



Collective Act of Worship Policy

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Summary:	Our collective worship policy assists the Academy to strengthen and support the Christian identity of our school, reaffirm our vision and associated values of Compassion, Friendship Service and Forgiveness and celebrate the central role that each child has to play in their community.
Policy Owner:	Trevor North
Committee Responsible for Review:	The Policy Review Committee
Approved by:	The Full Governing Body
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Next Review Date:	Three years from issue date

Controlled document

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Why are we here?

Our school is committed to provide our community the unconditional love and dedicated service that they need to reach their full potential. At St. Mary's, we provide **all of God's children** the opportunity to enjoy a purposeful, aspirational and inclusive curriculum which provides the wisdom and knowledge to **flourish in God's world**.

How then, do we live?

A flourishing child in God's world is any member of our community. Our staff, pupils and parents as well as the wider community that we can influence are all shown the unconditional love that God has shown us. We know that life lessons can be hard to learn and that reaching our full potential involves compassion, friendship, service and forgiveness. These are the core Christian values that underpin our work. They form the heart of all of the decisions that we make and ethos of our school community.

Our values are captured most prominently in the parables of the Two Sons and the Good Samaritan. The Two Sons teaches us that some people need more time and compassion than others to flourish and that our actions have consequences for which we must take responsibility. The curriculum at St. Mary's offers a wealth of opportunity, which is enjoyed by our pupils. Some, like the younger son in the parable, will need more time, compassion and encouragement than others to develop the skills to do this.

At St. Mary's, we teach everyone that mistakes are part of life's adventure and through forgiveness and compassion, we can live well together.

The Good Samaritan teaches us to show friendship through the acceptance of others, looking for the best in everyone without prejudice. In our school, children are encouraged to be kind, welcoming and generous. The same parable teaches us the importance of service to others, even when this is costly to us or we find it difficult.

This policy should be read and applied with the vision as the foundation for all practise.

Introduction

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of Compassion, Friendship Service and Forgiveness and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

What is Collective Worship?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

"... Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'. (DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)

Corporate worship assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness).

Collective worship, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values.

Collective Worship should be:

"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes." (DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)

The Value and Purpose of Collective Worship:

The value of assembling pupils together has long been recognised. All that our school stands for, which is outlined in the Vision Statement, can be celebrated in these collective gatherings. It is possible to develop pupils in ways, not easily achieved at other times, in terms of moral and spiritual growth. We recognise that no, one act of worship can meet all of our aims, but through careful planning, they can be addressed over the school year in ways appropriate to the children, with the aim of ensuring all engage and respond. Collective Worship gives pupils and school staff the opportunity to:

- Engage in an act of community
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar

Aims of Collective Worship

In line with the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS, 2021) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship;

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- b) Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- c) Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- d) Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Saints Days amongst ordinary days
- Learning and saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the blessings in common use
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection
- Using Psalms and simple liturgical responses

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican throughout the liturgical year:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship
- Celebrating Eucharist

Implementation

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors from the local churches in consultation with the collective worship leader. This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using Canterbury Diocesan Collective Worship Planning which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and this enables continuity. Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies (found on our school website). This should include discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

We aim to meet termly to discuss Worship and reflect and evaluate on its impact.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities including (eg: music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT).

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- **Gather** – we welcome the community, for example, (with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle)
- **Engage** – we share, for example, (a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message)
- **Respond** – pupils, for example, (discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing)
- **Send** – we share, for example, (the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle)

Expectations of pupils

Pupils regularly plan their class worship with the worship lead and can lead worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the collective worship leader to develop their own understanding of worship and to design a worship to support the spiritual development of their peers.

The worship committee is led by Mrs. H Haines and attended by self-nominated pupils. They meet on a weekly basis. They plan and communicate the class worship for the week.

Developing Worship

The school allocates part of its budget to support the daily act of collect worship. The collective worship leader attends regular professional development with Canterbury Diocese and accesses a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.

Self-Assessment and Inspection

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop. We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils through our suggestion boxes and questionnaires, which are reviewed and considered on a regular basis. Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in consultation with the Diocese of Canterbury (SIAMS).

The legal requirements of collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England
- The Governing Body should ensure that all pupils **each day** engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church
- Arrangements for collective worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher (*DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53*)
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)
- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of collective worship'

Health, Safety and Well-being

In collective worship we follow the school's health, safety and well-being policy. For example, appropriate care must be taken when using lighted candles and electrical equipment. In line with our "net-safety" policy any internet resources used must be checked by the leader prior to their use in act of collective worship. In event of fire all pupils must be familiar with the exit routes from the halls and other areas of the school where collective worship takes place. Visitors are not left unaccompanied with children/young people.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Collective worship will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, ethnicity, religion and gender. During collective worship, religions will be presented fairly and accurately, and diversity and equality will be affirmed. This policy should be interpreted in conjunction with our equality statement.

Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as special time which wholly reflects our ethos as a church school. It is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none. We respect the right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship. However, as collective worship is central to our ethos, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this decision with parents.

Date of validation..... Signed.....

Chair of Governors

Date of review..... Signed.....

Chair of Governors

Collective Worship reflections

Observer	Date
Venue	Time
Collective Worship Leader	Type
Topic / Theme	
<p>+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How clearly was the aim expressed? • To what extent was the collective worship 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'? • How did the act of collective worship promote the spiritual and moral development of pupils? • Was the act of collective worship appropriate for the pupils/students (age, ability, backgrounds, etc)? • How did the pupils/students actively participate? • How did the adults present actively participate? <p>Were there opportunities for:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Reflection? Stillness? Silence? Prayer? Participation? </p>	

General comment on above reflections..