

Fairview Primary School



Assemblies and Collective Worship Policy

Date Ratified: June 2026

Last Review Date:

To Be Reviewed: August 2027

School Ethos and Purpose

Fairview Primary School is a controlled primary school in Ballyclare with a strong Christian ethos. In partnership with families and our community, we aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to explore themes of faith, values, character and community consistent with our core values:

INCLUSIVE – Everyone is a valued and welcomed member of our whole school community

NURTURE – Our Fairview family cares for, supports and encourages one another

KINDNESS – We treat others as we would like to be treated

RESPECT – We show respect to ourselves, others and our environment

EMPOWER – We enable each other to achieve our full potential

Legal Context

All publicly funded schools in Northern Ireland are required to provide Religious Education (RE) and collective worship. The RE curriculum must include the core syllabus specified under Article 11 of the Education (NI) Order 2006 . Parents have an unqualified right to withdraw their child wholly or partially from RE and/or collective worship without giving reasons.

The aims of Collective Worship and Assemblies at Fairview

- To explore Christian themes while welcoming diverse beliefs as the school community evolves
- To encourage personal reflection
- To celebrate achievement
- To strengthen community
- To promote pupil voice and leadership

Organisation and Content

In Fairview Primary School assembly takes place twice per week, on a Monday and Friday. Due to the size of the school, assemblies are generally split into three age groups:

- Primary 1–Primary 3
- Primary 4–Primary 5
- Primary 6–Primary 7

Themes are age-appropriate and include Christian stories, moral education and songs of praise. Speakers from local churches and charities will generally take part in Monday assembly each week. Friday assembly is teacher-led and focuses on the Core Values in school, pupil voice and leadership (such as Eco Assembly or House system) or a relevant theme to the time of year, e.g. Remembrance Day. Once per month, the focus for assembly will be Pupil of the Month, celebrating pupils' achievements.

Right of Withdrawal

Article 21 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 requires all publicly funded schools in Northern Ireland, except nursery schools, to provide Religious Education (RE) and collective worship. The law provides an unqualified right for parents to withdraw their children wholly or partially from RE and/or collective worship without the need to explain or justify their reasons.

- If parents wish to withdraw their children from RE and/or collective worship, in full or in part, they should complete the withdrawal form (Appendix C as taken from RE Policy) and mark for the attention of the Principal (either by email or hard copy to school office). This request will be granted immediately and confirmed within five school days. Following this, parents will not be asked to explain their views on their decision. However, if parents require a meeting with the Principal, this can be arranged via the school office.
- A confidential record of children who are withdrawn (fully or partially) will be kept in the Principal's office. Parents do not need to renew the withdrawal annually. Arrangements will remain in place until the parent withdraws the request in writing.
- Children who will not be participating in RE and/or collective worship will be provided with a variety of activities ranging from mindfulness, reading and emotional well-being tasks. These tasks will be meaningful and age-appropriate but will not be a bespoke solution for each child.
- Pupils who have been withdrawn from collective worship will be accompanied by a classroom assistant to the nearest empty classroom to complete set tasks as noted previously. Pupils withdrawn from RE lessons will complete tasks in a nearby breakout space supervised by a member of staff as available.
- Parents should be assured that these arrangements noted above are established so that withdrawal can be facilitated simply and confidentially.
- Information on the right of withdrawal will be shared with parents annually through the school newsletter with a link to this policy, including topics to be covered across each year group in RE and a collective worship overview detailing guest speakers.

Communication and Staff Training

Parents will receive annual information about speakers in assembly and staff will be briefed on procedures. While every effort is made to ensure assemblies progress as planned, on occasion arrangements need to change last minute. Parents will only be notified of this if the new arrangements differ substantially from what was originally planned.

Monitoring and Review

Implementation of this policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix C

FAO Fairview Primary School Principal

Standard Withdrawal from R.E. and/or Assembly Proforma

Section 1: Pupil Details

Name of pupil: _____ Year group/class: _____

Section 2: Parent/Carer Details

Name of parent/carers submitting this request: _____

Relationship to pupil: _____

Section 3: Request for Withdrawal (*Please tick all that apply*)

I request that my child be withdrawn from:

Religious Education

- ☐ All RE
- ☐ Specific RE topics/units (please specify):

Collective Worship

- ☐ All collective worship
- ☐ Specific elements of collective worship (please specify e.g. prayers, hymns, assembly, particular speakers):

Section 4: Start Date

I request that withdrawal arrangements begin:

☐ Immediately

or

From (date): ____ / ____ / ____

Section 5: Confirmation

By signing below, I confirm that I am exercising my statutory right to withdraw my child from Religious Education and/or collective worship (delete as appropriate) and understand that:

- I do not need to give reasons for this request;
- The school must implement this request promptly and without negotiation;
- This request will remain in place until I submit a written request to end or amend it.

Signature of parent/carers: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Section 6: School Use Only (to be completed by the school)

Date received: ____ / ____ / ____

Acknowledgement issued: ☐ Yes – date: ____ / ____ / ____

Arrangements begin: ____ / ____ / ____

Alternative arrangements provided:

Recorded in confidential register:

☐ Yes – date: ____ / ____ / ____

Name of staff member processing request: