



# The Skinners' School

## Collective Worship Policy

### 1. Philosophy

At The Skinners' School, worship is an important part of the Skinners' School day as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a community. It is attended by all students (unless they have been withdrawn by their parents/carers) and by staff. Any visitors in the Skinners' School are very welcome to join in. We recognise that Collective Worship is an important opportunity to provide opportunities for our students' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

### 2. Aims

It is our aim that worship should:

- contribute to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of each student
- support the social and emotional aspects of students' learning (SEAL)
- promote community cohesion
- give expression to, and reaffirm and practise the values of the Skinners' School community
- allow reflection and response to the fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings
- celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the Skinners' School, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals.
- foster and enable a concern for the needs of others, a recognition of the vulnerability of self and of others
- provide members of the Skinners' School community with the opportunity to praise and reach out to God.
- provide members of the Skinners' School community with the opportunity to experience stillness and quiet
- provide members of the Skinners' School community with the opportunity to respond to Christian language and symbolism and that of other faiths
- provide members of the Skinners' School community with the opportunity to experience a variety of forms of prayer and meditation. These might include praise, seeking forgiveness, asking on behalf of self and others or quiet reflection.
- to help students to begin to understand the nature and purpose of worship
- provide a foundation for a mature understanding and practice of worship in the future.

### 3. Legal Status of Collective Worship

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires that 'all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each day take part in an act of Collective Worship'. The Skinners' School accepts the desirability of this legislation but has considerable practical difficulties in meeting this requirement. We seek to do our best to keep the spirit of this legislation seeking to provide as many high quality acts of worship as is practically possible.

To provide students with variety in their experience of worship, acts of worship may take the form of a whole Skinners' School act of worship for all students or separate acts of worship for students in different age groups or Skinners' School groups. Collective Worship may be held at any time during the Skinners' School day.

The responsibility for arranging worship in the Skinners' School rests with the Headmaster who after consultation with the governing body may appoint a co-ordinator with the responsibility for co-ordinating Collective Worship in the Skinners' School.

All acts of worship are in accordance with the guidance issued in circular 1/94 which states that worship should be of a 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' and not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. By broadly Christian in this Skinners' School we mean that:

- Worship contains some elements which accord special status to Jesus, his teachings and actions, e.g. The Sermon on the Mount.
- Sharing with students the Christian belief that all Christians are called to continue Jesus' work of love and compassion for their fellow human beings through the exploration of key Christian concepts such as Love, trust, forgiveness, mercy, humility, courage and integrity, respect for life, value of an individual, justice, co-operation and service, honesty and truthfulness.

Acts of Collective Worship at The Skinners' School take into account the students' ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds.

The Headmaster and governors, on advice from the Worship Co-ordinator, may apply for a determination from SACRE if there are a large number of students in the Skinners' School from a particular non Christian faith background.

The Skinners' School recognises that there is a difference between Acts of Collective Worship and the assembly of students. On some occasions assembly may precede or follow an Act of Collective Worship. When this happens the transition from Assembly to worship may be marked in some suitable way e.g. the lighting of a candle or reflecting on a visual image, moment of silences and reflection etc

#### 4. Rights of Withdrawal

At The Skinners' School we seek to be an inclusive community however we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children for Collective Worship. The Skinners' School has a system of suitable supervision for students withdrawn from Acts of Collective Worship. However, no additional work is set or followed in this time.

All teachers, including the Headmaster, have the right of withdrawal from the Act of Collective Worship, but the Headmaster should he or she wish exercise this right, maintains statutory accountability for Acts of Collective Worship in the Skinners' School.

This right of withdrawal does not extend to assemblies.

#### 5. Planning, Recording and Evaluation

Collective worship will be treated like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing and evaluation.

The content and methodology of Collective Worship should be varied and there should be evidence of this in planning.

Each week there is a theme for Collective worship. These are published at the beginning of the term and a reminder is included in the weekly bulletin. It is expected that those leading worship that week will relate their worship to this theme and that House tutors will re-enforce this in reflections in House period time. The themes chosen are broad enough to allow all those leading worship to approach the theme from their own perspective. This will mean that by the end of the week the students will have had the opportunity to reflect on the theme from a variety of viewpoints.

This pattern is flexible and on occasions it is recognised that worship leaders may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.

The Skinners' School seeks to involve students in the evaluation of collective worship. Members of the Skinners' School Student Council regularly seek the views of their classmates and report these to the Skinners' School's Student Council.

This policy will be monitored by governors through the Education committee.

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