



## Collective Worship Policy

Reviewed: November 2021

Next review date: November 2023

*Journey together,  
guided by God,  
to do the best we can.*

### **Rationale**

One of the school's aims is to be a Christian Community where everyone can grow in Christian faith and develop an understanding and tolerance of others. In accordance with this and with statutory requirements, collective worship is placed at the centre of the school's daily life. The spiritual, social, cultural and moral welfare of all children is of prime concern to us. Christian values are integral in our ethos and teaching and our daily acts of worship reflect this.

### **The Legal Requirements**

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) requires that:

- 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".
- 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.

### **Withdrawal**

The right of parents to withdraw their children from Collective Worship established in the 1944 Act remains unchanged. Parents also retain this right in voluntary aided and voluntary controlled church schools. This means that:

- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending Collective Worship at a school, the school must comply.
- If parents request alternative worship in accordance with a particular faith or denomination for a child who has been withdrawn, schools should respond positively providing that:
  - denominational worship does not replace the statutory act of Collective Worship for voluntary schools;
  - alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purpose of the school curriculum;
  - such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school.

In recognition of the particular affiliation and ethos of this school, all staff and pupils are expected to take part in worship though the right to withdraw exists. The Governors would hope that parents and staff having chosen this school would wish to support its ethos. Pupils whose parents withdraw them from collective worship go to the library or other agreed place during this activity.

### **Aspiration**

In a Church school collective worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Our aspiration is that Collective Worship will not only be 'good' as outlined in the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) toolkit but 'excellent'. (See Appendix 2)

### **The aim of collective worship is to:**

1. provide children with an opportunity to worship God;
2. give children experience of Christian acts of worship within an Anglican framework;
3. provide opportunities to explore different Christian Values, particularly our adopted values of Compassion, Hope, Creativity, Friendship and Respect;
4. give children the opportunity for reflection and thought in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity;
5. provide a special, quiet, focused time where children are invited to explore issues for themselves and reflect and learn from their own experiences;
6. provide an experience where children can consider moral and spiritual issues;
7. provide worship which is appropriate for children's needs and interests and to encourage their participation;
8. be an activity distinct from, but linked to and supportive of, other school activities;

9. provide experience which enables children to develop sensitivity and a sense of wonder, awe and mystery for the world of which they are a part;
10. provide opportunities to ask and answer 'Big Questions,' related to our worship.
11. provide an opportunity for celebration of the school community, its life, its work and its ethos at which staff and pupils can come together as a family;
12. develop children's skills, for example, music, drama, ICT.

In our worship, and in line with SIAMS we aspire to and will monitor the extent to which worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring and:

#### Extract from SIAMS

- 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.

## INCLUSION

St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School welcomes all. Our pupils come from a variety of backgrounds reflecting our local school community. This may include those who have, or who come from:

- families with a commitment to the Christian faith
- families with a commitment to a faith other than Christianity
- families with no particular commitment to any religion

Acts of Collective Worship take account of the family backgrounds of all pupils as part of the school's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Diversity enriches the life of our school community. In line with guidance from the Diocese of Chichester (In Spirit and In Truth 2015) we take particular care to ensure that in acts of Collective Worship diversity is embraced in positive and sensitive ways through:

- building up positive relationships with families and local faith communities
- encouraging pupils to be present at acts of Collective Worship while ensuring that pupils from other faiths and their parents are aware that they will not be required to say Christian prayers
- ensuring that when some leaders use Christian prayers in the time set aside for prayer, pupils will be encouraged to use their own private devotions by thinking of prayers they have learned in their own faith tradition
- providing opportunities for silent reflection to enable all pupils to make a personal response
- developing a sense of shared values and achievements which cross cultural and religious boundaries
- catering for a diversity of beliefs and points of view, allowing individuals to respond as individuals.

We aim that our approach to Collective Worship is sensitive to the needs and backgrounds of the communities it serves.

### Delivering collective worship at our school

The arrangements for collective worship in this school are made by the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher.

A daily act of collective worship is provided for all pupils. This will be held in various ways – whole school, class groups or phase groups – giving an opportunity for all children to take part. Worship will be held both indoors and outdoors.

All collective worship is time-tabled and usually held in the morning when children are most receptive, although times may vary eg on a Thursday afternoon.

### **Collective worship should:**

- be inclusive and involve children;
  - relate to children's experiences;
  - build on the school's shared values;
  - provide an opportunity for prayer and reflection;
  - be curricular and educational.
1. Acts of worship should be carefully planned and records kept. Themes will be planned for each week and a schedule for each term and year, but will also be responsive to current affairs and the needs of children. Themes may link to: displays / artefacts in reflective areas in classrooms; external activities, for example, Art Exhibition at St Mary/St Nicolas Church; large artwork / sculpture / display.
  2. Acts of worship will be held in the school hall, classrooms, the Parish Church or appropriate outside venues, for example, Lancing College.
  3. The setting for acts of worship should be attractive and welcoming with a focus for all attending. Children should enter and leave in an orderly manner. Music will be played on entry and departure. Hymns and songs will be sung and there will be a quiet time for children to reflect. The visible focus may be a picture, slides, artefacts or the lighting of a candle. For school Eucharist Year 6 pupils will prepare the altar and process in with the cross at the start of worship. At the end all stand while pupils process out with the cross.
  4. Acts of worship will be led by members of the Senior Leadership Team or other staff members, whole classes, groups of children, local clergy or visiting speakers.
  5. A place is given for the celebration of the school and individual achievements – including BEST point certificates, and the birth of a new baby.
  6. ICT will be used where possible.
  7. Children will be able to participate in a number of ways including worship, planning, setting up the hall or room, working the data projector/CD player/computer, singing, reading, responding, reflecting, spending time in prayer and evaluating. Opportunity to perform musical recitals at the start and end of worship will be given to children who play musical instruments.
  8. Parents, friends and governors will be invited to particular acts of worship such as class assemblies and Eucharist services.
  9. The school will support the Diocesan Leavers' Service.
  10. All visiting speakers will have access to the Collective Worship Policy.
  11. Acts of collective worship will not normally be used as a forum for announcements about conduct or matters of organisation of the school.
  12. Acts of worship should be referred to or written about in the School Newsletter.
  13. Acts of worship should be planned, monitored and evaluated by the "Dream Team" and the Senior Leadership Team.
  14. The Worship and Ethos Committee should also be involved in the monitoring and evaluating of worship within the school.
  15. Acts of worship will be evaluated against the SIAMS Toolkit. (See appendix)

### **Acts of worship in class or year groups**

1. Class worship, led by the Class Teacher will occur in each classroom or outdoors in an agreed location (eg in the Tree Circle of Friendship) on a regular basis (approx. every two to three weeks).
2. The acts of worship should have a visible aid to help focus on God – candle, picture, artefact, vase of flowers, display on a cloth, poem or natural objects (see Guidance for Class Worship).
3. There should be time for quiet reflection.
4. Children in Years 4-6 may have the opportunity to use their Bibles during worship.
5. Children should be given the opportunity to participate and/or plan and arrange worship themselves (see Pupil's Guide to Leading a Whole School Assembly).

### **The Anglican Tradition**

The faith and practice of the Church of England is explored in collective worship through a child's time in school.

The areas covered are:

- using the Bible;
- taking part in the set order of Anglican worship;
- reflecting on Christian symbols;
- observing the cycle of the Church's year and holy days;
- using the Parish Church and its priests as resources;
- building up a collection of prayers, hymns and songs for worship;
- learning traditional responses and prayers;
- providing the opportunity to discover the value of silence within worship;
- recognising our strong commitment to ecumenism;
- welcoming all pupils of whatever faith and celebrating shared values and beliefs.

## **The Bible**

The use of the Bible is central to worship and is used to enrich worship, to enhance the theme and to give context to the worship. Bible readings and stories are a regular focus during worship. In addition, children are presented with Bibles (by the local vicar) at the beginning of Year 4, for use during class worship, quiet reading time and RE lessons in the subsequent school years. These Bibles are then presented again formally at their school leaver's service as the children continue onwards in their spiritual journeys.

## **The Eucharist**

The Eucharist is central to the expression of Anglican worship. In this school it is celebrated regularly, usually twice a year for KS2 pupils, parents and friends of the school. The Eucharist is planned with care so that the children can grow in understanding of what it means to be believers. On St Nicolas Day or close to it we celebrate the Eucharist with the whole school, governors, parents and friends.

Parental permission must be given before children receive the Eucharist, which includes wine. When children (and adults) go to the front they normally put their hands behind their back to indicate that they want to receive a blessing or in front of them to receive the bread and wine. Alternatively, and this particularly applies to children of other faiths, may shake hands. Children are encouraged but not compelled to go the front. They can remain in their place.

## **Prayer**

Prayer is an important part of collective worship and a natural part of school life. Children can be helped to understanding through a flexible approach to prayer.

We use different methods of prayer such as:

- arrow prayers anytime, anywhere, anyhow;
- prayer and music;
- prayer and silence and quiet time;
- postures for prayer such as hands together or hands in laps;
- ways in which pupils can make prayer requests such as our prayer folder/book in the hall or prayer post-box.
- prayer activities within the Prayer Space, which is held annually and led by the Brighton and Hove City Mission and Off the Fence charities.

We also use set prayers – our School Prayer, the traditional version of the Lord's Prayer and the prayer of St Richard of Chichester, as well as our own collection of prayers and graces for use at lunchtime and at the end of the day.

## **Hymns and Music**

Music plays an important part in our worship and helps to create an atmosphere that sets the tone for worship.

We have a large repertoire of hymns, songs and rounds. These include a variety from all traditions of Christian worship.

Hymns and songs are selected for the appropriate age group and are practised regularly. Where possible, these relate to the theme of our worship eg Friendship, or to the relevant Christian festivals.

Music is chosen to start and end our collective worship. This is either recorded music or can be live music played by children and visiting adults.

## **Planning**

Worship is planned in advance using long term plans and termly plans. The themes ensure a balance by considering special occasions in the school's life, the use of the Church Calendar, Christian values (including the school's own: Friendship, Respect, Hope, Compassion and Creativity), the leadership of the worship and special services.

The planned worship for the term provides opportunity to be flexible offering invitation to reflect, be responsive to local and national situations and current affairs, be responsive to children's needs, and appropriateness for our school. KS2 children can also plan whole school worship sessions, in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team Music Leader.

## **Online Worship**

If the school is closed or partially closed for any reason e.g. pandemic, then the school will seek to provide online worship. This could include a range of worship e.g.

-Worship recorded by staff and clergy

-Signposting/links to other organisations providing worship via platforms such as YouTube.

Staff will monitor to check that any assemblies delivered externally are in line with the ethos and values of the school.

## **Whole School Worship Restrictions**

Sometimes it may be not possible to have Key Stage or Whole School collective worship. In such circumstances the school will have a combination of online worship (see above) and class worship.

If it is not possible to meet in the school hall, the school will consider outdoor worship e.g. in the Courtyard.

## **Staff Expectations**

Staff are expected to fully support the Christian ethos of the school and respect times of worship. They should join in or respectfully observe and set a good example. They should not do alternative activities e.g. if the class are watching an assembly online, they shouldn't multitask and do something else.

## **Resources and Review of Policy**

The worship plan is accessible to staff in the staffroom, hall and via the weekly Staff Bulletin. Worship resources are kept in the holy cupboard, and Headteacher's room.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

## **Related Policies / Documents**

- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural policy
- Ethos guidelines
- RE Policy
- School vision, mission and aims
- Christian values webpages
- Christian Values for Life materials
- Big Start Assembly materials

## **Appendix I: A BRIEF GUIDE TO SCHOOL WORSHIP** (EXAMPLE FROM STAP)

We meet daily for worship, for 15 minutes.

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Music is played as pupils come to worship. This may be secular or sacred and will include worship songs, classical and contemporary music to set the tone of a calm and reflective space.

### **GREETING**

We indicate the start of worship with the following call and response:

**God is here:** We come to worship Him

### **ENGAGEMENT**

The theme of the week should be articulated in each session (see Collective Worship Plan). Across the week, the theme is explored through reference to Biblical text, our principles, through stories and song. Where possible, this should be interactive. A picture or artefact is helpful to focus attention, particularly of the youngest pupils.

### **REFLECTION**

Pose a question or thought for pupils to reflect on (this may be the little or big question of the week, or another thought). Prayers may also be said. The Lord's Prayer is always said as part of worship in church, and at other times.

### **SENDING OUT**

Worship always concludes with our school prayer – the leader speaking the words in bold and everyone responding:

**God, give us wisdom,** to understand more about you

**God, give us grace,** to know and share your love

**God give us hope,** to follow you into our future

Amen

Any notices are given following the conclusion of worship.

Music is played as the children leave.

## Appendix 2: Extracts from SIAMS Toolkit

In this strand the following must be explored:

- The ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.

In developing collective worship that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring the school community needs to evaluate the extent to which 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.

### **In a Good Church school which enables pupils and adults to flourish...**

Worship is invitational offering everyone the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity. All those who wish to be so are actively engaged in worship. Prayer is a natural and valued part of the culture of the school. It is not compulsory or forced. All those who wish to do so will have regular opportunities to pray and reflect. Pupils talk about the value of prayer and reflection both in formal and informal contexts and how being still and reflective in their own lives can be helpful. As appropriate to context, pupils speak of their personal use of prayer and reflection. Pupils recognise that worship provides meaningful opportunities to contribute to their spiritual development.

Statutory obligations are met in context.

Worship is creative and pupils talk about how it often inspires them to action. It has variety, for example, involving music and liturgy, silence, story and reflection and, where appropriate, the Eucharist. Most staff and pupils talk about how worship causes them to reflect on their behaviour, values and attitudes. Worship ensures pupils develop an appreciation of the variety of elements and styles found in the diversity of liturgical and other traditions of the worldwide Anglican/Methodist Church and its diversity of expression within the UK. Worship provokes thoughtful and respectful responses from pupils. They are aware of the central importance of the Eucharist/Communion to Christian worship.

Planning for collective worship ensures that pupils have opportunities to encounter the teachings of Jesus and explore the relevance of his teaching in today's world. Pupils talk about the meaning of the different elements of Christian worship including belief in the trinitarian nature of God.

An effective shared approach to planning allows appropriate opportunities for pupils to gather, engage and respond. The planning, monitoring and evaluation of collective worship involves a range of members of the community. Pupils are actively involved in this process, often taking a consultative role. Most leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.

The local church community is regularly involved in collective worship, providing practical support and encouragement.

## Excellent

These descriptors should be seen and used as a guide. They are not exhaustive of exemplary practice.

It is better than Good.

*For example:*

- The school community recognises and values worship as the heartbeat of the school. Pupils and adults talk with enthusiasm about worship and explain how it influences their lives, both in and out of school.
- School leaders work proactively with the local church community or diocese who provide innovative and appropriate support for collective worship. Pupils take a considerable lead in the development of worship within the school. Staff are well supported to lead engaging tutor group and classroom worship.
- Pupils articulate an informed and evaluative understanding of the value and use of prayer and reflection. There are varied and interactive prayer and reflection activities on offer to all pupils which they find helpful and supportive.
- Pupils are enabled to engage with the Eucharist in creative and innovative ways, and this ensures a range of age and context appropriate opportunities for pupils to explore the Eucharist in ways that respect the integrity of the pupils.