

Collective Worhsip Policy

Name of School: Queen Elizabeth's Community College

Next Policy Review: June 2009

Members of staff responsible: Director of Learning

History of Policy: Ratified by Full Governors; minute ref no, Review

Links with Aims of College

Learning:

- 1 Building the learning community
- 2 Ensuring that all are able to achieve their full potential
- 3 Developing the highest quality learning experiences possible for all our students
- 4 Developing all students technological and scientific understanding of the world in the context of creative innovation and adaptability

People:

- 5 Developing all students emotional and spiritual understanding of themselves and others
- 6 Investing in and developing people at every opportunity
- 7 Being open, outward looking and responsive

Resources:

- 8 Creating the best possible environment for learning.

Description of Policy Formation and Consultation Process

People involved: Director of Learning, Learning Committee

Main Issues Considered:

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Collective Worship

QE, as an engaging and outward looking learning community takes every opportunity to add a moral/spiritual dimension to its academic and pastoral work. Spirituality is fostered through core curriculum areas, with a significant boost at Key Stage 4 from the compulsory GCSE World Issues course for all students.

We also acknowledge the prominent position that faith groups play in the wider community, and are committed to working in partnerships with many of them. The work of the Connect team is a very valuable addition to our provision, and is highly regarded by staff and students.

The Governors wish to use collective acts of worship in as positive a way as possible, given the huge logistical difficulties of getting the school community together in one place. They have a staged strategy to develop acts of worship, based on developing work with 'Christians Together in Crediton'. In the first phase, this many involve augmenting the assembly programme with invited speakers, after proposals include opening the St Lawrence Chapel (Upper Site) and a suitable room on lower site at lunch time for prayers, quiet reflection and short services. In the longer term, we wish to add a faith message (thought for the day) to our tutorial time, either broadcast via a radio programme or via the Internet, students will then be able to request an opt-out from that part of the tutorial session if written requests are received from parents.

Appendix 1

From: Board of Governors Learning Committee

To: Full Board of Governors for meeting on 14 July 2008

Date: 14 July 2008

MEMORANDUM

Collective Worship

1. This memorandum outlines the present position that the Learning Committee has reached in updating the College's RE Collective Worship Policy. There will now need to be consultation with the Crediton Chamber of Churches over their proposed involvement, with the Learning Committee bringing a final report outlining an updated policy to a future meeting of the full Board of Governors.
2. The law requires every school to hold a daily act of collective worship, 80% of which must be Christian, something rooted in the Education Act of 1944 and more appropriate to that age than to the present. It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, not the professional leadership of the college, to ensure that this happens. Both those of faith and those who one of our members referred to as the Godless Governors would rather not have this legal requirement, but whether we like it or not it is there. Some 80% of secondary schools ignore it and break the law. QE is among this 80%. Yet this is an increasingly untenable position to be in, for it has consequences during an Ofsted inspection that we were lucky to escape in our last inspection.
3. Ofsted has put increased emphasis on not ignoring the law. There are three options open to a school and we have to identify which of the three options applies to us. At present we are in the category of schools that do not comply with the law. The Learning Committee proposes that we move to the second category, which is that we are moving towards complying with the law but have not reached that stage yet. The final option is for schools that are complying with the law.
4. The proposed policy that follows is designed to give students improving access to acts of worship in a manageable and sensible way that takes account of the legal requirement to allow staff and students to opt out. It is designed to meet the requirements of Ofsted, but it is more than just a form of words to get them off our back.

Proposed policy

5. Queen Elizabeth's Community College has for centuries had a close connection with the Christian Church. Its origins go back to the school founded in 739 as part of the abbey near the site of the present Church of the Holy Cross. The Charter of that church in 1547 re-established a school that from its inception in 1572 to 1860 was housed within the church. For many decades after the school moved to premises of its own, the Church governors were also the governors of the school. While this link has faded in recent years, the recent celebrations of the 460th anniversary of the charter of 1547 has led to renewed contact with the Anglican Church that will be built on in developing the policy as outlined below.

6. QECC, as an engaging and outward looking learning community, takes every opportunity to add a moral/spiritual dimension to its academic and pastoral work. Spirituality is fostered through core curriculum areas, with a significant boost at Key Stage 4 from the compulsory GCSE World Issues course for all students.

7. QECC acknowledges the prominent position that faith groups play in the wider community and is committed to working in partnership with many of them. The work of the Connect team is a very valuable addition to our provision and is highly regarded by staff and students.

8. The Governors wish to use collective acts of worship in as positive way as possible, given the logistical impossibility of getting the entire school community together in one place and the difficulty of staffing collective acts of worship in a number of places. The Governors have a staged strategy to develop acts of worship over a three year period based on developing work with the Crediton Chamber of Churches. There are three phases to this strategy.

9. The first phase involves enhanced weekly assemblies at the upper and lower schools, which may involve augmenting the assembly programme with invited speakers. While 80% would have to be from Christian churches, there would be scope for other faiths to be involved as well.

10. The second phase involves opening the St Lawrence Chapel on the upper school site at lunch time as a place for prayer, quiet reflection and short services for those who wish to take advantage of it. Although within the school site, the Chapel is owned by the Church of the Holy Cross. There will need to be discussion with the vicar and Governors of that Church about the details. A suitable room will have to be found at the lower school site for similar purposes.

11. The third phase, to be completed in the longer term, involves broadcasting a daily faith message, a faith thought for the day, to the whole school. The technical details of how this is to be achieved, through radio and/or the internet with podcasts, and the degree to which this may involve tutorial time will be worked out in the future. If tutorial time is used, and there are staffing implications in this, then students would be able to request an opt-out for that part of the tutorial session if a written request is received from their parents. Staff (other than the principal) can also decline to be involved in this.

12. The Governors believe that this strategy will succeed in moving the school over the next three years from a position where it does not comply with the legal requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship to one where the legal requirement is observed in a sensitive way as part of a policy of moral and spiritual education open to all students whose parents wish them to receive it.

Demitri Coryton
Chris Jordan