

St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School



Collective Worship Policy Statement

Rationale

Collective Worship forms part of the foundation of our school, and is designed to promote the spiritual and moral development of the children. It gives all children and staff the opportunity to explore and reflect on the core Christian values that form the bedrock of our school, allows them to honour God, to be aware of His presence and to explore their own beliefs. It is also an opportunity to create and participate in shared experiences of praise and thanksgiving. Worship is neither a simple nor a single activity but is a rich kaleidoscope of interconnecting elements.

The aim of collective worship in our school is to:

- Develop in every child a knowledge of the immeasurable enormity of God's love for them (Ephesians 3:18)
- Develop in every child an understanding that God sees their heart and loves them even in their failings (1 Samuel 16:7)
- Develop an understanding in every child that God is always with them (Psalm 139, Matthew 28:20)
- Develop in our children an understanding of Christianity and the place of God in our world and in our lives
- Contribute to children's spiritual, moral and cultural development
- Enable the children to reflect on Christian values and beliefs
- Be inclusive, fostering a sense of community and unity in the school
- To create a spiritual setting i.e. a calm reflective atmosphere and a time in the day for opportunities to share "real" experiences and celebrate achievements.
- Provide meaningful experiences which take account of children's age, ability and family background
- Foster in the children an approach of enquiry and tolerance towards people of other faiths and those with no faith, by encouraging children's sharing and understanding of them
- Encourage children's natural sense of wonder of God's creation and to develop their qualities of curiosity, celebration and gratitude which form the foundation of worship.
- Offer children an opportunity for experiential understanding of the adoration of God in a way that is individual and appropriate for them, and which allows them to function comfortably in their own worship.

Guidelines

1. An act of worship will take place daily. These acts will mainly involve the whole school but on at least one day separate acts will take place eg. for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage children or for individual classes, i.e. Class Worship.
2. The worship will be planned to be relevant, meaningful and inclusive of all and will allow for a variety of responses from awareness and appreciation through respect and commitment to devotion and adoration. There is a weekly theme across the school: themes are drawn from/based upon specific Christian events/festivals, Christian values, stories from the Bible, exploring our place in a multi-faith, multi-cultural world.
3. All staff will attend daily collective worship unless at the discretion of the Headteacher.
4. All pupils attend unless parents have requested the withdrawal of their child on religious grounds. These children will be supervised by a member of the staff on a rota should the need arise.
5. The act of worship will be taken by members of staff, the Rector and carefully chosen visitors (who will themselves be given our school's guidelines for visitors in advance). All staff responsible for arranging an act of worship will be able to consult the year's School Worship programme in advance.
6. On special occasions Collective Worship will take place at our parish church of St Aldhelm's i.e. Harvest, Christingle (Advent) Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, (or Pentecost) and Leavers Day. It is also expected that the pupils will visit the church for worship on occasions other than Church Festivals. Parents and friends are invited to join us when we attend church as well as for Collective Worship in school.
7. Worship will be planned to take account of the Church year. This plan will be made each September for the coming year and will aim to provide continuity and progression in considering issues and an opportunity for children to develop spiritually over a period of time. It will also allow for flexibility and spontaneity. The planned programme for Collective Worship will be reviewed regularly against the criteria set out in this policy.
8. The Act of Worship will usually follow a recognisable format.
 - a) The worship will be for 20 minutes in length.
 - b) A greeting will be given which may sometimes be a sentence and response,

e.g. S: "Peace by with you", R: "And also with you". N.B. This could also, alternatively, be used to finish the Act of Worship.

c) A "sense of occasion" will be created by the setting in the Hall for whole school worship. A "sense of occasion" for Key Stage and class worship will be created as appropriate within the constraints of the differing settings.

d) When the whole school meet, a table with a candle and a cross will be used as a focus. The colour of the cloth covering the table will tie in with the church year.

e) The children will be seated so that they feel close to the focus and a part of the "happening" that is taking place.

f) Each act will have a clear focus and will involve pupil participation. The theme will be developed over a period of time.

g) Music will be used on entering and leaving the School Hall and ideally for Worship in a classroom.

h) There will be a hymn in an appropriate place, which, wherever possible will relate to the theme of the worship.

i) There will be a quiet time for reflection and/or a prayer.

j) Elements of worship may include music (records, tapes, singing, musical groups) listening to stories, Bible readings and other relevant passages, use of movement, mime, drama, artefacts and audio-visual material.

k) A class/school prayer will be used regularly. And to finish there may be silence and a final sentence, e.g. "Now go in Love and Peace, trying your best in all you do" – said by teacher, or "Let's go now to work hard, care much and be just and gentle in all we do today" – said by all.

l) Any notices will be separated clearly from the Act of Worship.

9. School worship will be distinctively, though not exclusively, Christian in order to follow the Trust Deed of our Church of England school and the recommendations of the Diocesan Board of Education.
10. Staff and visitors will be invited, from time to time, to write a comment in the record of Collective Worship. The Collective Worship governor, staff and pupils will regularly evaluate worship.

Equal Opportunities

We endeavour to ensure that collective worship offers equal opportunities to all as set out in the school's Equal Opportunities Policy. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from any act of worship within the school and are able to do so in writing to the Headteacher. We would however aim to discourage such action given the Christian foundation of our school.

Evaluation

The Governor with responsibility for Collective Worship will attend at least two acts of worship of each type during a term. Verbal feedback will be offered and a feedback sheet completed which will, over time, form a record of the different types of experience offered to the children. Pupils will be invited to contribute to the evaluation process through the School Council and through the monitoring of pupil views.

Conclusion

Children should see the Act of Worship as a time when teachers and pupils may express joy and thankfulness, share concerns and experiences, and affirm beliefs and values of the school community and the Christian Church of which they are part.

This policy statement has been written in accordance with the Mission Statement, the Aims of the School and the Ethos Statement. It is subject to review as part of the schedule of policy review as set by the governing body.

Agreed by:

the Teaching, Learning and School Improvement Committee **30/09/2015**

the Full Governing Body 14/10/2015

Signed by the Chair of Governors

Review date: **September 2018**