

Collective Worship Policy

for whole School: Junior and Senior Sections

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Collective Worship Policy

1. Context: Freemen's Foundation

The Act of Parliament in 1850 secured by Warren Stormes Hale, which enabled the Corporation to found the school, described its purpose as being, "for the religious and virtuous education of the orphans of the Freemen of the City of London." The language used draws on that of the Order for the Administration of The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer. In this service, the intercessions include a prayer for the Sovereign and those in authority:

"We beseech thee also to save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors; and specially thy servant ELIZABETH our Queen; that under her we may be godly and quietly governed: And grant unto her whole Council, and to all that are put in authority under her, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and **to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue.**" (emphasis added)

The intention of the school's foundation was thus to educate pupils in preparation for Christian service and leadership in the world (Learn, Lead and Make a Difference). That Christian underpinning was emphasised by the appointment of a Church of England clergyman as the first headmaster, Revd. W. Brownrigg-Smith, and later endorsed by the appointment of an ordained Chaplain, a post which continues to the current day. Freemen's is a school with a distinctly Christian foundation.

2. Definition: What is Collective Worship?

The most pertinent statutory definition of Collective Worship can be found in DfE circular 1/94, "Religious Education and Collective Worship," from which some key points are:

- “[Worship] must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power.” (Paragraph 57)
- “Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common ... 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'.” (Paragraph 57)
- “Collective worship and assembly are distinct activities ... the difference between the two should be clear” (Paragraph 58)
- “ ... an act of collective worship should be capable of eliciting a response from pupils, even though on a particular occasion some of the pupils may not feel able actively to identify with the act of worship.” (Paragraph 59)

Perhaps the most helpful summary is given in Paragraph 50, which describes the aims of collective worship:

“Collective worship in schools 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, 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.”

3. Principles of Collective Worship at Freeman's

Collective worship at Freeman's is set within the context of the school's Christian foundation, but recognises that pupils come from a variety of faith backgrounds (including those with no belief or religious affiliation).

Most acts of collective worship are clearly indicated as such because they take place in church (usually either St Giles' parish church or one of the City churches). Others are clearly described as a service, often led by the chaplain in clerical dress (for example, a Remembrance Service held in the grounds outside Main House).

In planning collective worship for the Freeman's community, the following principles must be borne in mind:

1. The service should be of a non-denominational Christian character in keeping with the school's foundation
2. The service should foster a sense of identity among the gathered community; pupils should be encouraged by being together
3. No assumptions should be made as to the faith (or lack thereof) of the pupils (or staff) in attendance, in particular:

- a. Hymns and songs should be chosen with care, avoiding “devotional” lyrics which presuppose a faith response on behalf of the singer; pupils are not required to sing but are encouraged to join in for mutual encouragement
 - b. Addresses should offer an opportunity for pupils to develop their understanding of the Christian faith and to engage with the spiritual, recognising that not all pupils will engage with this aspect
 - c. Addresses should also offer sustenance and an opportunity to respond (socially, morally or culturally) for those who do not identify with that spiritual element
 - d. Pupils should be invited, not required, to join in prayer by saying “Amen”
4. Where possible, pupils should be invited to participate directly in the collective worship, for example
- a. Reading a Bible passage
 - b. Leading prayers
 - c. Leading hymns/songs (as a choir or on an instrument)
 - d. Taking part in a relevant activity or illustration forming part of the service

4. The Pattern of Collective Worship at Freemen's

Regular opportunities:

- In Key Stage 2, all pupils participate in a weekly service at St Giles' church on Friday morning, following Biblical themes which are chosen by the chaplain in consultation with the Head of Junior School
- In Key Stage 2, all pupils are invited to join in grace every lunchtime; grace should be a prayer of Christian character encouraging thankfulness and an awareness of the needs of others
- In Upper 3 and above all pupils participate in a half-termly service at St Giles' church on Monday morning, broadly themed around the school and church year:
 - Autumn 1: New School Year
 - Autumn 2: Advent
 - Spring 1: Epiphany
 - Spring 2: Lent
 - Summer 1: Easter
 - Summer 2: Pentecost

Occasional Services:

- All pupils participate in a united Remembrance Service on or near to 11 November
- All pupils participate in an age-appropriate Christmas Carol Service in the last week of the Autumn term
- The City Visit in March is an important rite of passage for pupils in Upper Three and Lower Sixth. Central to that event is a Church Service held at St Lawrence Jewry or one of the other City Churches

- It is no accident that Leavers' Day, for Upper Sixth pupils and their families, begins with a service of collective worship and celebration at which each leaving pupil receives a Bible from the Chair of Governors, an imperative to serve from the Headmaster and a final address and blessing from the Chaplain

5. Collective Worship and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education)

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 Part 2 stipulate (emphases added):

5. The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor—
 - a) **actively promotes** the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and **mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs**;
 - b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which—
 - i. **enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence**;
 - ii. **enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong** and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
 - iii. **encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour**, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;
 - iv. **enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England**;
 - v. **further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures**;
 - vi. **encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act**; and
 - vii. encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England

By implementing this policy, Freeman's aims to develop pupils' understanding of a spiritual dimension to life in general and Christianity in particular. By applying Christian teaching and doctrine to matters of community life and the moral realm, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their relationships with others and to develop their understanding of their role and responsibilities in society, whatever their own faith or belief system. Services highlight the role that faith, and the church in particular, plays for many at key moments in community life, and seek to engender a sense of tolerance and openness to the views of others. Collective worship at Freeman's also informs pupils and nurtures an appreciation of the Christian cultural heritage of the United Kingdom.