

SMSC Policy



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| Written by | Harriet Carter | August 2025 |
| Next review due by | | August 2026 |

Introduction

At Earley Springs, we believe that collective worship plays a vital role in school life. It provides valuable opportunities for:

- Reaffirming our shared values and ethos.
- Strengthening our sense of community, belonging, and inclusivity.
- Fostering respect and care among all members of the community.

Through collective worship, we contribute significantly to the religious, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of our students. We aim to create an environment where all students can "enjoy and achieve," and collective worship serves as a valuable vehicle for this.

Collective worship takes place in a supportive and inclusive environment that values and respects the unique worth of each individual. It does not presuppose any particular religious commitment or affiliation. We recognise and value the diverse experiences, beliefs, and starting points of all students. Individual integrity is always cherished. We believe that all students should develop a love of learning and demonstrate care and respect for each other within a happy, secure, and challenging learning environment.

Rationale

Earley Springs will comply with relevant legislation regarding collective worship in schools, as outlined in the Education Act 1982, Section 12(4). This policy will be actively promoted and implemented throughout Earley Springs.

Aims

Collective worship at Earley Springs aims to provide opportunities for students to:

- Develop cohesion within the community, fostering a strong sense of belonging and recognising the unique contributions of each member.
- Celebrate their membership within the school and wider community.
- Express gratitude and enjoy the unity that arises from sharing friendships, acceptance, joys, hopes, and fears.
- Cultivate a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them.
- Develop an awareness of and concern for the needs of others, as well as their own personal needs.
- Share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences with others.
- Develop shared values such as honesty, respect, tolerance, self-discipline, forgiveness, and fairness.
- Broaden their understanding of themselves, others, and the world around them.

- Celebrate the achievements of students and others within the community.
- Experience religious worship.
- Cultivate reflective and deep thinking skills.
- Deepen their understanding of their own culture and the cultures of others, recognizing that cultural diversity is enriching and not threatening.

Legal Requirements

Earley Springs is guided by the requirements of the Kent Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). The responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the Headteacher, in consultation with the Governing Body. The main provisions for collective worship are outlined in the Education Reform Act 1988:

- **Daily Participation:** All pupils must participate in an act of collective worship each day.
- **Parental Right to Withdraw:** Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from any or all acts of collective worship.
- **Earley Springs Responsibility:** It is the duty of the Headteacher and the executive board to ensure collective worship takes place.
- **Forms of Collective Worship:** Collective worship may take place as a single act for the whole school or in separate acts for different age groups. It can occur at any point during the school day.
- **Christian Focus:** In accordance with the Christian traditions of Great Britain, Section 7(1) of the Education Reform Act states that collective worship should be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character." However, it need not be exclusively Christian.
- **Inclusion of All Pupils:** Pupils from non-Christian families should be able to participate in the daily act of collective worship, even though it may primarily reflect Christian traditions.
- **Justification for Departures:** Any departures from the "broadly Christian" requirement must be justified based on the family backgrounds, ages, and aptitudes of the pupils.
- **Appropriateness:** Collective worship should be appropriate for the family backgrounds, ages, and attitudes of the pupils. This will be determined by the Headteacher after consultation with the executive board.
- **On-Site Occurrence:** Acts of collective worship should take place on the premises.
- **Record Keeping:** It is recommended that the Headteacher maintain records of the school's collective worship plans or other relevant documentation.

Implementation

Earley Springs provides a daily act of collective worship that is broadly Christian in character while drawing inspiration from a diverse range of faiths, beliefs, and traditions. Collective worship also incorporates our values and themes such as British Values. These acts can take place at any time during the school day and may involve the whole school, specific phases, or individual classes.

In addition to the formal act of collective worship, opportunities for reflection, celebration, and thanksgiving are incorporated into daily classroom routines. For example, teachers may set aside time for "review and reflect," where students share their experiences of the day and celebrate their achievements.

Collective worship is planned each term and incorporates themes relevant to the season, religious celebrations, personal/social/emotional development, and local, national, and international events. Links are made to students' learning experiences, and their efforts and achievements are celebrated. A long-term planning document outlines the collective worship themes.

Whole School Acts of Collective Worship:

- **Creating a Calm Atmosphere:** We aim to create an atmosphere of stillness and calm during whole school assemblies.
- **Regularity:** Whole school assemblies, including collective worship, are incorporated regularly within the school's learning approach. The frequency may vary depending on the specific needs of the students.
- **Format:** Assemblies typically include an input from a member of staff (possibly with student assistance), an appropriate song, and a time of quiet reflection. Staff will actively encourage student engagement.
- **Separation from Notices:** The act of collective worship is kept distinct from any other announcements or notices that may be included in the assembly.
- **Guest Speakers:** Occasionally, we may invite guests from religious groups, charities, or other local organizations to lead whole school acts of collective worship.
- **Duration:** Whole school assemblies, including collective worship, typically last around fifteen minutes.

Class-Based Acts of Collective Worship:

- **Quiet Reflection:** We aim to provide students with opportunities for quiet reflection and contemplation within their classrooms.
- **Student-Led Worship:** These acts of collective worship may be led by the class teacher or by one or more students.

Meeting the needs of all learners

Earley Springs aims to provide all students with stimulating and challenging learning experiences that cater to the diverse range of abilities within our community.

Collective Worship and Staff

Teachers and teaching assistants participate in collective worship alongside their classes. If an individual staff member feels that their personal beliefs may be compromised by the school's collective worship program, they can discuss this with the Headteacher. However, given the

nature of our school and the diverse needs of our students, it is expected that all staff will be physically present during acts of worship, even if they do not actively participate.

Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural Development (SMSC)

SMSC is intrinsically linked to collective worship. We foster a positive attitude towards individuality and cultivates respect for diverse cultures. Learning resources are carefully selected to promote awareness and understanding of different cultures and faiths.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All staff are responsible for ensuring that all students are treated equally and equitably, regardless of their background, gender, race, or ability. Earley Springs is an inclusive school that offers collective worship to all students, respecting individual needs. We strive to meet the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), gifted and talented students, and English Language Learners (ELL). Earley Springs operates in accordance with our SEND, Inclusion, and Equality policies.

Use of Visitors

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for liaising with any external visitors who lead collective worship at Earley Springs. Practical arrangements, such as timing, age appropriateness, and content suitability, are agreed upon through discussion. By inviting members of the local community to lead collective worship, we aim to enhance community cohesion. Parents, carers, and members of the Executive Board are invited to special collective worship services, such as Harvest Festival, Christmas Carol Service, and Easter Service.

Health, Safety, and Well-being

During collective worship, we adhere to its health, safety, and well-being policy. For example, appropriate precautions are taken when using candles or electrical equipment. In accordance with our online safety policy, any internet resources used during collective worship must be carefully reviewed by the worship leader beforehand. All pupils and staff are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures for all areas of the school where collective worship may take place. Visitors are never left unsupervised with students.

Right of Withdrawal

Any parent/carers has the right to request that their child be excused from attending collective worship or any specific aspects of it, such as prayer. Earley Springs will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during this time. Parents/carers are not required to provide a reason for their request. This right is protected by the 1944 Education Act and reaffirmed in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

Resources

A wide range of resources is available to support teachers and students in collective worship. These include examples of children's work, Bible stories, stories from other faiths, news articles, factual reports, live music and CDs, internet images, PowerPoint presentations, props, food, artifacts, and guest speakers.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of the quality assurance processes, the Senior Leadership Team is responsible for monitoring the implementation of collective worship to ensure compliance with legal requirements.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or at any time when necessary to ensure compliance with changes in legislation, regulations, or national or local guidance.