



DAVENANT FOUNDATION SCHOOL

WORSHIP POLICY

Last Review Date: March 2005 (Standing Committee)

Introduction and Definitions

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires that students take part in a daily act of collective worship, in accordance with the principles of the foundation. Davenant is an ecumenical Christian Foundation school. **We follow the beliefs of mainstream Christianity, emphasising the role of God in the world as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.** Worship is very important to our life. Although the daily experience of most students and staff will be that of collective worship, there will also be opportunities throughout the year to take part of voluntary corporate worship. It is important to differentiate between them.

Collective worship:

This takes place daily when the school community, or parts of it, comes together to share what it is to be a community in celebration of their being. This may, in our case, involve the exploration of and reflection on the part that **God** plays in the whole life of the community. Collective worship is inclusive of all students and staff in the school community.

Corporate worship:

This takes place when a group of Christians get together as the body of Christ in order to offer Him homage and devotion in response to their experience of His working in their lives. Special services throughout the year may be acts of corporate worship.

Collective Worship

- The daily act of collective worship is seen as the focal point of the school day and teaching staff are expected to attend large group assemblies with their tutor groups or to ensure that the 'Thought for the Day' takes place in their tutor group, or that which they are covering. The daily assembly should provide a sense of occasion for all in attendance.
- Whilst a Christian Foundation, the school recognises the valuable input of its Jewish students and staff. Collective worship will not preclude their involvement.
- Collective worship takes the form of either assemblies of various groups of the school community, or the tutor group following the 'Thought for the Day'.
- Collective worship should challenge and enrich the lives of both students and staff, providing opportunities for reflection and a greater understanding of the nature of worship.
- It should enable students to develop further their own faith and beliefs through a variety of stimuli.
- The form and content of the worship must take account of the age and backgrounds of the students.
- A variety of opportunities for students to be involved and to respond should be provided.
- The use of any materials in collective worship must be consistent with scriptural values and the aims and ethos of the school.
- Assemblies on Mondays (Years 10-13) and Fridays (Years 7-9) will be hosted by members of the Senior Leadership Group and often led by invited members of local

churches / synagogues. A variety of styles will be provided over the course of each term.

- The basic framework for collective worship will relate to the church year and provide opportunities for students to respond to and reflect on what is happening in the life of the school community and the world at large. A theme will be provided for each week, published for the full year. A group, led by the Head of RE, will co-ordinate this on a termly basis.
- The school programme of collective worship should also emphasise links with the world-wide church. (e.g. the persecuted church, the spread and revival of Christian faith overseas).
- Assemblies should be a focus for worship and celebration of the life of the community. Notices will be kept to a minimum and delivered at the start of assemblies to enable an appropriate atmosphere in the assembly. This will be monitored to ensure consistent approach in all assemblies.
- Parents have the right, if they make request, to withdraw their child from the act of collective worship, although there is an expectation that seeking a place at the school and fulfilling the admission requirements will preclude this happening.

Collective worship should include a variety of 'elements' which may include:

Affirmation	prayer	reverence	caring
reflection	symbols	drama	silence
awe	wonder	celebration	praise
dance/movement	communion/fellowship	liturgy	art
mystery	reconciliation/forgiveness	created things	readings
music	ritual	giving	teaching
thanksgiving	testimony		

Corporate Worship

- It is expected that, on the whole, all occasions where corporate worship takes place will be of a voluntary nature.
- Opportunities for corporate worship will include the celebration of the Eucharist on feast days.
- The school will promote special occasions when all members of the school community - students, staff, parents and governors can come together in an act of corporate worship, for example at Christmas.

Responsibilities:

- The school will acknowledge the importance of both collective and corporate worship by providing resources for its servicing and development.
- Appropriate staff and students will be responsible for various aspects of the worship of the school, with the Christian Review Group maintaining the role of co-ordination.
- The school will endeavour to ensure that any place used for worship is well prepared. When corporate worship takes place, thought will be given to the provision of focal points of worship.
- The school will endeavour to provide training for staff on leading and/or contributing to collective worship and will provide guidelines for good practice.
- The school is actively seeking to provide a place where students and staff can reflect and/or pray without interruption.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The school's Christian Review Group will maintain an overview of the worship in school through the agendas of its regular meetings, and through research activity. The group is chaired by a member of the SLG and membership includes a governor, the Head of RE, a member of the support staff, a member of the Stage Crew, and, at least, three other students, representing a cross section of ages, genders and churchmanship.
- The Senior Leadership Group encourages responses from all members of the community with regard to worship in school.
- Heads of Year are responsible for supporting those leading Key Stage assemblies and, in consultation with the SLG, for providing feedback as appropriate.
- The Christian Review Group will advise the SLG annually on a calendar of 'special' worship events (other than assemblies), in the light of an annual evaluation of worship opportunities in school.
- The Governors Standing committee will review the policy every two years and receive interim reports on worship in school.

Conclusion

Our ideal would be that our corporate worship should inspire Christians to practice Jesus' summary of the Law - to love God and to love our neighbour. Our collective worship should at least enable students to move towards an understanding of this and its potential relevance to their lives.