



Cookstown High School

Assembly Policy

February 2019

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Rationale & Ethos

All grant maintained schools must provide an act of collective worship for all registered pupils and promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development.

The school believes that assemblies are fundamental in promoting the Christian ethos of Cookstown High School, developing a sense of community and celebrating the success of other pupils and staff. Cookstown High School seeks to use collective worship in school to develop Character through Knowledge.

Assemblies must be delivered in accordance with this policy and therefore in a manner which is consistent with and promotes the school ethos and mission. The school's statement of ethos says:

As a school founded upon Christian principles, we believe in and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual and encourage all members of our community to show respect for all.

We seek the development of Character through Knowledge believing that each individual has a duty to build a community, to strive to do their best, to show compassion for those in need, and to take responsibility for their own words and actions.

Cookstown High School seeks to develop young people who are independent learners and active citizens.

The school's mission is: *To provide and promote excellence, opportunity and support.*

The aim of assembly

The majority of collective worship acts during any school term must be of a wholly or mainly Christian character, be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to God and reflect upon the message of Jesus Christ. The nature of daily collective worship shall not be distinctive of any particular religious denomination. (Department of Education Guidelines - Education and Libraries (NI) order 1986).

Assemblies at Cookstown High School should provide pupils with an opportunity for collective reflection and the consideration of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. On the basis of these values the assembly programme will encourage students to:

- Develop an understanding of character, and personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Develop self-respect and self-discipline.

The school is committed to developing skills of citizenship and leadership and awareness of the international dimension. Assemblies are designed to provide an opportunity to share community values and success.

Suitable themes for assembly at Cookstown High School (Please note this list is not exhaustive)

- The Christian Gospel
- Events of the Christian calendar
- Christian virtues
- International Days which are consistent with the character of assembly
- Promoting the school's ethos generally or aspects of it particularly
- Good citizenship
- Ambition
- Tolerance
- Hard work
- Resilience
- Anti bullying (in all its forms)
- Anti Racism/sectarianism
- Good manners
- Empathy
- International events
- Significant national events
- Significant historical events

Structure of assemblies

All year groups will have two whole school assemblies per week, led by a member of the SLT or a representative from those local churches that have an historical link to Cookstown High School (Transferor Clergy). From time to time other guests may be invited to address assembly as the school leadership sees fit. All speakers will be invited on the understanding that their input will be consistent with this policy.

There will be a regular programme of year assemblies for all year groups.

House assemblies occur regularly and are led by staff House Leaders and Sixth Form House Captains. House Assembly provides an opportunity to develop a House identity, encourage healthy competition, develop character and organise pupils to represent their House in various activities.

Where possible pupils will be encouraged to participate in delivering assembly.

Assembly Etiquette

- Pupils stand in form classes in straight lines
- Year Eight will stand nearest the stage with the other years in order behind them
- Each Form Tutor must accompany their Form Class to assembly and stand with them
- Pupils should wear full school uniform in good order – in times of warm weather they may remove their blazers
- Pupils must not lean against the walls
- When the person taking assembly approaches the stage pupils should fall silent
- Pupils must remain silent throughout assembly, unless invited to participate in some way
- At the end of assembly the member of staff leading assembly will dismiss pupils to leave the hall under the direction of their Form Tutor
- Pupils must not leave the hall until dismissed by their Form Tutor

Assembly format

- Pupils will take their place in the Assembly Hall
- Senior Perfects will accompany the member of SLT taking assembly
- Those taking assembly will (normally) walk from the back of the hall to the stage
- Those taking assembly will sit on the stage
- The member of SLT leading assembly will read the announcements and make any presentations to pupils required
- The assembly will be delivered
- Assembly will end with a prayer (usually) read by a member of the Senior Prefect Team
- It may be appropriate to have corporate prayer eg. the Lord's Prayer or The Grace
- Pupils will be dismissed under the direction of their Form Tutors
- Those taking assembly may descend the stage and leave before pupils or remain on the stage until the hall is cleared

NB: there will be occasions when circumstances will require the format and etiquette of assembly to change.

Exemptions

Under article 21(5) of the Education and Libraries (NI) order 1986 parents have the right to withdraw their children from assembly. Pupils may be exempt from assembly on the grounds of conscience or on medical grounds. In each case written application must be made to the Vice Principal (Pastoral) who will issue an 'Assembly Pass'. Pupils who are exempt from assembly must go to the Lecture Theatre (or another designated room) where they will be supervised by a member of staff and announcements and information about pupil successes will be passed on.

Staff who wish to be exempted from assembly must request exemption in writing to the Headmaster. Staff exempted from assembly may be assigned other duties.

Roles and responsibilities

The Vice Principal (Pastoral) has overall responsibility for the assembly programme including organising the assembly rota. Records of assemblies are kept to monitor quality and themes delivered.

Members of SLT have responsibility to fulfil their obligations on the assembly rota or to seek a substitute if they are unavailable.

Heads of Year, supported by **Form Tutors**, are responsible for overseeing the assembly programme for their Year Group.

All teachers are expected to attend main school and house assemblies.

Form Tutors have responsibility to ensure good order among their Form class and attending to any pupil who feels ill in assembly.

House Leaders are responsible for organising House Assemblies, in conjunction with the appropriate member of SLT and the various House Captains.

Monitoring and review

The Headmaster and Vice Principal (Pastoral) will monitor the implementation of this policy. The Board of Governors will regularly review this policy, amend it as necessary and make it available to parents.

Linked documents:

Pastoral Care Policy

CRED Policy

International Policy

Anti Bullying Policy

Form Tutor Handbook