

**St John's Church of England VA Primary School**



# **Collective Worship Policy**

**Agreed by SLT**

**Agreed: September 2024**

**Review: September 2026**

# St John's Church of England VA Primary School

## Collective Worship Policy

### *Sharing joy and hope in the community*

***When considering matters of Collective Worship, it is important for all the school community to reflect, considering our vision statement, 'Sharing joy and hope in the community'; along with the school values Respect, Compassion, Friendship, Service and Endurance. Through this we will ensure we are guided into good decisions to support all those in the St John's community.***

'Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

#### **Policy Statement**

At St John's, worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and Collective Worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At St John's, Collective Worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

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Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*<sup>1</sup>) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually. A 'Reflection Book' is used by the whole school after Collective Worship, to help children express their theology and define individual identities. This is through imagination and creativity, whilst showing respect for everyone's personal feelings and values.

### **Legal Requirements**

There must be a daily act of Collective Worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective Worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England.

The governing body have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

### **The right of withdrawal**

In St John's, there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As Collective Worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within Collective Worship.

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The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from Collective Worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from Collective Worship and requested religious worship according to their faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

*(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily Collective Worship.)*

## **Guiding Principles**

Collective Worship in our school aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth.
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

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- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief.
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well known Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship, particularly our School Pupil Chaplains.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

### **Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation**

This policy was developed by staff, the Ethos Committee, Pupil Chaplains and governors, and was written in accordance with advice from the Bath and Wells Diocese. The Collective Worship Policy has been written with high regard and consideration of our Religious Education Policy, SMSC Policy and our School Values and Visions.

We ensure that the principles for Collective Worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing

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- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and spiritual support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about Collective Worship is included on the school website.

## **How Collective Worship is organised**

### **Leadership**

- Daily worship is led by a variety of people, including the headteacher, the two deputy-head teachers, the local vicar, the RE lead, school pupil chaplains, small groups of pupils, a whole class, a member of the clergy or local church, individual visitors or teams e.g. Bible Story Time group.
- Support and guidance is available to visitors leading worship, through our local vicar.

### **Planning**

- Worship is planned by the RE lead, headteacher, two deputy-headteachers, local vicar and school chaplain.
- Members of the school community, especially children, are equipped to plan and lead acts of worship through mentoring and following set routines for Collective Worship.
- Worship reflects the cycle of the Church year.
- We plan church services to celebrate Harvest, Christmas and Easter, whereby parents, carers and the local community are invited to join us. These services are led by our local vicar.
- Christian values of the school are identified, expressed and celebrated through our School Values Certificates' Collective Worship.
- Explicit links are always made between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school, especially through the Parable of The Two Builders.
- A range and variety of materials are used, including websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g. a picture or candle.
- With an increased diversity of children joining our school family from around the world, opportunities are provided for children and adults to explore and celebrate faiths in today's world.
- The Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God is explored through our Candle Prayer that all children learn.

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- Spiritual growth through prayer, stillness and reflection is nurtured within our children at St John's during acts of worship, in the classroom and outdoors in the school grounds.

### **Organisation of Collective Worship at St John's**

- Collective Worship is held daily.
- The whole school meets on four days in the hall. One day it is in our classrooms.
- The liturgical colours of the seasons of the Church Year are observed through using different tablecloths on the altar table in the hall.
- Sitting in their class groups, the children face our special stained-glass window in the hall, with the younger children nearer the front and year 6 children at the back on benches.
- A Christian cross and candle are on the table as focal points and a wide variety of calm music is played on entry and exit.
- During Collective Worship in classes, a cross and candle are also used for focal points. Bibles are in every class.
- Children learn and say the candle prayer and school prayer during every Collective Worship, and the Lord's Prayer regularly. All prayers are displayed in classrooms.
- The outside gardens and the St John the Baptist Church are also used for Collective Worship.
- Worship is held at different times of the day for 20-25 minutes.

Monday – end of day	Deputy Headteachers'	School Values/SMSC
Tuesday – during the day	Class teacher/TA	Class worship
Wednesday – end of day	RE Lead	Through songs and prayers
Thursday – end of day	Head Teacher/local vicar	Bible Stories and Church distinctiveness.
Friday – start of day	Head Teacher	Celebration assembly

### **Staff development and training**

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. Sometimes the governing body is invited to attend PDMs.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment, Recording, Reporting**

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- Governors have responsibility for monitoring how Collective Worship in the school reflects its Christian Vision.
- The Ethos Team meet termly to ensure that all school leaders contribute to sustaining, developing and nurturing the school's Christian ethos. The Ethos Team also contribute to the Religious Education and Collective Worship policies ensuring the Christian faith is manifested through every aspect of school life.
- The RE subject leader monitors long term and medium-term plans in Collective Worship, talking and listening to children for ideas.
- The subject leader will be aware of staff development needs and encourage continuing professional development and will strive to facilitate the sharing of good practice, to ensure teachers' understanding of curriculum content and spirituality.
- The subject leader will be responsible for working with the Collective Worship Governor and hold termly meetings.
- The subject leader will liaise with the Diocesan adviser with responsibility for Collective Worship.

### **Disseminating the policy**

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.

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