



# SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

## School Worship and Assemblies

### Contents

Surbiton High School Ethos and Aims .....	2
Policy Statement.....	3
Aims and Principles of School Worship and Assemblies .....	3
SLT Assembly Rotation in the Senior School .....	4
Assemblies/ Collective worship at Surbiton High Girls’ Preparatory School.....	5
Assemblies/Collective worship at Surbiton High Boys’ Preparatory School .....	5
Document Information.....	6



# SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

## Surbiton High School Ethos and Aims

Surbiton High School aims to **inspire, encourage and empower** our young people to discover and embrace their individuality in an intellectually rigorous academic environment. Balanced with outstanding pastoral care, our students become compassionate, respectful, courageous, and inquisitive members of the community, living out the School's motto: *Amor nos semper ducat* (May love always lead us).

### Our Values

#### **We are compassionate:**

We are kind and we care, in both thought and action. We consider those less fortunate and strive to support and offer aid. We are mindful of the gentle power of positive actions. We support and encourage those around us.

#### **We are respectful:**

We respect all people equally. We respect ourselves, our learning, our community, our environment, and the planet we all share. We strive to act with respect and integrity in all things. When we disagree, we do so respectfully.

#### **We are courageous:**

When challenged by our fears we are determined, not deterred. We call on resilience for strength when in the heat of the struggle. We bravely chase our dreams and fight for what we believe. When we fall, we pick ourselves up and forge forward.

#### **We are inquisitive:**

We understand that a thoughtful question is the key to unlock understanding. We believe where answers provide ends, questions pose exciting beginnings. We are eager to explore, we question to discover, we are curious to learn more of the world at large.

#### **We are a community:**

We are united - with a common focus. We value belonging to a wider community: our school community, our local community, our global community. We are inclusive of all, no matter our differences. We value and nurture the connections we form.

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

- **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



# SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

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

## 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.



# SURBITON

## HIGH SCHOOL

- to provide an experience of Christian worship by celebrating festivals for Christmas and St. Mark's Surbiton for Founders' Day. 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.
- 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 houses.
- 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)

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

Pupils attend SLT-led assemblies in the main SAR hall on rotation as follows:

Monday: Year 8

Tuesday: Years 7 & 9

Wednesday: Year 10 & 11

Thursday: Year 12 & 13

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

The Friday Reflection is a self-running PowerPoint presentation composed by a member of the Spirituality Group which pupils watch in their form rooms.

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.

There is a special "off timetable" beginning of term assembly in the Autumn Term (September) and Spring Term (January) and an "off timetable" end of term assembly in the Autumn Term (December) and Summer Term (July). During this assembly pupils' achievements (musical, sporting, academic) are celebrated.

There are House assemblies once per term. These take place in different locations across the school and there is a member of SLT attached to each house, who attends the assembly.



# SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

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

In addition to attending a weekly SLT assembly, each year group has its own year group assembly, led by the head of year.

## **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 values are 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, Holi, and Eid for example will be explored during assembly time and PSHCE lessons. 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 Year Assemblies. These often end in a prayer, read by the pupils themselves.

Celebration assemblies are held every Monday, 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: to think, reflect and celebrate. The School's values are explored, and there are opportunities to learn about the different religions that make up our School, from our pupils and parents, during this time. The boys are encouraged to share experiences of their own faith and will present their ideas in the 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 5 values: compassion, respect, inquisitiveness, courage and community. National/ international events and topics of interest are an additional focal point during assembly time as well as charity endeavours and House assemblies. 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.



# SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

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.

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

## Document Information

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