

# St James Church of England Primary School



Name of Policy	Collective Worship
Signed ratification by Governors	24.11.2020
Review Date	October 2020
Next Review Date	October 2023

# Policy for Collective Worship



*Revised policy for 2020-2021*

***“God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”***

John 4:24

## **Rationale:**

St James' CE Primary School is committed to providing an excellent education – both academic and social – within a Christian context for all its pupils. Our aim, based on Christ's teaching, is to make a distinctive contribution in the field of education by having a caring and compassionate concern for all children and adults involved in the life and work of the school. As a school that serves the local community we aim to be inclusive, and welcome all children from the neighbourhood, whatever their family faith, if their parents wish an education centred on Christian values.

Our collective worship makes a major contribution to upholding the religious character and Christian distinctiveness of the school. The importance of our worship is central to our life as a school. It should be of the highest quality, engaging participants, and enabling spiritual growth. It should always be Christian worship that reflects the traditions and practises of the Church of England.

Collective worship should have an impact on the thinking and day-to-day actions of the whole school community outside of the act of Collective worship itself, impacting upon school life and on the daily lives of the members of the school community outside the school.

## **Aims:**

Worship is essential to the life of our school and plays an important part in the fulfilling of our role and mission as a Church of England school. Through our worship we seek to:

- develop children's feelings of awe, wonder, mystery, delight and joy in God's creation, including the natural world;
- observe the Christian Year, and celebrate major festivals and events;
- reflect on the Trinitarian nature of God;
- reflect on the teachings of Christ;
- affirm Christian values and attitudes and deepen spiritual awareness and unity;
- foster respect and unity;
- consider the importance of prayer, including opportunities for short meditation, reflection and silence;
- make appropriate use of music, both sacred and secular;
- encourage children in the development of their own identity, their awareness of their own value, and the equal value of others, children and adults, and a sense of community;
- help children to respond to challenging experiences, to develop a moral sense, and to respond to moral issues;
- affirm, interpret and put into practice the values of the school;
- provide the opportunity to celebrate achievements and special occasions.

## Guidelines:

### 1. Organisation -

A daily Act of Collective Worship is held in the school. Assemblies generally last around 20-25 minutes. The weekly pattern is as follows:

Monday:	Separate KS1 & KS2 school Collective Worship in the school halls led by a member of the SLT with a biblical focus including practical participation or story-telling; introducing the weekly theme as advised by our church partnership (class Collective Worship staggered – KS2);
Tuesday:	Whole school Collective Worship in the school halls led by a member of the church community (held at approximately 09:15, 09:40 & 10:15);
Wednesday:	Separate KS1 & KS2 school Collective Worship in the school halls led by a member of the SLT with a biblical focus including practical participation or story-telling; introducing the weekly theme as advised by our church partnership (class Collective Worship staggered – KS2);
Thursday:	Whole school Collective Worship in the school halls or classrooms led by a member of the SLT/CTs with reflection on the week's biblical focus including celebrations and achievements;
Friday:	Whole school Collective Worship in the school halls or classrooms led by a member of the SLT/CTs with a focus on celebration and achievement of conduct within school. Character traits with religious readings to be celebrated.

*NB: From March 2020 Collective Worship has been based in classrooms and has utilised videos from Church members weekly. This happens when movements and bubbles are restricted to 'bubbles' following Covid-19 restrictions in line with the school's Risk Assessment as a safety measure.*

The Tuesday Collective Worship is one of our important links with St. James' Church. The beginning and end of every term and any special events e.g. Harvest, Remembrance, are celebrated in St James' Church. Year 6 children participate in a special leavers' service at the end of the year both at Southwark Cathedral through the SDBE and St. James' Church.

### 2. Planning -

Whilst opportunities will be taken to link Collective Worship with Christian festivals and local or national events at particular times, in general these themes will be followed through the year. The year/weekly themes are discussed in meetings with the Deputy Head Teacher (MO) and Church team (Faith Group) termly and hence a cycle of daily readings are distributed and delivered accordingly.

September:	Beginnings – Starting School/God's creation,
October:	Harvest, Famous People & Black History,
November:	Remembrance,
December:	Advent and Christmas,
January & February:	Epiphany -Christianity in action,
March & April:	Lent & Easter – Ascension & Pentecost,
May:	God's rules for life/Communication,
June:	God's character/Miracles/Speaking – Prophets,
July:	Moving on – trusting God for the future.

A theme is introduced at the beginning of its cycle to the whole school. There is an assembly planner which links the school's contact (MO) with members of St. James' Church - this highlights the key themes and Bible readings for each week and is shared between the SLT and all who deliver assemblies within school. Music is chosen to link with the theme or to fit in with the school curriculum.

#### *How worship reflects the Anglican heritage:*

- Using the Bible as the foundation for inspiration and learning;
- Reflection on Christian symbols and their use in worship;
- Observing the cycle of the Church's year;
- Using a selection of hymns and prayers.

Collective Worship should be an inclusive activity that builds links with the broad dimensions of the curriculum. Appropriate music, visual foci and symbols assist the creation of atmosphere. Story, drama and art are important elements that should engage the pupils' imagination and interest.

### **3. Display/Visual focus/Reflective Corners -**

Display can play a vital role in Collective Worship. Themes and aims for the half term are displayed in the halls and corridors. Proactive use of visual foci and artefacts is encouraged to stimulate interest and curiosity in the subject. There is a reflective corner in the main entrance foyer where pictures and words aim to stimulate thought and reflection, linked to a current worship theme. Posters and pictures around the school also aim to reinforce a sense of our values. Each classroom also has a prayer and reflection area to encourage prayer and peace within the learning environment.

### **4. Race Equality & Opportunities for Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural Development -**

Collective Worship plays an important role in the promotion of all of these areas. The cycle of themes has been carefully chosen to develop these aspects. This may occur through the use of stories; appropriate resources; guest speakers; children/staff.

### **5. Parental and community involvement: citizenship -**

A major aspect running through our Collective Worship themes is how to be a good citizen. Community themes play a high profile role, both local, and the wider community. Throughout the year we support a number of local, national, and international charities, both Christian and secular.

### **6. Visitors: Community links -**

We enjoy strong links with the parish church. The church provides a weekly speaker to lead Worship. These visits are planned to link in with our Worship themes. The church worship team is coordinated by the Incumbent, who in turn liaises with the CW subject leader and Deputy Head Teacher (MO).

### **7. Parents -**

Parents are invited to attend services held in the church. Parents are members of the church community.

### ***How are parents informed about Collective Worship?***

This is made available from the newsletter (weekly) and on the school website. Themes and services will also be notified to parents through newsletters and on the website.

### **8. Recording and Evaluation -**

All acts of collective worship are planned and recorded. All classes have evaluation files of their RE topics and report at the end of every half term to the RE subject leader (LJ-G/MO), and are encouraged to get children to make regular evaluations. These are fed back to the subject leader and examples given and recorded.

### **9. Monitoring and Development: School Planning -**

The Foundation Governors, through the Faith Group, are responsible for monitoring this policy. They should meet at least yearly to monitor and review this policy. More regular monitoring is carried out by the subject leader (MO) – of evaluation sheets from planning and regular meetings are held to evaluate and discuss the impact of Collective worship and its effectiveness.

### **10. Inclusion**

All children will have equal access to Collective Worship regardless of age, gender or ability, including physical. Where necessary, activities will be differentiated to meet individual needs. Everyone is expected to attend assembly and we discourage activities which do not enable all to share our worship together. All faiths are respected and on occasion referred to and used as good examples of living during our assemblies; however, as a Church of England primary school we teach the Christian message as the truth.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. We expect that withdrawals will only be made following parental discussions with the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher followed by written confirmation of withdrawal. This would also include the supervision to be provided in the event of withdrawal. It is expected that by working in a church school, the staff share the vision and distinctive Christian ethos of the school and readily participate in Collective Worship.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed at four-yearly intervals, or sooner as appropriate.



## Appendix: Collective worship policy guidance from SDBE.

### SOUTHWARK DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

#### *Supporting Christian Education*

### POLICY STATEMENT

#### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

The daily act of Collective Worship is a legal requirement in all schools. In a Church of England School, it should always be Christian worship and it should reflect the traditions of the Church of England, developing learners' understanding of Anglican traditions and practice.

Collective Worship needs to make a major contribution to upholding the religious character and Christian distinctiveness of a church school and ensuring that it is understood and owned by all pupils, staff and governors. The importance of worship therefore should be central to the life of the school.

Collective Worship should be of the highest quality, engaging participants and it should aim to inspire pupils and staff, enabling spiritual growth. It should provide opportunity for everyone in the school to participate; this includes the chance for pupils to lead worship.

There need to be opportunities to:

- pray and express praise and thanksgiving to God;
- reflect on the attributes of God;
- reflect on the teachings of Christ;
- affirm Christian values and attitudes;
- foster respect and unity;
- share each other's joys and challenges;
- celebrate special times in the Christian Calendar;
- deepen spiritual awareness and reflection.

There should be a partnership with the Incumbent/School Chaplain in developing and leading the school's programme of Collective Worship and use made of the school parish church for some worship.

Collective Worship should have an effect upon the thinking and day-to-day actions of the whole school community outside of the act of Collective Worship itself, impacting upon school life and on the daily lives of the members of the school community outside school.

For Collective Worship to be outstanding there should be a clear structure which includes creative and thorough planning and a formal system of evaluation. For this reason, it is recommended a Faith Group, involving a wide variety of stakeholders, meets periodically to monitor Collective Worship policy and practice, listening to pupils' views and ideas.

For Collective Worship to be truly effective and make a complete contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school, it is desirable that the whole school community should be included. In particular, no pupils should be excluded as experiencing daily Collective Worship is their entitlement and an important aspect of being part of a church school.

It is expected that by working in a church school, the staff share the vision and distinctive Christian ethos of the school and readily participate in Collective Worship. Although legally parents have the option of withdrawing their children from Collective Worship, it is expected that by applying to a church school, parents understand the school's distinctive Christian character and recognise that Collective Worship is central to the life of the school, therefore not feeling it necessary to withdraw their child. For these reasons it is vital that the aims of Collective Worship are properly understood by the whole school community and that although the Collective Worship is clearly of a Christian nature, it is inclusive and affirming and therefore seen as non-threatening and relevant for all pupils in our diocesan church schools.