



# AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

## Collective Worship - AST

**December 2019**

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## Collective Worship

### Definitions

- Krishna: is the name of God within Hinduism and is used interchangeably with God.
- Collective Worship: any act of worship that is conducted collectively or as a group participating in the same activity at the same time.
- Worship: any activity by which children express their devotion and faith towards Krishna. This includes, but is not limited to: chanting Krishna's names quietly or in kirtan, arati, abhisheka, drama, prayer, dance and drama.
- Deity: the form of the Lord, which is worshipped (as distinguished from an 'idol').

### Purposes and Provision

- Positive and uplifting experiences of worship based upon the Chaitanya-Vaishnava tradition.
- The singing of the names of the divine, with special but not exclusive focus on Krishna.
- Opportunities for genuine self-discovery and spiritual exploration.
- Effective pastoral care that supports each students' personal, emotional and spiritual journey.
- Recognition that all of the world's great spiritual traditions represent the divinity in their distinctive ways.

### Outcomes

- Learn practices and techniques of engaging with and approaching the spiritual.
- Experience, as relevant to them, a loving, spontaneous and reciprocal relationship with Krishna.
- Be able to reflect upon and apply their experience, knowledge and understanding of Collective Worship to their daily lives and spiritual growth.
- Take up opportunities to explore their own faith and spiritual journey and develop into creative, creative and enquiring thinkers who are well-prepared to make up their own minds on issues of faith and belonging.
- Enthusiastically participate in the different forms of worship.
- Can confidently consider complex spiritual and moral issues in a probing and dialogic manner, with constructive critique to promote honest and empathetic dialogue.
- Develop a broad-minded perspective by acknowledging the key roles of free choice, fidelity to tradition and exemplary role models.
- Evidence a deep awareness of an essential spiritual identity that unites all living beings, transcending all designations related to age, race, gender, species, faith affiliation and ability.
- Support and celebrate the Avanti ethos, including the 6 values, which will develop a tangible school-wide community spirit and positive relationships.

- Through Collective Worship pupils are inspired to make positive changes to themselves and the world around them.

## Assessment

The assessment of Collective Worship within schools should support our ethos by promoting individual and autonomous thought, personal growth and values, as well as assisting the individual to recognize and develop a natural sense of spirituality, leading to devotion to Krishna.

There might be concern that any attempt to assess the value or effect of collective worship risks becoming judgmental or intrusive. We wish to avoid any system that might encourage labelling or stereotyping.

Collective assessment of a class and assessment of the Collective Worship provision should be encouraged as an approach.

At a minimum, assessment and evidence of outcomes should include:

- S48 inspection.
- Quality of provision (i.e. quality of staff delivery, kirtan, stories, thoughtful conversations etc.).
- Class Collective Worship Portfolio. Comprised of videos, photos, notes and observations.
- Collective Worship Journals. Individual reflections written by children. The diary should be used as a means to gauge the student's level of thought and contemplation. Such observations are about the quality of reflection and not accuracy or correctness. For Reception and part of Year 1, the class teacher will need to write this based upon conversations with each child. This can be increasingly online/multimedia for older students.
- Extracts and examples of debates, dilemmas and case studies with main arguments and thoughts.
- Pupil understanding of reflection on the daily and occasional prayers/songs.
- 'Wow' work examples.
- Observations by Collective Worship Lead.
- Examples of sharing Collective Worship with other schools.
- Comments book for parents and visitors on Collective Worship.
- Quality of classroom shrine area and displays.
- Record of pupil attitude towards Collective Worship, which is included in end of year report.
- Pupils' own assessment of their own class's happiness, behaviour, wellbeing, atmosphere and progress.
- Collective class assessments of cooperation skills, participation and behaviour.

## Expectations of Staff and Training (to be shared at or prior to interview)

- Each school must have an identified lead for Collective Worship. This person might well be the same as the PRE lead. The Collective Worship lead will be responsible for all aspects of Collective Worship, including the quality of provision across all classes.
- All staff should attend Collective Worship and be given the opportunity to participate. However, if they do not wish to actively participate, they should be allowed to respectfully and attentively observe. In all circumstances, their behaviour should be positive and an example for students.
- All staff should maintain a private journal for their own spiritual development, modelling this activity at the same time as when students are writing in their Collective Worship journal.
- There will be separate staff induction for new staff and for existing staff. This will be three 1-hour sessions in the first term, two 1-hour sessions in the second term and two 1-hour sessions in the summer term.
- Each staff meeting should begin with a brief spiritual reflection. This can be led by the Principal or PRE lead.
- Each school must identify an appropriately accredited school chaplain and make their contact details and availability known to all staff.
- Either the Principal, PRE lead or other designated staff member should be identified to all staff as the 'go to' person for questions on faith, Religious Studies and Collective Worship.
- Training for all PRE Leads should take place every half-term. This will provide a platform for leads to share practice and disseminate good practice across all schools.
- All SLT members have an important role in modelling for pupils a good understanding of the school's faith ethos, engagement with Collective Worship and enthusiasm for driving the ethos forward.

## Format of Collective Worship and Daily Prayers

Collective worship should be 20 minutes per day. This does not include any time dedicated to non-faith assembly matters. This can be whole school, by KS or individual class groupings. This will depend on individual school circumstances.

The daily prayers which will be recited are:

- Govindam prayers (as part of morning worship)
- Pranam Mantras (as part of morning worship)

- Hare Krsna maha mantra (as part of morning worship)
- Narasimhadev prayers (as part of morning worship)
- Avanti Prayers (at three points during the day – start of day, lunch, end of day)

Translations for the above do not have to be read daily but the meanings of the above prayers must be discussed in class at least once a fortnight so that correct pronunciation and understanding can be checked. Children can share different understandings of the translations and ways to connect and remember their meaning.

### Observation of Festivals

Festivals should be celebrated on the actual day of the religious festival unless these days fall outside of term-time, since these days we know well in advance. There are different levels of observation for the different festivals.

**Level 1:** Govardhan-puja, Gaura Purnima and Ratha Yatra.

There should be 3 drop-down days throughout the year, one day per term. The usual curriculum will be either themed on these festivals or suspended in order to engage in festival activities.

**Level 2:** Janmashtami, Radhashtami, Srila Prabhupada's birthday, Christmas (Christian), Lord Nityananda's birthday, Siva Ratri, Ramnavami, Easter (Christian) and Lord Nrsimhadeva's birthday.

These 9 festivals per year will be celebrated through an extended Collective Worship of 40 minutes, incorporating engaging activities such as drama and song. These will typically be whole school or KS gatherings and hosted in the temple area if possible. These festivals will be supported by in-class activities.

**Level 3:** Ekadashi, Appearance/Disappearance days of the 6 Goswamis and the principal acharyas, Passover (Jewish) and Eid (Muslim).

These festivals will be celebrated through a slightly extended Collective Worship to be able to reference something about the festival focus.

**Level 4:** All other religious days e.g. Vasant Pancami.

Mentioned immediately before or after Collective Worship and/or assembly.

A comprehensive curriculum for each festival, differentiated by KS or year group, will be developed for implementation. Differentiation will be possible through different festive activities and learning/meaning of festival specific songs and prayers.

It is important that schools consider creative, fun and engaging ways to celebrate the festivals, for example:

- Kirtan

- Drama
- Dramatised textual readings
- Dance
- Abhisheka
- Special altar decorations
- Cooking
- Specific bhajans/songs
- Yajnas
- Festival specific (e.g. cart procession for Ratha-yatra)

The parents and the wider community can be invited in to participate in different festivals if the school wishes.

### British Values

Assemblies will reference Collective Worship links to ensure there are recorded links to British Values. This will be documented as evidence. All schools will provide opportunities for those of different faiths and beliefs to contribute and share, thus developing respect and appreciation of others.