

**Gathering Together:  
Policy and Practice  
for Collective Worship  
SACRE guidance (2008)  
Headteacher breakfast briefing  
(May-June 2008)**

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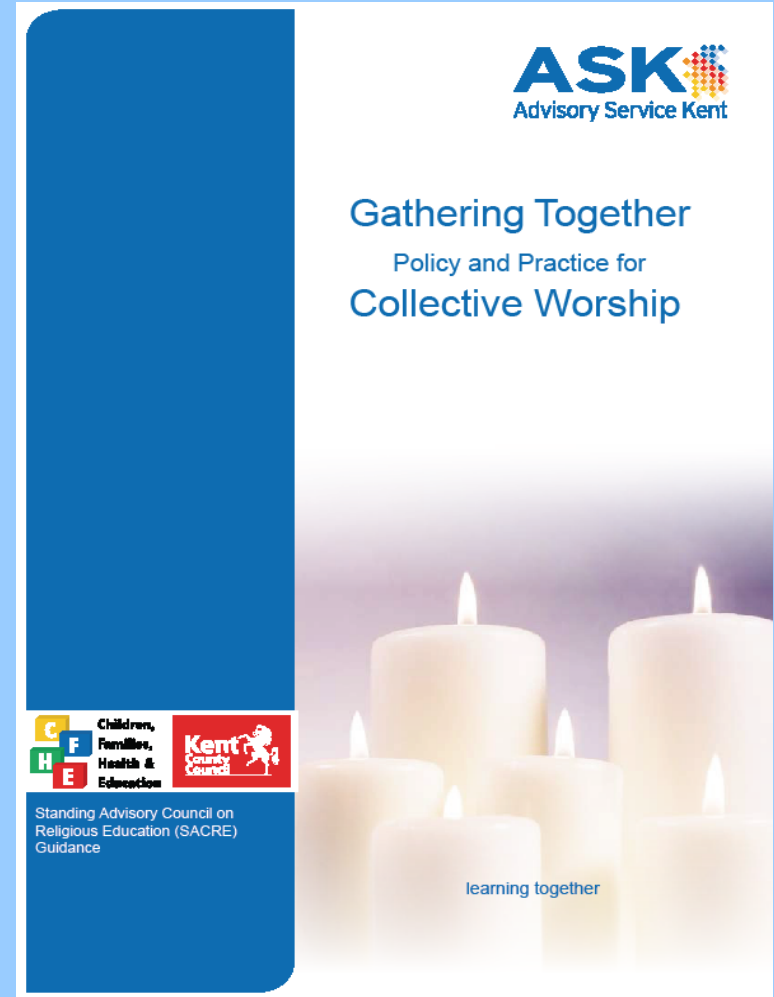
Based on SACRE's new guidance 'Gathering Together: Policy and Practice for Collective Worship' we will ...

- Consider what 'collective worship' is and how it relates to:
  - schools (planning and delivery);
  - children and young people (their experiences and opportunities - entitlement);
  - headteachers and others (what do we have to do?)
  
- Remind ourselves of the legal and educational basis for 'collective worship' in our schools.

# Collective Worship

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

- statutory body
- advises the authority on matters pertaining to RE and Collective Worship
- made up of 4 groups
  - Authority (Councillors)
  - Church of England
  - Teacher representatives
  - Christian and other religious denominations
- This guidance replaces previous guidance



# Collective Worship

- **Summary of legal position:**
  - all pupils (Reception onwards) ~ every day ~ any time ~ any usual school grouping;
  - 'collective' not 'corporate' worship in Community and Foundation Schools without a religious foundation ~ VA, VC and Foundation Schools with a religious foundation - trust deeds therefore 'corporate'/'denominational' worship (Appendix 9a and b);
  - distinction made between 'collective worship' and 'assembly';

# Collective Worship

- **Summary of legal position (cont):**
  - majority of acts of collective worship over any given term should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' (Community/'non-religious Foundation) ~ determination (Appendix 1);
  - parental right to withdraw child(ren) on 'grounds of conscience' (collective worship not assembly) ~ parents can provide alternative 'worship' at no extra cost to school and without impinging on child(ren)'s education ~ school remains responsible for health and safety of pupils on premises;
  - teacher (including headteacher) right to withdraw on 'grounds of conscience' (collective worship not assembly) ~ importance of attendance ~ if head withdraws still responsibility of ensuring compliance.

# Collective Worship

- **Circular 1/94:**
  - not a legal document (need to go to education acts for that) but advice ~ therefore current guidance from DCSF ~ includes RE and collective worship ~ what says about RE less controversial than interpretation of legal and educational basis for collective worship;
  - announced in December 2007 that review of Circular 1/94 will take place and that two Circulars will be produced ~ one on RE (consultation and work taking place currently ~ no publication date given as yet) and another on collective worship (consultation and work on this will begin after RE completed);
  - no indication from DCSF of any will to change legal basis for either RE or collective worship.

# Collective Worship

- Based on Circular 1/94 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;
  - encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and,
  - develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.

# Collective Worship

- Some educational benefits from good 'collective worship/assembly' practice include providing opportunities for:
  - the reinforcement and celebration of the school's ethos and values, its joys and successes;
  - developing a sense of 'the spiritual' and of 'God' (however defined or understood) through for e.g:
    - helping pupils to learn to 'be still' ~ providing a quiet and reflective time which for many will include prayer ~ considering a sense of 'other';
    - exploring values, beliefs, feelings and emotions (own and others);
    - developing a sense of self (inner-awareness and self-esteem) and of others (relationships and respect);

# Collective Worship

- addressing and making a positive contribution to community cohesion issues including for example:
  - sharing, experiencing and affirming 'sameness' and 'difference' - within the school and the wider world;
  - learning from others - their experiences and beliefs - listening and learning, participating and leading;
  - building a sense of belonging (and of self-esteem) and of group identity - being part of a larger group (class, school, local, national global);
  - encouraging a sense of personal and social rights and responsibilities.

# Spiritual development



all pupils - not confined to religious beliefs or a particular faith



fundamental to the human condition



relationships with others/God



search for individual identity (relationship with self)



response to experiences of life



search for meaning and purpose and values by which to live  
(links with moral and ethical behaviour, social and cultural awareness)

# Collective Worship

Some 'top tips' for developing collective worship:

1. be sure you know about and are compliant with the legal basis for collective worship in your school;
2. identify the educational and spiritual (moral, social and cultural) contribution that collective worship can make to your pupils (academic and personal) and to the life of your school;
3. be clear about the similarities and differences between collective worship and:
  - corporate worship;
  - assembly;
  - RE;

# Collective Worship

4. have clear aims for the collective worship programme in general and for individual acts of collective worship;
5. think about how best to organise collective worship in your school ~ timing, groupings, leaders (including pupils), themes, content, approaches ~ balance predictability with spontaneity ;
6. consider who should have oversight of collective worship across the school ~ seniority? Is a planning group needed?

# Collective Worship

7. Ensure that each act of collective worship is actually 'worship' by for example ensuring that:
  - there is a clear focus on appropriate themes and concepts (see list in book and on website);
  - materials and approaches connect appropriately with those present (heart and mind);
  - there is space for reflection and prayer and for 'God' (however defined or understood);
  - there is a clear understanding of and feeling that this time together is special and valued - perhaps marked in a special way (focal point, candle(s), music);
8. Resource it - time, training and financially (separate budget);

# Collective Worship

9. avoid loads of 'tellings off' and heaps of notices ~ if they are necessary have them before the act of collective worship and separate by having a different person doing that to leading the act of collective worship;
10. keep collective worship on the agenda ~ let the collective worship policy take its place alongside other policy documents and initiatives in the school and review it on the same basis as the others.

# Collective Worship

How are we going to know when we've got there?  
Success criteria (hard and soft)

Where are we now?  
Strengths and areas for further development  
Self-evaluation

What do we need to do to make it happen?  
Planned priorities  
Timescale  
Resources (person-power, training, finances, etc)

Where do we need to be?  
Compliance and quality issues  
Contribution to personal and academic development of pupils  
Role in life of school



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