



**[COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY]**

**[AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST]**

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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

This policy sets out the Collective Worship policy for all Avanti schools and includes an Appendix that is applicable only to Avanti's Hindu faith designated schools.

### 1. What do we mean by Collective Worship

- a. Worship: any activity by which students engage with the divine. This includes, but is not limited to activities such as: singing the names of God, ritual worship and prayer;
- b. Collective Worship: any act of worship that is conducted collectively or as a group participating in the same activity at the same time.

### 2. Purposes and Provision

Collective Worship should contribute to the development of spiritual insight for both students and adults by providing:

- a. Positive and uplifting experiences of worshipping the divine;
- b. Opportunities for meaningful self-discovery and developing spiritual insight;
- c. Effective pastoral care that supports each students' personal, emotional and spiritual journey;
- d. Opportunities to explore and apply spiritual teachings and practices in their own lives, inside and outside of school;
- e. Recognition that all of the world's great spiritual traditions represent the divinity in their distinctive ways.

### 3. Outcomes

- a. Celebrate and embody the Avanti ethos, rooted in the 6 core principles, which will develop a tangible school-wide community spirit and positive relationship i.e.
  - *We are unique spiritual beings with incredible potential and we achieve our full potential by discovering and nurturing all parts of ourselves – intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual.*
  - *We choose how we wish to respond to life and what we nurture within us.*
  - *We care for and respect all life – human, animal and plant – and live in a way that causes the least possible harm.*
  - *We each observe the one same reality from our own unique perspective and engage in open-minded dialogue to deeply enrich our vision.*
  - *We serve a higher purpose by living a meaningful and satisfying life of contribution.*
  - *We are nourished by personal relationships that fulfil our need to love and be loved, encouraging us to be the best we can be.*
- b. Be inspired to make positive changes to themselves and the world around them based upon their developing sense of spiritual self;
- c. Understand and learn practices and techniques of engaging with and approaching the spiritual;
- d. Experience, as relevant to them, a loving and reciprocal relationship with the divine;
- e. Be able to reflect upon and apply their experience, knowledge and understanding of Collective Worship to their daily lives and spiritual growth;

- f. Take up opportunities to explore their own faith and spiritual journey and develop into individuals who are well-prepared to make up their own minds on issues of faith and belonging;
- g. Enthusiastically participate in Collective Worship;
- h. Be able to confidently consider complex spiritual and moral issues in a dialogic manner to promote honest and empathetic dialogue;
- i. Develop a broad-minded perspective to spirituality by acknowledging the key roles of free choice, fidelity to tradition and exemplary role models;
- j. 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.

#### **4. Assessment**

The assessment of Collective Worship within schools should support the Avanti ethos by promoting independent thought and personal spiritual growth.

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, and so 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:

- a. S48 inspection or AST internal audit for the community schools;
- b. Quality of provision (quality of planning, resources and delivery);
- c. Quality of student reflections about Collective Worship;
- d. Quality of student work based upon Collective Worship content/themes;
- e. Student surveys evidencing their attitudes towards Collective Worship, and their assessment of their own class's happiness, behaviour and wellbeing;
- f. Feedback from parents and visitors on Collective Worship;
- g. Quality of a classroom-based area for spiritual contemplation and relevant displays.

#### **5. Expectations of Staff and Training**

- a. Each school must have an identified lead for Collective Worship. This person might 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;
- b. 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;
- c. All staff should be provided support, training and encouragement for their own spiritual development;
- d. Staff induction should include significant time allocation for understanding the Collective Worship provision and understanding its role in supporting Avanti's core principles and contributing to

Avanti's pathway of spiritual insight;

- e. Staff meetings should begin with an inclusive spiritual reflection;
- f. All senior members of staff have an important role in modelling a good understanding of Avanti's ethos, engagement with Collective Worship and enthusiasm for driving the ethos forward.

- g. The school should provide all students with a copy of the Trust's Collective Worship book, either on or before their first day at school.

## **6. Time Allocation and Format of Collective Worship**

Collective worship should be at least 20 minutes per morning. This does not include any time dedicated to "assembly" matters, including announcements, which are different from Collective Worship. Collective Worship time can be in whole school, Key Stage or individual class groupings. There are three meditations per day (before lessons starts, before lunch and at the end of the day). These meditations will be different for the faith schools and the community schools.

## **7. Withdrawal**

Collective Worship at Avanti schools forms a core part of the educational, character and spiritual experience. Collective Worship is inclusive and we encourage all students and staff to attend. Students and staff do have a right to withdraw from Collective Worship and we suggest that any such withdrawal take place after understanding the nature of Collective Worship and working with the school to see if/how the Collective Worship provision might be adapted to enable their participation, or at least their non-participatory observation. If the right to withdraw is exercised by a student, the school must make alternative provision for them that is linked with the Avanti Way and core principles.

## Appendix 1 – Aspects of Collective Worship that are applicable only for Hindu faith schools

### Daily Prayers

The daily prayers which will be sung daily during Collective Worship drawn from the Chaitanya Vaishnava tradition are:

- a. Govindam prayers
- b. Pranam Mantras
- c. Hare Krsna maha mantra
- d. Narasimhadev prayers

The three Avanti Prayers will be recited at respective times of the day (start of the day, before lunch, end of the day).

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

### Festivals

Since festival days are known well in advance, festivals should be celebrated on the actual day of the religious festival unless these days fall outside of term-time. The following indicates the level of observation expected 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, Kartik Purnima, Christmas (Christian), Gita Jayanti, Lord Nityananda's birthday, Siva Ratri, Ramnavami, Easter (Christian), Lord Nrsimhadeva's birthday, Snan Yatra and Guru Purnima.

These 9-12 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, Yom Kippur (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:** Any 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 Key Stage 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 may be invited in to participate in different festivals if the school wishes.