



# **Collective Worship Policy**

**Author: Headteacher  
Owner: CEO/Directors  
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**We are a rights respecting school. All our policies and procedures are written and reviewed to ensure that children's rights, as detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, are respected and promoted and this policy ensures:**

*Article 14: Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.*

## **Aims and objectives**

As an Aided Church of England School, all collective worship is set in the context of the school's mission statement and the trust deed. The aim is that worship is central to the life of the school and of the highest quality enabling pupils to appreciate their own worth and value in the eyes of God and to celebrate and pray as a community. All worship should be inclusive and support those of the Christian faith, those of other faiths and those of no faith.

The objectives of worship are to offer children opportunity to:

- to explore and reflect the Christian values of the school;
- to learn the vocabulary of worship and prayer and to experience a variety of forms of worship appropriate to their age and aptitude;
- to celebrate and give thanks for their own gifts, talents and achievements;
- to reflect and to explore the nature and being of God as expressed in the Christian religion, and specifically Anglicism;
- to celebrate Christian festivals and holy days and to appreciate the common concerns of all peoples' by sharing some festivals of the other world faiths;
- to develop an awareness and appreciation of the inner self and the spiritual dimension of life;
- to participate and lead worship in different contexts, including church services and the school Eucharist.

## **The legal position of Collective Worship**

A daily act of collective worship should take place for all registered pupils. As a voluntary aided school, the worship at St Mary and St Thomas follows the trust deed of the school and as a result is Christian in nature. The act of collective worship should have a sense of occasion and is separate and distinctive from an assembly.

Parents/guardians have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship on grounds of conscience but need to recognise that in a church school worship is not confined to one particular time of the day or place. Those wishing to exercise this legal right should make their request in writing to the Headteacher. Teaching staff are expected to attend collective worship as required and may be asked to support pupils in presenting worship as part of their duties in an Aided school. Children need not necessarily meet together as a whole school, but can worship in any size group, in any place and at any time of the day.

The governing body, particularly those appointed by the funding churches are responsible for arrangements concerning collective worship in consultation with the head teacher. The head teacher is required to implement the governors' policy.

## **Organisation of Worship**

Daily Collective Worship normally takes place at the beginning of each school day and follows this pattern:

Monday	Individual class worship led by individual class teachers
Tuesday	Individual class worship led by individual class teachers
Wednesday	Whole School musical worship.
Thursday	Whole school worship led by a member of the clergy supported by a member of the SLT
Friday	Whole school celebration worship led by the Head teacher or a member of the SLT

Visiting speakers will be invited to lead Collective Worship on a regular basis. They may come to share their Christian Faith or to speak on a particular topic that reflects Christian Values and Social awareness.

### **Pattern of whole school worship for major festivals in church**

Harvest	Year 2	St Thomas' Church
Christmas	Year 6	St Thomas' Church
Ash Wednesday	Year 5	St Thomas' Church
Easter	Year 4	St Thomas' Church
Ascension Day	Year 3	Parish Church
Leavers' service (July)	Year 6	School

### **Worship themes**

These are based on the Christian Values adopted by the school and displayed in each class. Weekly themes follow the Christian year and, where appropriate, festivals from other world faiths. Different Christian values are reflected in the themes as appropriate. The pattern of worship is sufficiently flexible to allow the school to react to unforeseen events. Worship themes are discussed with the member of the clergy working with the school and an annual plan is produced to help all staff plan and prepare suitable worship. This is reviewed and discussed at the end of every half term, with a modified list being produced for all staff for the next half term.

### **Eucharist Services**

School holds Eucharist services in school three times a year. In the Autumn term, this involves Year 5 and Year 6, and is held in one of the classrooms. In the Spring term it involves Key Stage 2 children in the main hall, and in the Summer Term it involves both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children, again in the main hall.

In addition to this school is developing links with St Ann's (Rainhill) and groups of children are travelling there to join in with class communion services in St Ann's church. In return groups of their children are travelling to St Mary and St Thomas to join in with our Eucharist Services.

### **Monitoring and evaluation of worship**

Monitoring and evaluation is ongoing. Each half term, two children are invited to comment on the worship of the day. These are analysed by the Worship Lead. If some observations or ideas are appropriate for immediate adoption they will be implemented. Staff are encouraged to feedback their responses to worship opportunities, using a different proforma. Staff overseeing major religious celebrations in church are encouraged to try new material and then analyse impact for consideration for future use. The Curriculum Team Leader will prepare an annual report for the School Committee members which outlines the success and areas for development identified from monitoring and evaluation.

### **Parental and Staff rights**

Parents have a right to request that their child / children are partially or wholly withdrawn from any act of collective worship and / or corporate worship. Since the conduct of the whole school reflects the Church of England's Christian ethos, the removal of pupils from Worship (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate pupils from the religious life of the school. All staff are asked, before the offer of a post is made, if they are prepared to attend collective worship. They have a right to decline to lead worship.

## **Appendix A**

Procedures to be followed if parents wish to withdraw children from collective worship.

- Parents should inform the school in writing that they wish their child / children to be withdrawn from worship, either wholly or in part.
- A proforma will be available to help the parents formulate their ideas, and also to allow staff to know when the children should be withdrawn from worship.
- Children who are withdrawn from worship are brought together and supervised by a Learning Support Assistant in a classroom.
- In the event of the children only being withdrawn for prayers during collective worship, then they will be asked to go to the Reception area, with a Learning Support Assistant and then return after the prayers.
- Parents withdrawing their children from Collective worship in church do so knowing that their child will remain in school in the EYFS classroom.

## Appendix B

<b>Name of child / children</b>	
<b>Date of notification</b>	
<b>I / we would like our children to be withdrawn from:</b>	
<b>Acts of Daily acts of worship led by staff in school</b>	
<b>Acts of worship led by members of the Christian Clergy</b>	
<b>Celebration Assemblies (where we celebrate the achievement of the children in school)</b>	
<b>Class Assemblies (Led by the children of different classes)</b>	
<b>In the event of an Assembly only having prayers as its act of worship, I / we would like our children withdrawn only during these prayers</b>	Yes / No

I / we accept that in the interests of safety and public information, our child will have to attend some information assemblies which do not have any element of worship.

Signed: .....  
(Parent / Guardian)