

Collective Worship Information

Q: *Do all state-funded schools need to provide a daily act of collective worship?*

A: Yes, all state-funded schools are required to provide a daily act of collective worship for pupils aged between 5 to 18 years, through legislation¹ for maintained schools or their funding agreements for academies.

Q. *Which state-funded schools need to provide collective worship that is of a broadly Christian character?*

A: Maintained schools and academies without a religious designation – sometimes called non-faith schools – are required to provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, which means that it “*reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination*”².

Such schools may apply for an exemption from the requirement to provide broadly Christian collective worship if they consider that this would better meet the needs of their pupils/community.

State-funded schools designated as having a religious character – sometimes called faith schools – are not required to provide collective worship of a broadly Christian character as defined above. Rather they provide collective worship that is in accordance with the tenets and practices of the religion or religious denomination specified in relation to the school.

Q: *What do schools need to do if they want to apply for an exemption?*

Maintained schools must apply via their local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and academies via the [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#) (ESFA).

Q. *Can pupils withdraw from collective worship?*

A. Parents can request to withdraw their children from all or some parts of collective worship and they do not need to give a reason for doing so. Sixth-form pupils can make the same request on their own behalf. Schools are

¹ [School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 70](#)

² [School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Schedule 20 3\(3\)](#)

required to comply with these requests and to provide supervision for pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship.

Q. *What are schools legally required to do when pupils withdraw from collective worship?*

A. Where a child has been withdrawn from collective worship, the school remains responsible for their supervision. However, neither current legislation nor non-statutory guidance creates any obligation to provide any alternative activity (or meaningful alternative) in lieu of collective worship.

Q. *Does the recent Judicial Review settlement (Harris and Harris vs Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST)) affect what schools should do for pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship?*

A. No. The complaint was settled by the two parties outside of court and the terms of the settlement has no bearing whatsoever on legislation or policy on collective worship, and therefore has no bearing on other state-funded schools.

[Information on RE and Collect Worship in Academies](#)

[Information on Collective Worship in maintained schools](#)