



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

**Ratified by Christian Character Committee on:
Monday 30th April 2018**

Headteacher	Sign and date:	
Chair of Christian Character Committee	Sign and date:	

**Date for review Summer 2020
(or earlier if this is considered necessary)**



Our Vision: To be guided by God's wisdom, to embrace challenge and to strive to achieve our best, enjoying all that we do together.

Vision and Values

Our Vision: To be guided by God's wisdom, to embrace challenge and to strive to achieve our best, enjoying all that we do together.

Our Christian Values lie at the heart of our school.

- Agape – love
- Koinonia – community
- Thankfulness
- Compassion
- Peace
- Forgiveness
- Justice
- Service
- Courage and Self sacrifice
- Hope

Definition

Arrangements for collective worship in a Church school are the responsibility of the foundation governors in consultation with the headteacher.

There are three main legal requirements for collective worship which it is important to observe:

Collective worship in a church school should be carried out in accordance with the school's founding trust deed, and in accordance with the School's ethos statement, which is to be found in the statutory Instruments of Government. It must, therefore, be wholly Christian in nature.

The school must provide an act of collective worship for all pupils every day.

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 unit.

Aims and Principles

The Aims of Collective Worship

It is important to ask how the worship is related to the school's Mission Statement or Statement of Purpose. Worship in church schools should be of the highest quality and a central activity in the life of the school. Effective collective worship is one way in which a Church School can give expression to its founding trust deed. Below are some of the accepted aims of collective worship in a Church School:

- To help children discover their place in the world.
- To provide an opportunity for the children to reflect upon God and to give Him honour.
- To highlight and nurture the spiritual dimension through experiencing worship.
- To provide children with a vocabulary of worship and an experience of a wide variety of worship forms, including symbols and imagery.
- To provide an opportunity to celebrate Christian festivals.
- To heighten awareness of the ultimate questions / realities of life and to provide the opportunity to reflect upon these.



- To support the search for meaning.
- To enable children to appreciate their worth and value to God, and to the community, and to respect the integrity of each individual as a child of God.
- To enable pupils to make effective use of silence in opportunities for reflection, contemplation, meditation and prayer.
- To celebrate gifts, talents and achievements.
- To establish, explore, and reinforce the common Christian values of the school community such as love, peace, kindness, compassion.
- To foster a feeling of community and belonging in the school through a sharing of experiences and feelings.
- To develop personal relationships and to encourage social development.
- To provide an opportunity to empathise with the needs of others.
- To provide an opportunity for children to become acquainted with people from the local and wider community, particularly the local church.
- To encourage respect and care for God's creation by a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues.
- To foster feelings such as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy.
- To give memorable and enjoyable experiences.
- To provide an opportunity to bring personal needs and those of others before God in prayer.
- To share with participants some of the central teachings of the Christian faith at an appropriate level and thereby give them the encouragement to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework.

What is collective worship?

Christian worship is an honouring of God. Worship stems from personal experience; it is a central characteristic of faith communities which are in relationship with God. We can never make anyone worship because it is an attitude of the heart focused on God; in the school situation 'all' we can do is lead people to the threshold of worship by providing a setting where they may worship God if they so wish.

The term *collective* worship is used only in education, whereas churches and religions usually think of their worship as being *corporate*. The implication of this is that when a group of people gather together due to shared beliefs with the intention of sharing worship then this is a corporate activity. No such assumptions about shared beliefs can be made in the case of a school community, even a church school. The school is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds and who happen to be together primarily for the purpose of education, not for worship. The family backgrounds of pupils may be very different in terms of beliefs and adherence to religion. Where parents have choice about which school their child attends, this is often limited by geographical factors and the church school still cannot claim the right to use school collective worship as an act of corporate worship.

What takes place in collective worship must take account of the varied backgrounds of the pupils (and staff) as well as of their ages and aptitudes. In collective worship children and adults will be responding to the worship on offer in different ways and at different levels; it is the task of collective worship to provide a setting in which the integrity of those present is not compromised but in which everyone finds something positive for themselves. Collective worship plays a central role in a Church School; it models the school's Christian ethos and values, and proclaims its Church School identity.

As a result it should:

- Have a recognised place in key school documents such as the Statement of Aims or Statement of Purpose
- Be well organised, planned, delivered and resourced
- Have a place in the development and improvement cycle
- Be special and different from ordinary classroom activities, offering a sense of occasion
- Be both inclusive and unifying, recognising the personal integrity of all members of the school community



- Be *real* worship, thus offering the possibility that those who choose to worship in this situation may be enabled to do so

Collective Worship and Assembly – Understanding the difference between them

→ see note in appendix 1:1

The Anglican Tradition

When planning collective worship, Church Schools should be aware of their Anglican foundation and consider how this can contribute to the assembly provision – without reproducing something inappropriate to the children's age and experience.

The following may be described as *shared* Christian elements of collective worship:

- Using the Bible, either as a source book, or as an inspiration for themes and stories
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Saints Days
- Learning and saying traditional prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the Grace
- Singing a wide variety of hymns, from traditional to rap
- Using Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection
- Using Psalms with simple responses

Whilst these are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses e.g.: The Lord is here / His Spirit is with us; Peace be with you/ and also with you; Go in peace to love and serve the Lord / In the name of Christ, Amen
- Using Collects as a focus for worship
- Eucharists

Management and Planning

Planning Your Collective Worship Programme

Schools usually plan their collective worship on an annual or termly basis and frequently this may be left to one person to put together. However, given that the Foundation Governors of a Church school have particular responsibility for monitoring collective worship, and that at least one Foundation Governor – namely the priest of the parish, will probably be a regular contributor to the programme, it is very appropriate that such planning should be done by a small team of people, *including* church representatives.

It is important to take the following into account as part of your planning process:

- Blocking out the whole year in advance to show the Christian Festivals and other significant dates will also help you to determine appropriate themes for the rest of the year. For example, if



the school regularly engages with the Bishop's Lent Challenge, you will know that linked worship materials will be sent to you from the Diocese. Weekly themes and acts of worship which follow the pattern of the Church's three year lectionary are also available to you through the Ely website. Other themes may arise naturally out of the school's Christian Vision and Values.

- The pattern and timing of collective worship can affect its efficacy. Here your monitoring procedures will have told you that worship at different times of the day can be less stressed and rushed – worship immediately before morning break, for example can feel very “tight” while worship at the beginning or end of the day may be more appropriate. *This can be a particular issue when some class based worship is taking place.*
- Is it more sensible to theme your worship horizontally or vertically? In other words, to run a theme for a week or a fortnight, or, where there are a variety of worship leaders, to run a theme through half a term of Thursdays for example? The right answer to this question is what works best for your school, but the corollary of this is that if you theme horizontally *and* have a variety of worship leaders, including visitors, it is important that a theme is planned in some detail to avoid repetition.
- Collecting feedback from pupils and parents on your collective worship provision will be a natural part of your monitoring process, and it is important that this is discussed by your worship planning team and contributes to the planning of the next worship cycle.
- Agree how collective worship will be recorded (including key stage and class worship if applicable) and the pattern of monitoring and evaluation over the year.
- Consider how you will share the worship themes and occasions with your school families e.g. on the website, newsletters, invitations to church services and celebration assemblies.

The Diocese of Ely recommends that **Church Schools** use a four part model of worship in their collective worship, with liturgical greetings and the format “**Gathering, Engaging, Responding, Sending**” (**GERS**) which is the outline format for any Church of England Service of the Word.

→ This format is expanded on in detail in the appendix. The appendix (1:2) also contains details of the scheme and approach titled “BLESSED”.

Leadership and Authorisation

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that a daily act of Christian Worship takes place in school. The weekly themes of Collective Worship are organised by our RE lead and collective worship is regularly led by members of SLT and RE lead on a rotation basis. Our incumbent leads collective worship at least once each half term.

Every class is responsible for leading two acts of Worship throughout the year, one in school and one in St Augustine's church.

Worship is led by our “Praise Pals” approximately twice a term.

We are always keen to welcome leaders from local churches into school to lead collective worship.

Monitoring and Feedback

Governors Monitoring Collective Worship

Governors have a particular responsibility for collective worship in a Church school, supported by the headteacher and staff. Monitoring of the collective worship provision should be a regular feature of



governor visits to the school, allowing governors to build up a record bank which covers all the different styles of worship provision which take place e.g. whole school, class based, regular visitors, celebration assemblies, church services.

Governors seeking to assess the *impact* of their school's collective worship provision should take time to dialogue with both pupils and parents, either through conversations (e.g. the school council) or questionnaires. There should also be an annual review of the collected evidence conducted by the school's collective worship leader and the collective worship governor(s) to consider future development of the collective worship programme.

Governors should be aware of:

- the collective worship entitlement (a daily act of worship for every pupil unless withdrawn by their parents / carers)
- whether all acts of worship are Christian
- the collective worship policy
- the school's collective worship planning and recording methods
- who leads collective worship in the school and how visitors are supported
- the collective worship development plan and budget

Governors could also support the collective worship of the school by:

- sharing resources, ideas and music which could be used by the school
- encouraging members of the local church community to join with the school for worship e.g. musicians, Open the Book teams, attending acts of worship which are open to parents and public, joint eucharists.

Evaluating Collective Worship – Pupils

In a Church school the foundation governors will already have a system of monitoring collective worship and pupils, who will see far more acts of worship than visiting governors, can have valuable input into this process. This can be done in a number of ways, including governors meeting with the School Council or annual class questionnaires. Pupils can also fill out simple evaluation grids of individual acts of worship on a more regular basis – these should be based on whatever the governors are using and be included in the governors' monitoring file. Alternatively, a simple proforma can be found in Appendix 1:3.

Withdrawal

Parents have been able to withdraw their children from collective worship since the 1944 Education Act and no recent legislation has affected this right. It is most recently confirmed in Section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The government guidance document which remains current in the case of collective worship is Circular 1/94: Religious Education and Collective Worship.



The law states that in on occasions, the parent (or the student themselves if over 18) may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from collective worship. The right of withdrawal from collective worship would normally be exercised through the physical withdrawal of the pupil from the place where the act of worship is taking place.

Any parent wanting to exercise the right of withdrawal would be asked to meet with the head teacher to clarify:

- the elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part;
- the practical implications of withdrawal; and
- whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and, if so, how much.

APPENDICES

1:1 Collective Worship and Assembly – How they are different

It is still customary in the majority of schools for teachers and pupils alike to use the term 'assembly' when they are referring to the 'act of collective worship'. This accepted shorthand should not be allowed to blind us to the differences between the two activities. Schools frequently assemble for a common purpose. In essence the purpose of most school assemblies is to gather the school for collective worship followed by the sharing of notices. In this scenario, pupils withdrawn from collective worship should rejoin the rest of the school for the assembly notices. There are many elements which worship and assembly have in common, such as helping children to develop common standards and values, or to develop an awareness of, and a concern for, the needs of others. However, the presence of these common elements alone does not turn an assembly into an act of collective worship. It is a mistake to assume that, for example, inviting a charity worker to address the school during the 'collective worship slot' is collective worship. In each and every act of collective worship some of the elements of worship (ie of 'giving worth to God') must be present. *An Assembly may include Collective Worship. Not every Assembly is Collective Worship.*

1:2 Assistance with Planning and Execution

Two programmes to assist in planning and executing Collective Worship are given below: "Gathering, Engaging, Responding, Sending" and "BLESSED"

✦ Using the tool: "Gathering, Engaging, Responding, Sending"

The Diocese of Ely recommends that Church Schools use a four part model of worship in their collective worship, with liturgical greetings and the format "Gathering, Engaging, Responding, Sending" (GERS) which is the outline format for any Church of England Service of the Word.

"Flippin' Praise" is an excellent resource with which to do this and can be purchased through ChurchschoolsEast.

The principles are applicable to whole school, key stage and class worship. The notes below are to help with your preparation using this format.

Gathering

We gather together and greet each other.
We all come to play a part in this community.
We are preparing to meet God.



How is the room set up?
How is seating arranged?
Does everyone know what they should be doing?
What will the greeting be like?

Engaging

We engage with the big things and the little things in life.
We encounter Jesus and the stories of the Bible.
We are listening for God's message for us.
How will you share God's message?
How will you share your own experiences or contemporary events?
What strategies will you use?

Responding

We respond to what we have heard and seen.
We respond together as individuals.
We are given the opportunity to worship God.
Will you use singing or prayer or reflection time?
Will there be a practical response and how will this be encouraged?
Do you give enough time to responding?

Sending

We are sent out to love and serve one another and to make a difference in the world.
We are all dismissed with God's blessing.
How will people leave worship – singing? silently?
Will there be special words of blessing or dismissal?

✦ Using the tool: Making your Church School Worship BLESSED?

- B *Biblical*
- L *Liturgical*
- E *Ecumenical*
- S *Seasonal*
- S *Symbolic*
- E *Eucharistic*
- D *Diverse*

B – All acts of collective worship in a Church school contain Christian elements and teaching – the Bible, and Bible stories retold at an appropriate level, should figure regularly in worship. Themes can be built around some of the big Biblical epics, such as the story of Joseph, or e.g. parables of Jesus.

L – Liturgical refers to the structure of worship and this is where features from Church practice can be used. The liturgical format of an act of collective worship is best described as gathering, engaging, responding and sending. Both the gathering and sending can use familiar responses such as “The Lord be with you” “and also with you”. Responding includes using some of the great prayers of the Church, including the Lord's Prayer itself.

E – The Anglican Church is an Ecumenical Church and, in the same way, Church schools can draw freely on worship materials from other Churches, especially those found in their locality. Materials from the World Church, particularly songs and prayers, can also be used.

S – The round of the Church year – beginning in Advent – passes through special festival seasons which tell the Christian story over the pattern of the year. Church schools will naturally organise their worship themes around the great festivals of Christmas and Easter, and also include other special days and celebrations, tying in with their parish church.

S – Thinking of symbolism opens up the question of how the hall is prepared as a worship space, including the use of cross, candles, and other Christian symbolism. Calendars of the Church's Year can also be used as displays, linking collective worship with Church practice. Symbolism also includes the use of symbolic actions e.g. in sharing food together in class based acts of



worship. Symbols which are in constant use can become wallpaper and it is important to keep revisiting their importance and meaning with each new intake of pupils.

E – Nationally about 20% of Church schools regularly include a Eucharist or Holy Communion service as a part of their collective worship provision. Schools wishing to explore the possibility of a school based Eucharist should do so in close co-operation with their parish and consult with parents. *All* pupils should have the opportunity of learning about the Eucharist in RE.

D – Worship is a rich experience which take many forms from quiet meditative reflection to exuberant celebration. Schools can draw on many different worship styles and resources to give pupils a generous diet of worship experiences.

1:3 Monitoring Proforma

Collective Worship Observation Form

Leader: _____ Observer _____

Theme _____ Date: _____

Criteria	Aspect	Comment
Gathering	Is there a real sense of a marking a start of a special time of day? Candle, song, reflection?	
Engaging	Does the worship leader capture the attention of the children and staff so the become actively engaged with the content?	
Responding	Does the leader allow for a response from the children and adults-whether active or quiet, passive, or noisy?	
Sending	Does the leader send us out with a clear 'thought of the day' something that may change our behaviour in some way? Passing of the peace? Song?	
Content	Clear Christian content and teaching?	



<h1>Summary</h1>	<p>Quotes from the children, staff or other members of the congregation.</p>	
------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

1.4 Resources

The resources listed below have been suggested by the Diocesan website:-

Websites to support your Collective Worship

Christian Collective Worship

- Planning the formal framework of collective worship – greetings etc (with seasonal variations) also downloads of hymns <http://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk/>
- The Ely website has collective worship materials which follow the Sunday Bible readings and collections of materials for special events as they occur http://www.elyeducation.org/main/?page_id=253
- Other dioceses with collections of worship materials include Blackburn <http://www.bdeducation.org.uk/schools/teacher/collective-worship/primary-school-colective-worship> and if you want to take up the idea of reflection diaries for class based collective worship look at Salisbury's materials: <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/schools1/diaries-of-reflection/?searchterm=diaries%20of%20reflection>
- Assemblies from Christian Aid <http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/TeachersResources/primary/ResourceOverview/assembly.aspx>
- Margaret Cooling has written a lot of helpful collective worship collections - you can download her Wisdom for Worship based on the book of Proverbs for free at <http://www.stapleford-centre.org/resources/wisdom-for-worship> She also has a set called Assemblies for Primary Schools (3 volumes for the three terms) and a follow up set called, unsurprisingly, "More assemblies for primary schools" some of which are cheap on Amazon at the moment!
- Sermons 4 Kids is a church resource rather than a school one – nut it may give you some ideas <http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

General Assembly Websites

- <http://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/> is now the main general assemblies website with Christian, secular and different faith assemblies. New assemblies are placed online every month and it also includes access to materials from the Culham Archive which was its predecessor.
- <http://assemblytube.com/> chiefly secular assemblies rather than collective worship – film clips and scripts – but you could adapt some of these to Christian values themes
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00nkdgx/clips> the BBC has a limited number of assembly clips see also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass/assemblies/> and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/collectiveworship>
- Materials from CAFOD at <http://cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-schools>

Collective worship resources for sale



- It's also worth looking to see what Barnabas has in their shop <http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/assembly/> things like the Bible storybags and the worldwide church book are good, and there's one out on Narnia
- For interactive stories (not whole assemblies – just the stories) the books by Dave Hopwood are always a good resource <http://davehopwood.com/books/coming-soon-telling-tales/> and he has some examples on this site to give you a “taster”.