

THORNTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

POLICY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The School has a long tradition of formal morning assemblies which have formed the basis for collective worship within the School. During its association with the Bradford LEA the School subscribed to the Authority's policy on assemblies, and this has remained unchanged since.

The School has committed itself to the implications of the recent legislation on religious education and this is now part of the core curriculum for pupils throughout the School. This has been integrated into the wider pastoral curriculum which incorporated personal, social and physical education.

There is emphasis on moral values and on communal and individual responsibilities in our society. Wherever possible these are related to current issues which may be centred on the school, community, or on the world at large. Whilst assemblies are the main focus of this aspect of the School's life there is a long-standing association with the Parish Church.

There is limited communal accommodation in the School and the main hall will only provide spaces for about 250 persons. For this reason assemblies are normally organised on a year basis. They are held on three days a week and the year groups rotate through a weekly cycle. On the other two days the main hall is used for a Christian assembly and a Muslim assembly under the provision made in the determination to SACRE. A Sikh assembly and a Hindu assembly are also provided once a week but these are held in a classroom.

Responsibility for the organisation of the assemblies rests with the Deputy Headmaster and year group assemblies are normally taken by the Head of Year or by members of the Senior Management Team.

This programme is varied by the introduction of outside speakers such as Gideons and representatives from national and local charities. The assemblies are designed to encourage pupils to reflect on their own faith and attitudes, to examine their response to specific issues and their role in society.

Placing Worship within the basic curriculum

'Collective Worship' together with Religious Education makes up the basic curriculum along with the core and the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum.

The DES Circular 3/89 The Education Reform Act 1988: Religious Education and Collective Worship provides the detailed organisational requirements which basically are:

Collective Worship:

- must be daily for all registered pupils. This includes Sixth Formers.
- can be at any time of the school day.
- can be a single act for all pupils or separate acts for groups of pupils (age or school activity, but not faith).

The majority of acts of collective worship each term shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character - that is they will reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. The extent to which, and the ways in which this is applied will have regard for the pupils' family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes.

The reasons for making an application for a determination to SACRE are:

The composition of the student population attending Thornton Grammar School is heterogeneous and therefore delivery of the Religious Education curriculum through acts of collective worship as outlined in the 1988 Education Act is inappropriate. The school is sensitive to the varying faith backgrounds and expectations of its students. There are also practical difficulties in that the school cannot accommodate all the students in one place as one collective group and the main hall is not available for collective worship throughout the academic year.

Consequently, whilst every student will take part in an act of collective worship each week, the school would consider it appropriate to make arrangements for smaller groups to meet in suitable areas within the school.

The arrangements the school proposes to make for daily collective worship wherever possible will be implemented, subject to the availability of resources.

- Faith groups will meet once a week;
- When and where appropriate whole year groups will meet on a frequent basis;
- Students will meet as Form Tutor groups and consider a 'Thought for the Week' selected from a list compiled by students and staff of the School and displayed in each Form Room and in the Entrance Hall;
- Space for individual students will be provided so that they may engage in private meditation or prayer;
- Information will be provided to parents on the rights of withdrawal;
- Alternative accommodation and learning will be provided for students whose parents have withdrawn them from collective worship;
- Attendance of any student to places of worship will be facilitated;
- Fostering collective worship and promoting individuals to hold specific faiths will be encouraged.

Parents have the right to withdraw children from Religious Education and/or worship and in this case alternative arrangements will be made.

Teachers rights are also safeguarded. The Headteacher is not expected to personally conduct any act of collective worship within the exclusive and specific context of the 1988 Education Act nor are any other members of staff. However, acts of worship can be led by members of the school staff if they are prepared to do so and if for a specific faith they are committed to the relevant religion. In certain cases the School may well seek to augment the situation by having as the collective worship leaders from the religious communities outside school. Such assistance will be sought from Thornton Parish Church and the Interfaith Centre.