

# St John's CE VA Primary School

## Collective Worship Policy



At St John's we are:

Loved by God - Learning with Jesus - Living by the Spirit.

### 1 Introduction

As a Church school we want to worship and we want our children to have the opportunity to learn to worship and to grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. Worship in our school is not simply a statutory duty. We believe that we and our children are made in the image of God and that worship is a vital factor in this image becoming more real and meaningful.

We believe that, at its heart, Collective Worship should provide opportunity for pupils and staff to come together, to sing and pray, to share and communicate their feelings with one another and to God. It should take them beyond themselves towards an encounter with the living God and should prove to be an exciting time for all of them.

### 2 Aims and purpose

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 to reinforce positive attitudes

At St. John's we aim *"to enable our school community to engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship every day."* (The Way Ahead, 4.6)

### 3 Legal Requirements

We seek to comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which 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.

All acts of Collective Worship in Church schools must be Christian in character.

For Collective Worship, pupils can be grouped in various ways: as a whole school, according to age, or in groups (or a combination of groups) which the school uses at other times. Pupils cannot be put into special groups just for Collective Worship.

Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.

The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises but all schools are able to hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.

Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a VA school rests with the Governors in consultation with the headteacher. Foundation Governors have a particular responsibility because they are appointed for "the purpose of securing, as far as is practicable, that the character of the school as a voluntary school is preserved and developed, and, in particular, that the worship is conducted in accordance with the provisions of any trust deed relating thereto. The headteacher has a responsibility to ensure that all arrangements for Collective Worship are secured.

#### **4 Anglican Faith and Practice**

In addition to the above, we seek to provide acts of Collective Worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England therefore:

We use the Bible as a source book for inspiration and learning and make pupils familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture. We use Values of Life to create a framework for worship.

We use Christian symbols as a focus for reflection and provide opportunities to discover the value of meditation and silence. We encourage intercessory prayer for individuals, those in positions of authority, the needs of the local community and the wider world. We observe the cycle of the Anglican year including celebrations of the major Christian festivals.

We aim to provide a worship space which is attractive and well prepared with appropriate thought having been given to colour, space, seating, ambience and music.

We foster strong links with St. John's Church - regularly involving its clergy in leading Collective worship and providing coherence between the worship in church and school.

We make students aware of wider links with St. Edmundsbury Diocese and beyond that to the worldwide Anglican Communion.

## **5 Connections with other local churches**

The Anglican sees itself as part of a much wider church and promotes ecumenism. At St. John's, accordingly, we promote close links with other local churches and Christian organisations and welcome their clergy and leaders as regular contributors to acts of Collective Worship. We recognise that, while some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, many worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations and others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and accepted in worship without any pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.

## **6 Rights and Responsibilities**

As established by the 1944 Act and explained in the School Prospectus, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, having chosen to send their children to St. John's, it is hoped that no one will exercise this right. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act.

Similarly teachers have the right to withdraw from Collective Worship. However, at St. John's where teachers have signed a National Society contract, they are expected to participate.

The Foundation governors at St. John's have a particular responsibility to ensure that the character and foundation of the school are reflected in Collective Worship but the actual arrangements for Collective Worship are made by the co-ordinator in consultation with the Headteacher.

## **7 Planning**

Long and medium-term planning for Collective Worship is led by the co-ordinator and is undertaken in consultation with the head teacher, vicar and music co-ordinator. Plans follow the cycle of the Anglican year and the Values for life scheme and are arranged around half termly themes and associated Christian concepts. The co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that leaders and visiting speakers receive copies of these plans. Individuals and groups are then responsible for using them as a basis for developing their own short term plans for individual acts of worship.

## **8 Organisation**

An act of Collective Worship is held daily. This may involve the whole school in the hall or smaller class or key stage groups e.g. in individual classrooms or the KS1 area. Where Collective Worship forms part of an assembly, we ensure that there is a clear distinction between the two elements of the gathering. When Collective Worship

takes place in the hall, the Year 6 children are responsible for preparing the environment.

The Headteacher and other members of staff together with groups of children take turns to conduct Collective Worship. On Wednesdays, we welcome a visitor from other Churches or Christian organisations.

We conduct Collective Worship in a dignified and respectful way expecting children to behave appropriately. We create a suitable atmosphere by using music and candles, pictures or other artefacts to act as a focal point. We ask children to be quiet and thoughtful, to listen carefully and to participate in singing and prayers.

We use Friday assemblies as an opportunity to share children's work and to celebrate their successes. These are incorporated into an act of Collective Worship and play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school.

We invite parents to the Friday assembly on a weekly basis as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and school work together to support the achievements of our children. Governors are welcome to attend acts of worship at any time.

## **9 Resources**

There is a generous annual budget for Collective Worship which is distinct from the budget for Religious Education. RE. We have a three year programme covering Christian Values. Teachers and visitors use the plan as a basis to plan from. We have a good collection of assembly books and artefacts which we aim to regularly update and improve. We also access short term plans from the internet. We have an extensive collection of CDs which are used to provide suitable music as children enter and leave the hall as well as to accompany singing.

Within the hall, resources are conveniently stored in a suitable trolley which keeps them safe and makes them readily accessible.

We aim to purchase additional resources to enhance the hall environment and create a more effective focal point for Collective Worship to take place.

## **10 Contribution to SMSC development**

We recognise that although SMSC development should be fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of Collective Worship provide opportunities in this area almost too numerous to mention in detail. 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.

## **11 Monitoring and Evaluation**

We aim to develop the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship by continuing to keep records of Collective Worship and surveying adults and children as to their views on its effectiveness. We intend to make the criteria for successful worship available to all those who plan and lead it before asking them to submit short term plans. The co-ordinator and others will routinely observe and monitor acts of Collective Worship in line with these criteria. The co-ordinator will also involve the Foundation governors more fully in the monitoring and evaluation process.

## **12 Inclusion**

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs when appropriate. As when teachers prepare lessons, worship leaders take account of different learning styles and aim to present materials using multisensory resources.

## **13 Implementation of Policy**

The Collective Worship Co-ordinator is responsible for this policy which will be reviewed every two years. Its implementation is the responsibility of all those planning and leading Collective Worship.

## **14. Responsibilities of the Governing Body**

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes;
- the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;
- the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils with SEND;
- clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request that their child is withdrawn;
- the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures that the school can fulfil its legal obligations.
- the religious ethos of the school is maintained and developed.

## **15. Linked Policies**

Due to the focus and purpose of this policy, there are also direct and intrinsic links to the following:

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- SMSC Policy
- SRE Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Science Policy
- RE Policy
- PE Policy
- SEN Policy

Please also refer to those named policies for more comprehensive information.

**Signed:**

**Mrs E Burton**

**RE & Collective Worship Co-ordinator**

		Date
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