Assemblies are occasions which are used to reflect on moral, social and current issues of specific interest and concern to the year groups. All assemblies seek to develop community cohesion at all levels, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes. As well as incorporating collective worship, assemblies are an opportunity to address various necessary administrative tasks, although this is a small part of the overall picture. Singing, music, dancing and drama form part of some assemblies. Due to the limitations of the school building and the school day, it is impossible for the school to comply completely with the requirements in terms of the frequency of collective worship. We have made all reasonable efforts to comply with the legislation.

7. The Rights of Withdrawal

The rights of parents to withdraw their children from Collective Worship established in the 1944 Act remains unchanged. This means that:

7.1 North Halifax Grammar School would comply, if a parent asks for a student to be withdrawn from Collective Worship.

7.2 The School would respond positively should a parent request alternative worship in accordance with a particular faith, but such arrangements could be at no extra cost to the school and must be consistent with the overall purpose of the school curriculum. The parent would be asked to state the element of Collective Worship in which the parent would object to the student taking part. The School continues to be responsible for the supervision of any student withdrawn from Collective Worship. As with the rights of parents, the rights of any member of staff to withdraw from Collective Worship, as described in the 1944 Act, remains unchanged.