

Guidance for All Schools for Collective Worship (2025-2026)

The guidance is taken from the Religious Education and Collective Worship 1/94 which is a circular aimed to help schools interpret the Education Acts previously passed relating to Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CW).

The local SACRE (Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education) is legally responsible for the implementation of the law.

What is the aim 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.

What is 'Collective Worship'?

There is no set definition for collective worship, but it should be separate from and different from usual school activities. It should reflect the community it is for, therefore being 'collective' not 'corporate' worship. There is an expectation that pupils are taking part. The collective worship therefore needs to be relatable for the pupils and elicit responses to enable them to actively be involved.

It should be of a broadly Christian nature and reflect broadly Christian traditions, it should not be specific to one tradition to enable all to participate, being appropriate for all. If it is felt that broadly Christian traditions and nature would be inappropriate for pupils, then a discussion between the school and the local SACRE is required.

It is advised that plans for collective worship are maintained to ensure that this can be available to respond to queries.

Who should attend?

All pupils who are registered in school, should attend and take part in a daily act of collective worship (unless parents have chosen to withdraw their child, see later paragraph). This means all pupils from Reception to Year 11 and those in KS5 if in school. This does not apply to tertiary colleges or to nursery classes in primary schools.

How should it be organised?

It should be a daily event, appropriate for all and to include all pupils. When in the day, is at the discretion of the school and it can take place in small groups (although these groups should not be based on religious views).

Collective Worship should take place on school premises, although exceptions can be made for special occasions.

Who has the right to withdraw?

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Collective worship. Schools must comply with this and are responsible for the supervision of the child during this time. Parents are not obliged to state why they wish to withdraw their child, but this guidance would suggest it is advisable to seek some clarity with parents about why they wish to withdraw their child to avoid misunderstandings. (The NATRE website provides a helpful set of additional guidance to support school staff with this).

Parents can request that religious education work / religious worship is completed during this time which they have provided, it is not the responsibility of the school. It is at the discretion of the school and must meet the following guidance: it does not provide a denominational worship (replacing the school's non-denominational worship), does not incur any additional cost for the school and is not contrary to the curriculum being provided.

What about schools of a Religious Foundation?

Where a school has a religious foundation, there is an expectation that the traditions of their foundation are followed within collective worship. They will be inspected in collective worship through the SIAMS or the Catholic Schools inspectorate. Both the Catholic and Anglican Church have produced their own guidance which is linked below.

Catholic Church: [Worship - Key Guidance from the CES.docx](#)

Anglican Church: [Curriculum: collective worship — National Society for Education](#)