

Foundation School



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THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL

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THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Date of last review:	May 2023	Review period:	2 years
Date of next review:	Summer 2025	Owner:	Curriculum Committee
		Approval:	



TBSHS: A truly all-round education



1. Aims of Collective Worship

The school values underpin every aspect of life at The Bishop's Stortford High School (TBSHS) and are designed to help students develop as responsible, considerate young people that can make a positive contribution to society. The school values are:

- Commitment
- Aspiration
- Respect
- Integrity
- Community

The culture and ethos at TBSHS is epitomised through our 'Black & Gold' spirit which is the values enacted, promoted and modelled by staff and students. Collective worship is an important and fundamental aspect of how we support students in developing these values, which are at the very heart of education at TBSHS. Collective worship at TBSHS pulls all members of the school together into a cohesive community and provides opportunities to reflect on deeper spiritual, moral, social and cultural values of religions and beliefs. Collective worship is not the same as religious congregational worship, it is an invitation to and opportunity for worship in an educational context. It includes and builds bridges with the students' own views and experiences helping them to reflect on and develop their ideas about what is important in life. It helps create and sustain the ethos, values and learning culture at TBSHS as an aspiring and inspirational learning community. It is inclusive, invitational, participatory, reflective and celebratory. Collective Worship recognizes and values the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of our school population and is conducted in line with our Equality policy.

2. Statutory Requirements

The collective worship policy at TBSHS pays due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken account of the guidance offered by the local authority through its Local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Collective worship is a valued and valuable part of school life and is taken seriously, because it shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school. The School will provide Daily Collective Worship for registered students (apart from those who have been withdrawn by their parents). The Headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the Daily Collective Worship after consulting with the governing body. Daily Collective Worship at TBSHS will be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, and will depend on the background, ages and abilities of the students. If it is inappropriate for some or all of the students to take part in Christian collective worship, the Headteacher may apply to the Local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for a determination to have this requirement lifted.

3. The Management of Collective Worship

The following arrangements exist to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate collective worship:

- The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Collective Worship will plan themes for Senior Leadership Team assemblies each week (which will feature heavily in form time sessions and have links to PSHE and Citizenship).
- The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Collective Worship will observe at least 6 acts of collective worship (from a range of formats) per term to ensure that they comply with school policy and the law.
- The Head of Religious Studies and Citizenship is responsible for the daily Thought for the Day message, which is sent to all students and staff.

Collective Worship, whether in Assemblies or Form Time, will be appropriate to the school community, include a variety of elements at different times and involve the students. To achieve this it addresses a wide variety of themes and topics, uses diverse stimuli and resources and provides students with opportunities to 'respond' at their own level. Collective worship takes place in a variety of groupings in the school hall, or the classroom. Acts of worship usually last for approximately 20 minutes, although it is recognised that this time will be shortened or lengthened when it is appropriate.

4. Collective Worship and the Curriculum

TBSHS recognises that schools should be more than places of academic learning. Collective worship time is distinct from curriculum time given to any subject including religious education. At TBSHS, we aim to enable collective worship and provide opportunities for students and staff to experience together national and international days and celebrate and reflect on events of moral significance and key cultural and religious festivals. In Collective Worship, those students who have a faith will be able to use the reflection time to consider issues in the light of their religious beliefs and to pray or worship internally as they feel appropriate whilst those students who do not have a religious belief will have the opportunity to reflect and make a personal internalised response to the same stimulus. They will also be able to enter into dialogue with those of faith, enabling both believers and non-believers to appreciate each other's stories. The language of invitation to reflect will be open and inclusive, ensuring that no student or adult present feels their beliefs have been compromised and ensuring that they are able to participate and grow spiritually.

5. Withdrawal

The TBSHS Collective Worship Policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory. Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship and staff (and students in the sixth form) are also free to withdraw from involvement in this aspect of school life. We request that those who wish to exercise this right inform the Head Teacher in writing so that school records are accurate. We also appreciate opportunities to speak with parents and staff who have concerns about collective worship, always keen to develop our understanding of sensitivities and to overcome difficulties where possible. Those students who are withdrawn from worship are cared for by a member of the school's staff; parents may provide suitable activities for children so withdrawn.