

The Basic Facts: NORTHERN IRELAND

1. An act of collective worship must be included in every grant aided school for all pupils every day.

2. Collective worship may take place in one or more assemblies depending on the most appropriate arrangements for the school as long as every pupil attends one such assembly.

3. Parents may request that their child is wholly or partly excused from attendance at collective worship.

4. Teachers may make a request to the Board of Governors of their school to be wholly or partly excused from attending or conducting collective worship and furnish the Board with a statutory declaration that the request is made solely on the grounds of conscience.

5. Outside visitors can be invited by the Board to conduct collective worship.

6. Some suggested aims for collective worship are:

‘To encourage the development of a Christian ethos throughout the school community. To help pupils see that worship of God is a relevant part of daily life. To illustrate the practical outworkings of Christianity in the lives of people. To encourage pupils to reflect on their existence, and the questions which life poses. To develop a sense of “community” in the school.’

Information compiled from The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 and Transferor Representatives’ Handbook (Transferor Representative Council, September 1994)