THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Policy for Collective Worship

A school vision for Collective Worship

"First of all, my child, worship and adore God, think of Him magnificently."

- William Law

As a Church of England school, we hold to a vision that worship is primarily an opportunity to encounter and meet with God. During this time, who God is can be experienced, affirmed and celebrated.

This time is an opportunity for all to learn, worship and grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. It is not simply a statutory duty.

In our school, we want to see Collective Worship enable pupils and staff to gather together to respond to the presence, power and peace of God through prayer, reflection, singing, celebrating and sharing feelings.

Worship should enable participants to develop an understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We recognise that not all staff or children have a Christian faith. We welcome everyone to Collective Worship and offer it as a shared space for reflection and spiritual growth where our communities grow together in love and respect.

Policy pointers: The following paragraphs indicate the expectations for CW in church schools. It is for each school to take these expectations and personalise them into their own clear policy statement. The Headteacher of each school and its governing body are responsible for its implementation and review.

1. Legal Requirements

All schools must take note of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

1. All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
2. The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the school and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
3. All acts of Collective Worship in Church schools must be Christian in character. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for worship such as the whole school, year groups, tutor groups, classes, or other combinations.

4. Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
5. The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises but all schools may hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.
6. Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a Church of England school rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the Headteacher. Foundation Governors have a special role in ensuring the Collective Worship is linked to the Trust Deeds.
7. The Headteacher has a responsibility to ensure all arrangements for CW are secured.

2. Anglican Faith and Practice

In addition to the above, we provide acts of Collective Worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England as a part of the heritage of our schools. We use the following indicators:

BIBLICAL- the Bible is used to encounter the teachings of Jesus and as a sourcebook for inspiration and learning. Pupils are made familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture.

LITURGICAL - aspects of Anglican liturgy, such as greetings, are used to create a framework for worship; pupils are also introduced to a variety of well-known prayers – many of which express central beliefs of Christians throughout the ages.

EUCHARISTIC – we introduce children to the central act of Anglican worship, either in RE or through our own school celebration with the local priest

SEASONAL - we observe the cycle of the Anglican year including celebrations of the major Christian festivals

SYMBOLIC – we use Christian symbols as a focus for reflection

ECUMENICAL – we work with other local Christian denominations

DIVERSE – we provide opportunities to discover the variety of worship in Anglican churches e.g. through work with our link diocese of Kagera, through valuing both meditation and silence, dance, prayer, reflection, story, quiet songs and louder expressions of praise, etc

In each school, we seek to provide a worship space which is attractive and well prepared with thought given to colour, space, seating, ambience and music.

We foster links with the local parish Church, involving clergy in leading / joining us for collective worship and providing coherence with worship in church.

We aim to visit the parish church at least four times per year as part of the Christian calendar and to offer the occasional opportunity for all children to experience worship in the wider church e.g. at the cathedral or on a Sunday morning.

We aim for our Collective Worship to be creative and to inspire pupils into action.

3. Connections with other Christian denominations and faiths

The Anglican Communion sees itself as part of a global church and promotes ecumenism. In all our schools, we work to promote links with other local churches and Christian organisations and welcome their clergy and leaders as contributors to acts of collective worship.

We recognise that some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, some worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting in which no-one's integrity is compromised, where everyone finds something positive for themselves, and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

As established by the 1944 Act and reinforced in this policy, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. If a parent is considering withdrawing their child from Collective Worship they should make contact with the Headteacher in writing.

However, it is hoped that no one will feel the need to exercise this right. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act. This includes the school continuing to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from collective worship. We will seek advice from the Diocesan Schools' Adviser with regard to further legal requirements and the management of withdrawal.

5. Aims and Purpose

In relation to the issues of withdrawal, it is helpful for parents to be aware of the aims and purpose of Collective Worship as defined by the Education Reform Act 1988 are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for the children to worship God
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs
- To encourage participation and response
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and reinforce positive attitudes

Within our provision of Christian Worship, we try to meet these aims for all children.

6. Planning

Planning for Collective Worship must be led by the Headteacher but may be delegated to an appropriate member of staff. Responsibility may not be delegated

Plans follow the cycle of the Anglican year, celebrating festivals and saints' days as appropriate. Each half-term explores a Christian value in a variety of ways, through

story, song, prayer and reflection. 'Values for Life' or 'Roots and Fruits' are most commonly used as the basis of these plans.

The Headteacher must ensure that leaders and visiting speakers receive copies of the plans. Individuals and groups are responsible for using the plans as a basis for developing their own short- term plans for individual acts of worship.

Pupils as well as adults engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of Collective Worship. Our preferred approach for individual acts of worship is to follow the pattern of **GATHER, ENGAGE, RESPOND, SEND** – this approach offers a pattern which both staff and children can use and is useful for evaluation as well.

7. Organisation

In each school the act of worship is organised across the week differently but an act of Collective Worship is always held daily which may involve the whole school or smaller class or key stage groups meeting together.

Where collective worship forms part of an assembly e.g. an awards assembly, each school will ensure there is a clear distinction between the two elements of gathering.

Our timetable is as follows:

Monday – collective worship led by the Headteacher around a Christian value

Tuesday – singing worship

Wednesday – Key stage worship

Thursday – class worship

Friday - celebration

In each school aspects of Collective worship should be discussed regularly in a staff meeting and by the school council or a team of children, designated as CW leaders.

8. Resources

Each school should have a budget for Collective Worship which is distinct from the budget for Religious Education.

Good assembly books, access to websites and child-friendly Bibles should all be available. Good quality music e.g. through a growing collection of CDs, and access to a live musician where possible should be seen as important and worth pursuing.

9. Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

Each school should recognise that although SMSC development should be fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of Collective Worship provide a multitude of opportunities in this area. For example, children will be encouraged to reflect on and celebrate the deeper meanings of life, consider their own behaviour and recognise the need for forgiveness, appreciate the contributions of others and respond to their needs, value their own culture and the cultures of others.

Contributions to SMSC made by acts of worship may be inspected by Ofsted.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation / SIAMS Inspection

All schools should develop simple ways of monitoring and evaluating the impact of Collective Worship. Advice is given by the Diocese on this area. Monitoring should lead to the improvement of practice.

SIAMS inspectors explore the ways in which Collective Worship is an expression pf the school's Christian vision and to what extent it is inclusive, invitational and inspiring.

Questionnaires provided for staff and pupils are useful indicators and should be used annually to help monitor this impact of Collective Worship.

Staff should have opportunity to discuss the requirements of the SIAMS inspection and use its criteria as one way of moving CW forward in their individual school.

The Headteacher, CW co-ordinator, pupils and the GB should routinely monitor acts of Collective Worship. An observation form is available from the Diocese.

11. Inclusion

In line with the Equalities Act 2010, we are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability, religion, physical or sensory disability or any other protected characteristic. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs as appropriate e.g. taking account of different learning styles and using multi-sensory approaches.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed.