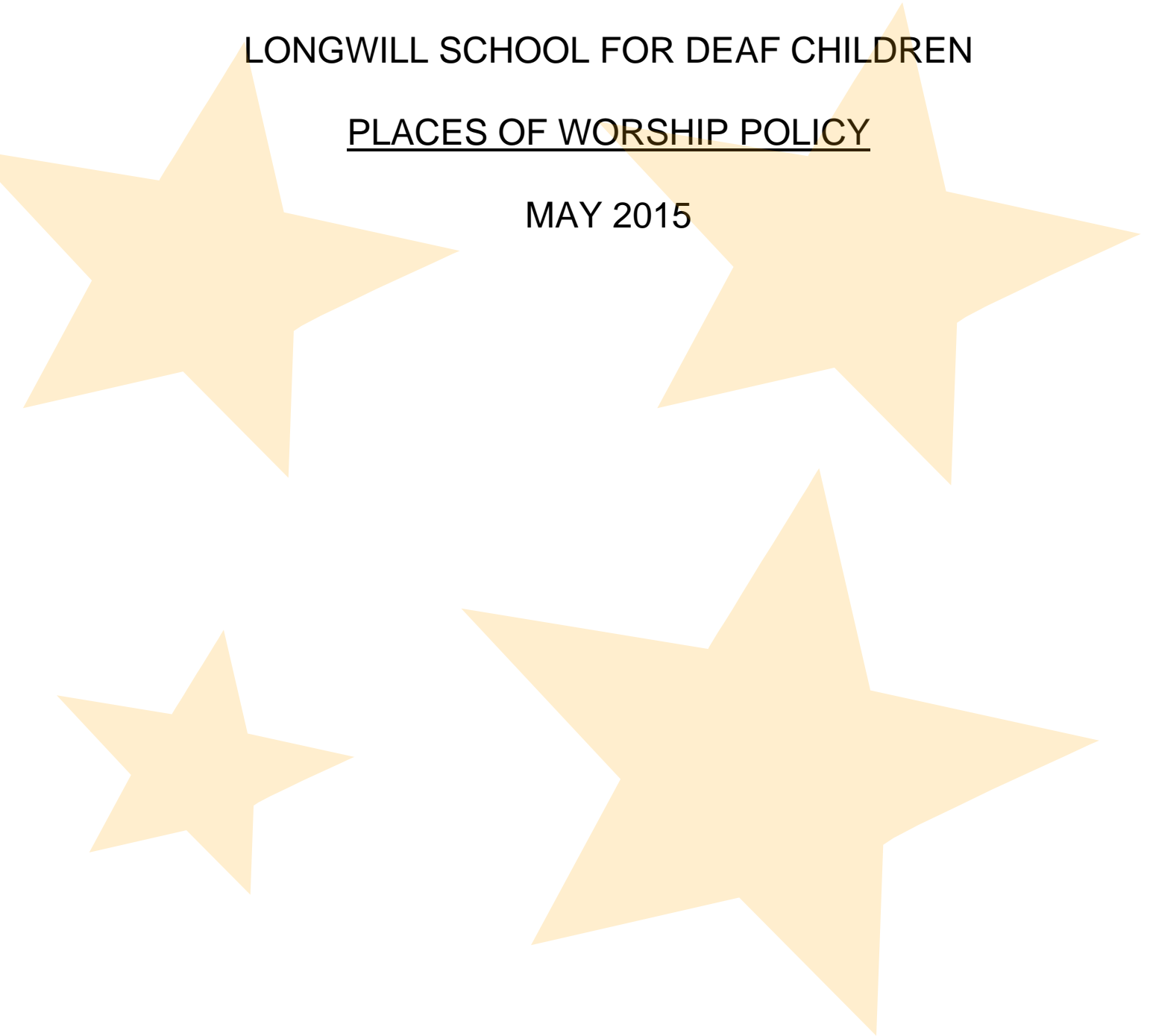


LONGWILL SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN

PLACES OF WORSHIP POLICY

MAY 2015



Visiting Places of Worship

Introduction

It is often difficult for teachers to know who to contact if they wish to take school groups to places of worship. If the place of worship is near then contact is straightforward but it can take longer if setting up visits to places further afield. There are many articles of guidance and this adds to what will already be available in local authority guidelines.

What to do when making a visit

1. There are several basic things to bear in mind when visiting any place of worship in any religion. The place will be **a special place for those who worship there** or who go to talk and to meet friends and relations so one should respect both the place and one's hosts and remember one is a visitor in someone else's house. Every community that receives visitors is welcoming, trusting and willing to open themselves up to visitors. Virtually every religious community wants to help children (and adults) understand more about their beliefs and practices.
2. The most important aspect of any visit is to carry out **a risk assessment**. Staff should visit the place of worship first to ensure pupils will be safe and secure. Any issues of concern should be noted in the risk assessment file. Parents will, of course, be notified of the visit and will have given permission based on the school's risk assessment evaluation.
3. It is important to **try to get written confirmation of the date and time of the visit**. This may be difficult in some cases as some communities function very much by the telephone and now, increasingly, email. Perhaps most important is to ascertain whom one will be visiting or have the name of the person who knows you are expected
4. Most places of worship **have expectations of visitors and it is important to be aware of these before setting off**. If taking a class of children, they and their parents will need to be aware of those expectations. We can assume the children will be well behaved but there will be occasions where they need to be sure of what to do. Teachers can talk about these expectations before the visit takes place.
5. The same, of course, is true for adults and **wherever possible a visit prior to the school visit is most important**. If one is visiting an unfamiliar place of worship with children for the first time, one can be so concerned with what is taking place or being said that one can forget the visit has an educational objective. Children will be expected to do some follow-up work and not to treat the opportunity of the visit as anything other. While there are similarities between churches, mosques and mandirs, they are all distinctive in some way and the environment of the Gurdwara you visit may not be quite the same as the one you have read about in text books. So prior experience is most desirable.
6. Check carefully for what the children will need. Obviously this will depend upon the age of the children but with younger children **it is important to know if there are toilets, and if there is somewhere they can eat and drink, if necessary**. Some older churches do not score highly on this and one does need to be prepared! It will also be important to find out if there is an area where the children can work and carry out activities or whether they will be largely on the move during the period of the visit.

7. Establish **the nature of the visit with the people in the place of worship**. Often teachers want their pupils to have a flavour of the synagogue or mosque and to explore feelings and emotions and may not want a long talk about the religion itself. So it is important to have clear objectives for the visit.
8. Try to ensure the children know something about the religion whose place of worship they are visiting. It doesn't matter how little they know, all of us are pleased when visitors have clearly made an effort to take an interest in us before they arrive. **Some primed questions will be useful with some children having been rehearsed to ask them.** This is not only a polite thing to do; it means that the children will be able to use their time effectively by discovering answers to questions raised previously in the classroom.
9. Some places of worship are excellent at providing speakers who can speak at the level of the children; others are not so well provided for and **teachers may need to intervene politely on occasions to explain what is happening to the children.**
10. If children have not visited an unfamiliar place of worship before some may find it strange, threatening even, because it will be out of their normal experience. This has to be expected and **helping the children with prior expectations** in the classroom will mitigate much of this.
11. Some parents may welcome the opportunity to accompany the class and additional support is always welcome and maybe eye-opening for the parents too. Some parents, however, can feel insecure about their children visiting religious places with which they are not in sympathy, It can be a sensitive issue but if **the school is clear that this is an educational activity and neither children or adults are going to be engaged with anything that may challenge family beliefs and practices, that may prove to be acceptable to most.** It is unusual for parents to take this view but if they continue to choose to do so then the child will have to remain in school.
12. Finally, it is very important **to establish the length of the visit before you arrive and make it clear what time you must leave.** Communities are normally very generous with their time and one may need to be firm about getting back to school on time.

Longwill School Places of Worship Visits

<u>Year Group</u>	<u>Visit</u>
Foundation	Visit or visits to suit current cohort
Year One	Mosque
Year Two	Church
Year Three	Sikh Gurdwara
Year Four	Synagogue

Year Five	Hindu Temple
Year Six	Buddhist Temple

Places of Worship in Birmingham willing to receive visits from schools

The list below is not an exhaustive list by any means but all major places of worship in Birmingham were contacted to establish whether they were willing to respond to requests for visits from schools in Worcestershire. The list is made up of those that did respond and include one or two other places where visits are welcome but who did not respond to the initial letter.

All the places listed below will make you and the pupils feel most welcome. Remember there are different customs associated with different cultures and religions so what may be acceptable in one place may not be accepted elsewhere. We have tried to offer a very brief guide on what to wear and what to expect for each place of worship. Even then, however, individual people and places of worship may differ within the same religious tradition. It is one of the excitements of studying religion!

When visiting it is worth remembering that while the purpose of the visit may be to look at religious practices and meet people from that particular religion, there will be all sorts of opportunities to follow up with cross-curricular activities related to art, perhaps music, broad cultural issues etc to say nothing of creative writing, poetry and drama.

There is also a co-ordinating contact for visits in the Wolverhampton area, which may be more convenient to some schools. The Wolverhampton Interfaith Group is willing to organise visits to schools. The advantage of using the Interfaith Group is that they are aware of the places where pupils will gain the most experience and ensure the speakers are appropriate for the age of the pupils. They do charge £1.00 per pupil to cover their expenses.

Buddhist

Baba Saheb Ambedkhar Buddhist Association
 Jetavana Buddha Vihara
 13 Booth Street
 Handsworth
 Birmingham
 B21 0NG
 Tel@ 01902 427807
 Email: kamlachumber@hotmail.co.uk
 General Secretary: Mrs Kamla Chumber
 (Visits welcome. Would like 2-3 weeks notice)

Birmingham Buddhist Vihara
 29/31 Osler Street
 Birmingham
 B16 9EU
 Tel: 0121 454 6591

Email: office@bbvt.org.uk

Contact person Ven. Dr. Otteira Nyana
(Prefers a letter to make appointment)

Birmingham Buddhist Centre
11 Park Road
Moseley
Birmingham
B13 8AB
Tel: 0121 449 5279
(Affiliated to Friends of the Western Buddhist Order).

Birmingham Karma Ling Buddhist Centre
41 Carlyle Road
Edgbaston
B16 9BH
Contact: The Secretary Simon Romer
Tel: 0121 454 2782
sfromer@hotmail.com
or
b.k.ling@jbhotcat.demon.co.uk

Karma Do-Ngak Kunchab Ling
(See Birmingham Karma Ling Buddhist Centre above)
41 Carlyle Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B16 9BH
Tel: 0121 454 2782
Contact: The Facilitator Simon Romer
(will also co-ordinate visits to other Buddhist communities.
Charge of £40 per visit)

Buddhavihara Temple
5 Hampton Road
Aston
Birmingham B6 6AN
Tel: 0121 515 1518
email: laow.panyasiri@yahoo.com
Contact: The Abbott, Ven.Laow Panyasiri
Times: 10-11 am or 1.30-2.30pm
Visit about 1 hour includes short meditation (3-5 minutes).

Christian

St. Philip's Anglican Cathedral
Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 2QB
Contact: The Cathedral Education Officer
Birmingham Cathedral
Colmore Row
Birmingham B3 2QB

Tel: 0121 236 4333/6323

St Chad's Roman Catholic Cathedral
St Chad's Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6EU
Contact: The Administrator
Cathedral House
St. Chad's Queensway
B4 6EU
Tel: 0121 236 2251

Lazarica Serbian Orthodox Church
Griffins brook Lane
Bournville
Birmingham
B30 1QE
Contact: The Very Rev Archpriest
131 Cob Lane
Bournville
Birmingham B30
Tel: 0121 458 5273

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St Andrew and St Mary
8 Arthur Place
Summer Hill
Birmingham
B1
Contact: The Church: 0121 236 3274
The Vicarage: 0121 454 1832

Jewish

Birmingham Progressive Synagogue
4, Sheepcote Street
Birmingham
B16 8AA
Tel: 0121 643 5640
Administrator: Mirielle Fisher
New synagogue being built – cannot accommodate visits until mid 2007
Contact Administrator first

Birmingham Hebrew Congregation
Singer's Hill
Ellis Street
B1 1HL
Contact: Stanley Fisher
0121 704 1851
email: sifisher@onetel.com
(Can take 30 students of any age range. Visit lasts about 45 minutes)
Or contact: Tally Rosenfeld, School Tour Guide
on www.schooltour@gmail.com

Birmingham Central Synagogue

(Beth Hamidrash)

133 Pershore Road

Birmingham

B5 7PA

Tel: 0121 440 4044

Contact: The Administrator: Mr Chris Jennings (between 9.30-1.30)

(School visits preferred between 10.15-12.30)

Hindu

Shri Geeta Bhawan Mandir

107-115 Heathfield Road

Birmingham

B19 1HE

Tel: 0121 554 4120

Contact: Mr JC Gupta

9.30-1 4.30-6.30

Shri Venkateswara Balaji Temple

Dudley Road East

Tividale

Nr Birmingham

B69 3DU

Tel: 0121 544 2256

Email: templeoffice@balajitemple.freemove.co.uk

Or contact@venkateswara.org.uk

Recently (2006) constructed Temple. Very welcoming –probably available for visits after Spring 2007

Hindu Sabha

54 Goldthorn Crescent

Penn

Wolverhampton

WV4 5TX

Tel: 01902 330735

Contact: General Secretary: Mr T R Bhardwaj

(Visits welcome)

Shree Krishna Mandir (Birmingham Prabati Mandal)

10 Sampson Road

Sparkbrook

Birmingham

B11 1JL

Tel 0121 771 4478

Contact Mr Raman Bulsara

Tel: 0121 244 2713. Mob. 07748658498

Email: raman.bulsara@blueyonder.co.uk

Sikhism

Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha

18-20 Soho Road

Handsworth

Birmingham

B21 9BH

Contact: The Chairman

Tel: 0121 551-1125

Visits, excellent facilities for accommodating young children, good parking.

Islam

Jamia Mosque Hamza and Islamic Centre

88 Church Road

Moseley

B13 9AE

Tel: 0121 449 1193/4385

Contact: Mr Tahir Rehman

Mobile: 07815821188

Visits welcome: encourages visits at time of prayer to view from gallery

Dress: No shorts and trousers and modest dress for ladies

Sparkbrook Islamic Centre

179-187 Anderton Road

Sparkbrook

Birmingham

B11 1ND

Contact: Mr Muhammad Afzal

Tel: 0121 773 8651

(Visits welcome)

Wolverhampton Interfaith Group

c/o The Revd JR McManus

Assist. Hon. Secretary

Wolverhampton Interfaith Group

2 Clarence Road

Wolverhampton

WV1 4HZ

Email: admin@wifg.eclipse.co.uk

or jimmavis@fairtradewolv.eclipse.co.uk