



# SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

## School Worship and Assemblies

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## Surbiton High School Ethos and Aims

### Ethos

- We are a vibrant learning community, which **inspires** every child to discover and embrace their individuality, to grow in their intellectual curiosity, and to enjoy their independence
- We acknowledge that there is no such thing as a typical Surbiton High School pupil and that impressive academic results are just one aspect in our rich tapestry of educational provision; therefore, we **encourage** every child to grow in compassion, respect and an outward looking attitude, living out the School's motto: *Amor nos semper ducat (May love always lead us)*
- We **empower** every child to thrive, developing social and emotional intelligence to become rounded and grounded in their character, demonstrating kindness and service to others

### Aims

- Surbiton High School aims to **inspire, encourage and empower** our young people to discover and liberate the very best of themselves, exceeding their potential in an intellectually rigorous and challenging academic environment, balanced with outstanding pastoral care and support

We achieve these aims through our *Charter for Happiness and Well-being*. Our children:

- are **inspired** to deploy their highest strengths to tackle all situations, developing a growth mind-set and a can-do attitude, equipped with the tools to maximise their positive emotions
- are **encouraged** to find their niche, to be fully engaged in educational activities and to meet the highest challenges that come their way
- are coached and **encouraged** to develop strong relationships, to be empathetic and responsive to the needs of themselves and others
- are **empowered** to lead a meaningful life, to be able to understand what their goals are and to know what they are striving for
- are **empowered** to draw strength from celebrating their accomplishments, in order to tackle new challenges

We achieve these aims through our inculcation of *Learning Habits*. Our children:

- are **inspired** in their thinking, to ask questions, to make connections, to imagine possibilities, to reason methodically and to capitalise on their resources
- are **encouraged** to be emotionally invested in their learning, persevering in the face of difficulties, noticing subtle differences and patterns, managing their distractions, and becoming absorbed in their learning
- are **empowered** to be fully involved in their learning, growing in interdependence, collaborating effectively, listening empathetically to others, and imitating their learning habits
- are **inspired, encouraged and empowered** to be productive, planning their learning in advance, revising and reviewing their progress, distilling important information, and developing their own meta-learning



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## United Learning and the United Church Schools' Trust

Surbiton High School is part of *United Learning* and the *United Church Schools' Trust*. The School has an Anglican foundation, valuing its Christian heritage whilst welcoming staff and children from all faiths and none. We share with United Learning its core mission statement "to bring out the best in everyone". We are committed to the aims of United Learning, including its *Framework for Excellence*, which can be found at: [www.unitedlearning.org.uk](http://www.unitedlearning.org.uk)

## Policy Statement

Whilst seeking to maintain and build on the School's Christian heritage, it is recognised that the pupils and staff come from a variety of religious backgrounds. It is also recognised that many pupils and staff have few or no links with a faith community, and some have an explicitly humanist/atheist worldview. Irrespective of these considerations, School Worship and Assemblies have an important role in the provision of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education (SMSC). Being an independent school, our parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their children from School Worship. Nonetheless, we are open to discussing any such requests. That said, in practice the inclusive nature of our provision means that such requests are rare.

## Aims and Principles of School Worship and Assemblies

- to create opportunities for pupils to glimpse the transcendent, to explore their inner feelings, to reflect on moral issues and to be challenged and inspired.
- to provide opportunities for worship and reflection in a variety of styles recognising that staff and students will respond individually and be inspired and challenged by different things.
- to introduce the students to the rich Christian heritage of prayer, music and Bible readings. Principal Christian festivals and seasons, such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Harvest, may be referred to during Assemblies.
- to provide an experience of Christian worship by celebrating festivals for Christmas and St. Mark's Surbiton for Founders' Day. School Eucharist happens four times a year and attendance is optional, with only those who would normally take Communion at their own church doing so in school. All Year 7 attend the Communion for the start of the school year as an introduction to Christian liturgical worship. Remembrance is also commemorated, and Easter is explicitly celebrated.
- to be sensitive to the religious traditions of pupils from different faith backgrounds, drawing on their heritage of story, scripture and prayer when appropriate.
- to encourage staff to volunteer to run Assemblies and to do so in a manner with which they are comfortable in respect of their personal beliefs (while ensuring that SMSC is promoted).
- to foster a sense of community and belonging based on the School's Aims and Ethos, so that individuals feel valued, talents are celebrated, and the moral codes of the school are reinforced.



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- to provide opportunities for reflection on, and where appropriate, response to local, national and international events thus reinforcing a sense of social responsibility and national and global citizenship.
- to uphold fundamental British values
- to promote Learning Habits (see *Appendix*) and habits of mind (in line with the School's *Charter for Happiness and Wellbeing*)
- to provide opportunities for girls to plan, lead and participate in Assemblies within their own Forms, year-groups and before the whole school.
- occasionally to promote and celebrate major school events (such as launching the School Musical or for social enterprise and charitable fundraising, such as Harvest Festival contributions to local senior citizens and the Kingston Food Bank)



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## **Assembly Rotation in the Senior School**

Assemblies start at 8.40am and finish at 8.50am with Period 1 starting at 8.55am.

HOYs may choose to cancel their Year Level Assembly occasionally in favour of an extended Form Time and will communicate this to Form Tutors and Deputies if and when this occurs.

The Friday Reflection is a self-running PowerPoint presentation composed by a member of the Spirituality Group.

Once per half term, the SLT assembly takes the form of a Celebration Assembly, in which individual and collective achievements are formally acknowledged and celebrated by the School community. The PA to the SLT, Jen Crouch, collates information provided by all staff, including Heads of Year and tutors, who provide information about pupils' achievements outside School, as well as their academic and co-curricular successes within School. These are then presented by the Principal.

On occasion, other members of the School community lead SLT assemblies, in liaison with SLT, in order to cover whole-school events or themes. Recent examples include the launch of the School's musical and Reverend Robert Stanier presenting a Harvest Assembly.

The majority of SLT assemblies are delivered virtually via a recorded video sent out to forms. However, there are face-to-face assemblies at relevant points of the year where a gathering in person is more appropriate.

## **Assemblies/ Collective worship at Surbiton High Girls' Preparatory School**

Assemblies at the Girls' Prep provide an opportunity for the pupils and staff to come together as a community and think, reflect, worship and celebrate. The School's Christian ethos is explored, and there are opportunities to learn more about other religions from amongst our school community. The girls are encouraged to share experiences of their own faith and have done so within the context of a whole-school assembly. Core events such as Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Diwali and Eid for example will be explored during assembly time. This time is also used to develop the pupils' social, emotional and personal understanding of the world around them. Themes such as: friendship, acceptance, forgiveness and kindness are explored, as are the School's vision, values and ethos. These assemblies are usually planned and delivered by the Head Teacher, although other staff are welcome to lead on themes which they are passionate about. Guest speakers are also invited in to speak to address the girls. These may be figures representing a certain faith or the school's chosen charities.

Singing assemblies are held where pupils rehearse hymns, as well as other anthems and songs. These sessions are led by the Head of Prep Music.

Parents are invited in to watch their children share their learning on a topic during Class Assemblies. These always end in a prayer, read by the pupils themselves.



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Celebration assemblies are held every Friday, where all members of our community come together to celebrate individual, group and House successes. The Head Teacher leads these assemblies.

## **Assemblies/Collective worship at Surbiton High Boys' Preparatory School**

Assemblies at the Boys' Prep provide an opportunity for the pupils and staff to come together as a community and think, reflect, worship and celebrate. The School's Christian ethos is explored, and there are opportunities to learn more about other religions from amongst our school community. The boys are encouraged to share experiences of their own faith and have done so within the context of a whole school assembly. This time is also used to develop the pupils' social, emotional and personal understanding of the world around them. Themes such as: kindness, empathy, perseverance and honesty are explored, as well as the 3Rs (Respect, Responsibility and Resilience), the School's values. As well as, national/ international events and topics of interest during that time. These assemblies are planned and delivered by all the staff, on a rotational basis, with guidance from the Deputy Head of Wellbeing and Pupil Development.

Celebration assemblies are held every Friday, where all members of our community come together to celebrate individual, group and House successes. The Head Teacher leads these assemblies.

The Boys' Prep School and Girls' Prep School come together throughout the term to celebrate Harvest Festival and Remembrance. Both assemblies are an important time when the girls and boys reflect, participate and speak side-by-side.

The School invites visitors in to contribute or lead Assemblies, and Acts of Collective Worship.

## **Document Information**

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