

The Basic Facts: ENGLAND AND WALES

1. There must be a daily act of worship for every pupil. This can be any time of the day in any normal school grouping and should usually take place on the school premises. It is the head teacher's responsibility, or the governors in voluntary schools, to ensure this happens.

2. It must be in addition to any non-religious assemblies. Wherever possible it should be a single act.

3. The majority of acts must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character meaning they should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief. They can contain non-Christian elements, but must contain some elements which accord a special status to Jesus Christ. Worship must not be distinctive of any particular denomination.

4. Worship must be appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of all pupils such that they can all take part. Decisions about the nature of broadly Christian worship will take these factors into account. Taking part implies more than a passive attendance. Collective worship should elicit a response from all pupils even though they may not all feel able to identify with a particular act of worship.

5. The aims of worship are:

'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, [watching] and joining in worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.'

6. Worship should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power. This is the natural and ordinary meaning of the word worship. It should reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities, although it can be related to the day to day life, aspirations and concerns of the school.

7. Collective worship in schools will 'necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common'. It is not corporate.

8. Non-broadly Christian worship is allowed:

- * in a minority of acts of worship
- * if a determination is granted to a school by SACRE
- * if parents request and arrange it

9. Both teachers and parents have a legal right of withdrawal.

10. Worship should promote respect and understanding of those with different beliefs and religious practices.

Information compiled from the 1988 Education Act and Circulars 1/94 (England) and 10/94 (Wales)

Note: Word in brackets only applies in Wales.