

Collective Worship: Letting Schools Choose

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What is the law on collective worship right now?

1. Education and Libraries Order: almost all schools must hold collective worship
2. A school's Board of Governors has no choice over this
3. **We believe the law should be changed to give them the choice**
4. Opted-out schools should be protected from discrimination in funding
5. This doesn't affect parental rights
6. Pupils will still need parental permission to withdraw in opted-in schools

Why should schools get to choose whether they hold collective worship?

1. Schools which don't want collective worship shouldn't be made to conduct it
2. We're all critical of collective worship as a whole
3. It's uninclusive, marginalises those with different views & doesn't represent them
4. Promoting one view above others doesn't let pupils fully understand religion, ethics, etc.
5. Children as young as 4 are being deprived of critical thinking ability, infringes on freedom of religion
6. In spite of our strong views, we acknowledge the support for collective worship
7. We're taking 'baby steps' approach to argue our views; even most stringent collective worship supporters wouldn't want schools forced to conduct collective worship
8. Inclusiveness isn't just about accommodating Protestants/Catholics
9. It's also about making room for those of minority faiths and no faith background
10. We don't want 'atheist schools', but secular schools, where no religious view of any kind is promoted above any other

What kind of public support is there for giving schools this choice?

1. Petition: +1000 signatures
2. Deputations done in Strabane and Belfast
3. Covered on BBC Radio Ulster
4. Written about on Slugger O'Toole
5. BBC Radio Foyle interview
6. Supported by National Secular Society
7. Backed by British Humanist Association
8. Northern Ireland Humanists
9. Atheist NI
10. Atheist Ireland

What is the role of Derry City and Strabane District Council?

1. This has affected all schools in the borough area
2. If debated at full council, press coverage would be boosted
3. We could educate and inform even more about the need for change
4. We have already won the support of many individual Cllrs across NI
5. Deputation planned at LCCC and North Down and Ards
6. We must make Causeway Coast and Glens Borough schools more inclusive of all faiths and none
7. We must protect their right to decide their own views for themselves at the right age
8. All essential to well-functioning, cohesive and strong communities

Motion text

"That this council notes the deputation by Scott Moore on Tuesday 26th April, recognises the infringement upon the autonomy of grant-aided schools as they are all required to conduct collective worship under the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 with no choice on the part of their Boards of Governors (BoGs), acknowledges the strong feelings of Mr. Moore, many of those who signed his petition, and the various groups supporting his campaign, including Northern Ireland Humanists, Atheist NI, Atheist Ireland and the National Secular Society, concerning the implications of compulsory collective worship regarding the right to freedom from religion (as established under UK, EU and international human rights and children's rights law) of children and young people, particularly those who have not yet determined their views and those who are of a minority faith or no faith, and, to these ends, to call upon the Department of Education to change its policy in support of amending the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, and upon the Minister for Education to take the necessary legislative steps to amend the law as appropriate, to ensure the BoGs in grant-aided schools are able to choose whether their schools conduct collective worship, and that there will be no discrimination in funding towards schools from any public bodies according to how BoGs exercise this choice."

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Thank you for listening!

We hope you will consider our proposals.