

ST AIDAN'S
Voluntary Controlled
PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Assembly and collective worship policy

Introduction

St Aidan's is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England school with a Christian ethos and as such we welcome and respect all children, parents, visitors and staff whatever their faith or non-religious beliefs. We recognise and value their contributions to our school, our community and to our assemblies.

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1 Assemblies

At St Aidan's we define our assemblies as the gathering of staff and children to receive messages or announcements; to watch plays and share children's work.

- 1.1 Our school values are peace, kindness, sustainability, resilience, inclusiveness and community. Our assemblies are inclusive through their careful balance of religious and non-religious themes, which may include:
 - current affair topics;
 - religious festivals or celebrations;
 - citizenship;
 - personal, social and health education.
- 1.2 Our assemblies also reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies by showing their work to the other children and raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised. St Aidan's is a successful primary school and we celebrate the successes of all the children in assemblies.
- 1.3 We invite parents and carers to assemblies on a regular basis and we encourage them to attend as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children.
- 1.4 We welcome governors at our assemblies at any time. They regularly attend our whole-school sharing assemblies on Fridays, giving out weekly certificates celebrating the achievements of children.

2 Organisation of assemblies

In the classrooms before any gathering, staff remind their children of the school's expectations of their behaviour in assemblies.

- 2.1 Whilst entering the assembly hall, children listen to a piece of music which helps to set the tone of the assembly.
- 2.2 We engage in whole school assemblies on Fridays. On other days KS1 and KS2 have separate assemblies.
- 2.3 Members of staff normally conduct assemblies each week but occasionally other representatives of local religious groups or other members of the community, eg. police neighbourhood team or charity representatives, conduct them instead.

3 Collective worship

At St Aidan's collective worship involves members of the school coming together and participating in prayer (which may be sung in the form of a hymn) or a moment of personal and spiritual reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen attentively. These acts of daily worship are held at



the start or at the end of our assemblies and church visits or, when these do not occur, at a convenient time in the classroom.

- 3.1 We consider collective worship to be a special act or occasion. The aims and purpose are to:
 - provide an opportunity for children to worship God, or explore their own beliefs through reflection;
 - introduce children to stories from the Bible;
 - enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
 - encourage participation and response;
 - develop in children a sense of community spirit;
 - promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes.
- 3.2 Our collective worship reflects the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Church, as received by the Church of England.
- 3.3 We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and sometimes candles or other objects that act as a focal point for the attention of the children.
- 3.4 Although the acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies which reflect and honour other religious traditions. We conduct all our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school. We expect everyone – staff, children and visitors – to respect our collective worship.
- 3.5 Children from non-faith backgrounds are supported in their role of comfortable observers during the moment of collective worship.

4 Clergy support and Church visits

The priests in charge of the local churches, Holy Trinity and Holy Innocents, conduct the Monday assemblies. The content of their presentations encourage children to think about moral issues and lessons for life which are relevant to all children. These themes are then related to Christian teachings and conclude with collective worship.

- 4.1 We visit the local church, Holy Trinity (Church of England), four times a year. We celebrate the festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas and the transition of our year 6 children to secondary school at the end of the school year.

5 Right of withdrawal

We encourage all children to participate in collective worship. However, any parent can ask for their child to be excused from collective worship. This request must be made in writing. The school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and the 1988 Education Reform Act.

- 5.1 The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who are withdrawn from collective worship and this information is shared with staff and governors.



6 Monitoring and review

- 6.1 It is the role of the Religious Education and collective worship subject leader and the Religious Education and collective worship school governor to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship.

- 6.2 The SIAMS Working Party and Standards Committee review this policy every two years, or earlier if the need arises.

Date of policy: **OCTOBER 2022**

Policy ratified: (Signature) (Date)

Review due: : **OCTOBER 2024**