



Together we Love, we Aim High and we Celebrate!

Collective Worship Policy

This guidance should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the school and operated within the context of our vision, aims and values as a Church of England School.

Headteacher: Mrs Nichola Chesterton
Chair of Governors: Mr Peter Luscombe

To be reviewed: September 2026

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Collective Worship at Chilthorne Domer Church School

Collective worship is a major element of school life at our church school. The children receive a daily opportunity to come together as a class or school for a period of reflection and worship. The foundation of the school is based on Christian values and we are keen to ensure that the children experience the sharing and development of these values. Our commitment to this area of school life means that we will be complying with the legal requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship, of a broadly Christian nature as set out in the 1988 Education Act.

Aims for collective worship

Collective worship has a great deal to offer every child in attendance at our school and our aims are for every child to;

- experience the coming together with others, sharing similar experiences and values.
- have opportunities to reflect on, and express, their own personal views and responses to certain life experiences and questions and to begin to understand the beliefs of others.
- have time to reflect on Christian views and values and ascertain how these relate to their own.
- develop an awareness of Christian values and understand how they affect the school ethos and therefore their daily lives.
- have experience of being part of Christian worship – worshipping God and celebrating the Christian faith.

Objectives for Collective Worship

Through our provision of collective worship, we believe that the pupils, school and community will experience positive results. It is intended that our provision of collective worship will;

- continue to develop the Christian ethos throughout the school.
- help the children to understand the moral code of the school and society.
- add to the development of children's spiritual awareness.
- maintain links between the school and local churches.
- provide children with an understanding of the Christian year, its festivals and main teachings.
- be accessible to all members of our school.

Organisation of collective worship

Collective worship is a daily event at our school but will take on a variety of forms. The timetable for collective worship is:

- Monday and Tuesday – Whole school – Value of the half term worship led by class teachers
- Wednesday – Whole School – The Life and Teachings of Jesus
- Thursday – Whole School – Praise Through Song
- Friday - Whole school worship – Praise assembly – for children or class presentation

The variety of Worship formats, including Roots and Shoots workshops, will enable the children to experience the sharing of different experiences and will provide them with a range of opportunities for reflection.

The acts of collective worship follow the Roots and Shoots Scheme and are delivered over a two year rolling programme, details of which can be found under the Christian Values tab on our website. Each half term we focus on one of 12 Christian values through collective worship and in class. At the end of each half term, a

Christian Star Certificate is awarded to a child in each class who demonstrates characteristics of the Christian value we have been focusing on.

Praise Through Song allows the children to learn new songs and helps them to understand the importance of praise through singing within the Christian faith.

The Friday act of worship provides time for the children to share their learning experiences and reflect on personal and group achievements.

Weekly, the headteacher leads collective worship in school. Her worships focus on different aspects of the life and teachings of Jesus whilst thinking about 6 further Christian Values. A visiting minister visits half termly to lead a worship on the life and teachings of Jesus and the school regularly visits the church to worship and celebrate significant Christian dates. When appropriate, teachers may choose to invite speakers in from other religions to participate in acts of worship but the worship element of the gathering would remain of a Christian nature.

When coming together for whole school acts of worship certain routines and symbols will be used to identify with the importance of the event. At the start of each act of worship a candle/candles will be lit to signify the start of our coming together for thought and reflection. The children are made aware of the symbolic nature of the candle within the Christian faith. Christian artefacts will be on display in the hall to highlight the school's Christian foundation and to demonstrate to the children the changing of focus as the Christian year passes.

Resources for Collective Worship

A bank of resources is being developed to aid teachers with their provision of collective worship. Along with other resources, teachers can use the prayers, poems and bible stories from the Roots and Shoots resource. Teachers are encouraged to make use of a variety of strategies to make collective worship inviting and of interest to the children. Posters, stories, artefacts, pupil participation, music, songs, hymns and other creative elements are to be used as regularly as possible.

Visitors

Visitors can be a valuable 'resource' for collective worship in school. They can be involved with leading collective worship or may be asked to come and talk to the children. It is important to ensure that the role of the visitor is clearly agreed upon and that guidelines are followed so that both parties understand their role and responsibility.

Rights of withdrawal from collective worship

The development of this collective worship policy states the high regard that our church school holds for collective worship. We view it as central to the running of a school that values every pupil as an individual. We acknowledge that the children attending our school do not all come from homes where a religion is practised through a committed way but believe that our approach to collective worship can help every child's understanding of Christianity and its values. We would always place an emphasis on children being their own decision makers, having time to reflect on what they have learnt and how it relates to their own lives and experiences. If parents feel concerned about their child attending collective worship at the school, we would ask for them to discuss the subject with the headteacher. We acknowledge the parental right to withdraw their child from collective worship (as set out in the 1944 education act and restated in the 1988 act) and would honour any such wish if, after dialogue with the headteacher, the parental view was still to withdraw their child.

The 1944 and 1988 act also states that teachers have the right to abstain from involvement in collective worship on conscience grounds. If a teacher sees this to be so in their own case, they must talk to the headteacher.

Role of the Collective Worship Lead

The main responsibility of the Collective Worship lead will be to maintain the Collective Worship policy, reviewing it every three years ensuring that the collective worship programme is well planned and fulfils the legal requirements for collective worship. The lead will also need to monitor the effectiveness of collective worship in the school and arrange appropriate INSET for the school staff. Resources need to be organised by the lead and they are responsible for purchasing new resources to support the delivery of collective worship in the school.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the collective worship co-ordinator. At each review the co-ordinator will need to assess the effectiveness of the policy with all people involved with collective worship in the school. Suggestions for changes will need to be discussed as a staff and then the policy altered and approved by the Governors. Ongoing monitoring of collective worship should be maintained with the lead being aware of how collective Worship is being organised, led and received.

Use of visitors and outside agencies in Religious Education and Acts of Collective Worship in Schools.

Introduction

Religious Education and acts of collective worship in schools provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities and experiences. It is sometimes valuable to support and enrich these educational activities by involving appropriate visitors and outside agencies.

It is vital that on all occasions when visitors are received into Religious Education or acts of worship that the integrity of all involved is maintained. That is the integrity of pupils, teachers, the visitor and if appropriate, any faith community involved.

Principles/Guidance on use of Visitors and Outside Agencies in religious Education and Acts of Collective Worship.

Before involving visitors in Religious Education or acts of collective worship, schools/colleges should ensure that:

- ❑ clear policies on Religious Education and collective worship have been agreed and adopted by the governors.
- ❑ Where appropriate, visitors have received copies of relevant policies and that they understand and share the school's values and approach to Religious Education and/or acts of collective worship.
- ❑ the visitor's contribution is being sought for sound educational reasons and that the particular visitor is the most appropriate source of that input.
- ❑ a precise brief has been negotiated with the visitor and that the contribution is an integrated element of the syllabus/scheme of work/collective worship themes, with appropriate planning, preparatory and follow-up work. This means that the content and types of activities the pupils will be participating in have been agreed. This should include viewing any videos or literature that will be shared with pupils. On occasions it might be appropriate to receive a visitor at short notice. In these instances, it is important to maximise the opportunity and make the relevant links to the Religious Education or collective worship programmes.
- ❑ the visitor understands the composition of the group of pupils receiving him/her, i.e. size of group, age and ability range and that he/she can communicate at the appropriate level.
- ❑ the visitor is prepared for unexpected responses from pupils!
- ❑ the visitor is aware that permission should be gained from the school for distribution of literature, raising money or giving invitations to attend out-of-school activities.
- ❑ the legal implications of having and using visitors in school, in respect of child protection and the Children's Act 1989 have been addressed.
- ❑ issues of charging, including the payment of travelling expenses, have been discussed with the visitor.

When receiving visitors to Religious Education or acts of worship the school should ensure that:

- ❑ the needs of the visitor are met. This includes a welcoming environment and an appropriate setting with the necessary resources (e.g. Interactive whiteboard, table for displays). In particular, the beliefs, customs and traditions of a faith community must be respected. For example, a Buddhist monk should be offered a vegetarian meal before mid-day.
- ❑ a member of the teaching staff is always present and is responsible for the lesson or act of worship. Visitors should never be left alone to work with pupils. The teacher must be part of the experience so that she/he can provide appropriate follow up work.
- ❑ the visitor owns his/her beliefs and is not seeking converts. Visitors should be encouraged to use phrases such as "I believe" or "my community/faith believes" ...not "you must believe".
- ❑ there is monitoring and evaluation of the contributions received. It is important that visitors receive feedback.

- if a visitor makes regular contributions he/she is reminded of the school's policies and approaches to Religious Education and acts of worship.

Once a decision has been made to invite a visitor to Religious Education or Collective Worship the following questions should be addressed:

- does the visitor understand and share the school's values and approach to Religious Education/collective worship?
- is the purpose of the visit clearly identified and shared?
- is it clear how the visit forms an integral part of the scheme of work/collective worship plans? If the visit is at short notice, how can the potential for RE and collective worship programmes be maximised?
- has the visitor received information about the size of the group and the age and ability range of pupils?
- how will the pupils be prepared to receive the visitor?
- have the content and appropriate activities for the pupils during the visit been agreed?
- have all the organisational arrangements been made?
- how will the visit be evaluated?
- how will feedback be shared with the visitor?
- with the visitor's permission, is it appropriate to share information with local schools within the area?