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 hold to a vision that worship is an affirmation and celebration of our Christian ethos where staff and children have the opportunity to learn, worship and grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. It is not simply a statutory duty.

In our school, we want to see Collective Worship enable pupils and staff to gather together to respond to the presence, power and peace of God through prayer, reflection, singing, celebrating and sharing feelings.

Worship should enable participants to develop an understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We recognise that not all staff or children have a Christian faith. We welcome everyone to Collective Worship and offer it as a shared space for reflection and spiritual growth where our communities grow together in love and respect.

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 Right of Withdrawal

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child wholly or partly from collective worship. They do not need to provide a reason for the request. If a parent asks that a pupil is wholly or partly withdrawn from joining collective worship, then the school will comply and grant the request without delay. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act. This includes the school continuing to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn from Collective Worship.

5 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.

Aspects of Anglican liturgy, such as greetings, are used to create a framework for worship; pupils are also introduced to a variety of well-known prayers.

We use Christian symbols as a focus for reflection and provide opportunities to discover the value of reflection 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 use Christian symbols as a focus for refection.

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.

Throughout the year, we aim to visit St. John's Church regularly for worship times as part of the Christian calendar.

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

6 Connections with other local churches

At St. John's 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 some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, some worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting in which no-one's integrity is compromised and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe. We aim to provide a space for reflection, where everyone finds something positive for themselves.

7 Rights and Responsibilities

Parents have the right to withdraw their children wholly or partly 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.

Teachers retain such rights as are provided by law, but participation in collective worship may form part of their contractual duties having regard to the religious character of the school.

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.

8 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, celebrating festivals and saints' days as appropriate. Each half-term explores a Christian value in a variety of ways, through story, song, prayer and reflection. 'Values for Life' or 'Roots and Fruits' are most commonly used as the basis of these plans.

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.

Pupils as well as adults engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of Collective Worship. Our preferred approach for individual acts of worship is to follow the pattern of GATHER, ENGAGE, RESPOND, SEND – this approach offers a pattern which both staff and children can use and is useful for evaluation as well.

9 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 Friday assemblies 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.

We also attend St. John's Church once a term for our end of term Service which is led by the children. Parents are welcome to attend if they wish.

10 Resources

There is an annual budget for Collective Worship which is distinct from the budget for Religious Education (RE). We have a good collection of assembly books, child-friendly Bibles and artefacts which we aim to regularly update and improve. Good quality music and videos can be found using the internet.

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

11 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.

12 Monitoring and Evaluation

We aim to develop Collective Worship by continually monitoring and evaluating the impact. The co-ordinator and others will routinely observe Collective Worship and collect pupil and

staff voice as part of the monitoring process. Where possible, the co-ordinator will involve the Foundation governors in the monitoring and evaluation process.

13 Inclusion

In line with the Equalities Act 2010, we are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability, religion, physical or sensory disability or any other protected characteristic. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs as appropriate e.g. taking account of different learning styles and using multi-sensory approaches.

14 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:

- collective worship is provided in accordance with the school's trust deed, reflects the Christian character of the school, complies with statutory requirements and is regularly monitored and evaluated.
- 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. Legal Framework

St John's CEVA Primary School provides collective worship in accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the school's Trust Deed and the requirements applicable to Church of England Voluntary Aided schools. Collective worship is Christian in character and forms a central part of the school's distinctive Christian vision and ethos. Parents retain the legal right to withdraw their child wholly or partly from collective worship.

16. 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
Version	1.5	24.02.2026
Drafted by	E. Burton	24.02.26
Reviewed by	All Staff	March 2026
Approved by	Curriculum Cttee	March 2026
Ratified by	Governing Body	March 2026
Review period	3 years	
Date of Review	Spring 2029	March 2029