

**St. John's C of E (VA) Primary School**  
Collective Worship Policy



Date: Summer 2021  
Frequency of review: Bi-annual  
Reviewed by: Ethos Committee

### **Philosophy**

St. John's C of E School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School and as such Collective Worship forms a central part in the life of the school, helping to uphold the religious character and Christian distinctiveness which are so intrinsic to everything we hold dear. It is a time in the day when we are able to explicitly explore our Christian faith and as such, it plays a major part in creating the special ethos and identity which form the back bone of St. John's; inspiring and impacting the lives of children, staff, governors and parents and enabling their spiritual growth. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- SMSC
- Spirituality Guidance Policy
- RE Policy

### **John 4:24 English Standard Version (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

The calm, peaceful, reflective, special atmosphere of Collective Worship provides members of the school community with opportunities to:

- ✓ praise and reach out to God
- ✓ experience stillness and quiet
- ✓ respond to Christian language and symbolism
- ✓ experience a variety of forms of prayer and meditation
- ✓ acknowledge the wider world and raise pupils' curiosity
- ✓ be touched by the awe and mystery of the world
- ✓ appreciate that we are the 'stewards' of Gods' world
- ✓ understand justice and responsibility
- ✓ ask fundamental questions about the purpose of being and about moral and ethical stances
- ✓ begin to understand the nature and purpose of worship and to build a foundation for a mature understanding and practice of worship in the future
- ✓ learn and celebrate values we hold to be important

Collective Worship is attended by all pupils and classroom staff and it is an important part of our school's ethos that we all meet together to start the day. Any visitors in school are very welcome to join in Acts of Collective Worship.

### **Aims**

It is our aim at St. John's that worship should enable opportunities for the whole school community 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.
- celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance
- develop our understanding of Anglican tradition.

All Collective Worship at St. John's is Christian and broadly reflects the Anglican traditions and practice. We strive to ensure that it is the highest quality and that it has a clear impact on all aspects of school life, with the messages which are delivered being reinforced and lived out throughout the school building and beyond.

### **The contribution of Collective Worship to the life of the school**

As well as explicitly providing the opportunity for the school to worship together, Collective Worship contributes to a wide range of different aspects in the life of the school.

- Anglican tradition – Daily Collective Worship includes distinctively Anglican features (such as the opening and closing responses and the use of Anglican prayers and songs) and this reflects local practice. Services are regularly held in church to mark special Christian festivals (e.g. Harvest, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter, Pentecost) as well as special times in the life of the school (Beginning of term, Year 6 leavers) and special days in the year (St. George's Day, Animal Blessing Service for St Francis of Assisi day). Collective Worship has a strong focus on Jesus Christ and the Trinitarian nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the central role that this has to Christian teaching.
- Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Education (SMSC) including British Values – Collective Worship provides the opportunity for children to be spiritual everyday. Carefully selected themes inspire a high level of spiritual and moral reflection and seek to promote thoughts in children and staff for their own spiritual journey. Spiritual moments are planned for and exploited spontaneously. Children are given moments to reflect - Spiritual Moments, in relation to Windows, Mirrors, doors and candles.
- PSHE links are made in Collective Worship with common PSHE themes and with topical issues (Anti-bullying, E-safety). This promotes the Christian teaching behind the issue and encouragement that faith can support the messages delivered in PSHE.
- School Values- As part of Collective Worship during the year opportunities will also be given to link to the school Christian values, the school Golden Rule to 'Love One Another' and the school motto: Learn to love, love to learn. This is to ensure that all children have a deep and developed understanding of what these mean and how they should influence their daily lives, both in and out of school.

### **Inclusion**

Worship is planned and led so that all pupils have equal opportunity to take part and to benefit from the experience. We seek to be an inclusive community and we aim to ensure that our Collective Worship is sensitive so that all pupils (whatever their belief system) feel that they can participate and contribute in an act as well as being inspired.

When parents/carers choose to send their child to St. John's we expect that they understand that being part of the school community means all children will take part in whole school routines (which especially includes Collective Worship). Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, St. John's is a Church of England Voluntary Aided primary school where Christian values and principles underpin the whole curriculum. In order to preserve the distinctiveness of this church school community, we encourage everyone to be involved in Religious Education and Collective Worship. Parents who have concerns about this should discuss them with the Head Teacher before their child is admitted to the school. The school does not provide suitable supervision for pupils withdrawn from Acts of Collective Worship and parents/carers should provide appropriate alternative worthwhile activities for their child.

### **Organisation/Leadership and weekly pattern of Collective Worship**

Collective Worship occurs at the beginning of the school day as a way for the whole school community to come together. The range of Collective Worship styles includes; Whole School worship based on a half termly theme, Singing Worship, Celebration Worship where children's achievements are recognised and celebrated together, and worship led by classes in school or Church, which parents are encouraged to attend.

It is led by a range of leaders including members of staff, Governors, the parish priest and visitors from neighboring parishes. A wide range of visitors from different Christian traditions lead the acts of worship including the local Methodist and Baptist ministers as well as members of the clergy from local Anglican churches. This is particularly powerful because it provides children with a rich and wide range of experience of worship. Any new visitors are carefully briefed and invited to attend an act of worship led by a member of staff or an experienced visitor to ensure they are well inducted to the expectations for worship and therefore a high quality of worship can always be maintained. Members of the Senior Leadership Team monitor the quality of worship to ensure that a consistently high standard is always maintained.

### **Content**

Each half term there is a theme for Collective Worship. These are published to the whole school community at the beginning of the term on the school newsletter. Those leading worship each week (including visitors) relate their worship to this theme. The themes chosen are broad so as to allow all those leading worship to approach the theme from their own perspective. This pattern is flexible and on occasions it is recognised that worship leaders may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.

A number of different styles/ techniques are used during Collective Worship. These may include use of

- Film clips
- Stories
- Drama/ Role play
- Artefacts
- Pictures/ images
- Music/songs
- Words/ key questions
- Bible stories (including OT and NT)

- Audience involvement
- Opportunities for personal reflection

When marking special days/ celebrations Collective Worship is held in church as part of a service. Some services are marked with a Eucharist service.

As in all aspects of school life, high expectations of behavior are held for all children throughout worship. It is important that pace is maintained through each act of worship so that children remain engaged and interested. Techniques such as use of talk partners and no hands up/lolly stick questions for different year groups help to ensure that all children are engaged and actively participating in the worship.

### **Displays and Prayer and Reflection points**

The display boards in the hall are allocated to different classes each half term and will be designed to reflect the half termly theme for Collective Worship.

There are prayer and reflection points in the communal corridors which also reflect the current theme for Collective Worship. These displays also include some element where the children can interact with the display, with prompts for them to either think about or something for them to do. This is to encourage children to continue reflecting on the Collective Worship theme throughout the day and to show them how it can relate to different areas of their lives.

Appendices:

A - Collective Worship themes

B - Guide for visitors about Collective Worship

C - The Lord's Prayer (as used at St. John's church)

Appendix A

Themes for Collective Worship

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Term     | 2020-21   |
| Autumn 1 | <b>New beginnings</b>                           |
|          | Love one another                                |
|          | Harvest (1 wk)<br>Black History<br>Month 91 wk) |
| Autumn 2 | <b>Peace</b>                                    |
|          | Remembrance                                     |
|          | Advent/<br>Christmas                            |
| Spring 1 | <b>Going for goals</b>                          |
|          | <b>Generosity</b>                               |
| Spring 2 | <b>Trust</b>                                    |
|          | <b>Trust</b>                                    |
|          | Lent/ Easter                                    |
| Summer 1 | <b>Compassion</b>                               |
|          | <b>Compassion</b>                               |
| Summer 2 | <b>Growing up</b>                               |
|          | <b>Changes (2 wks)</b>                          |

## Appendix B

### Guidelines for visitors for Collective Worship.

Collective worship is an important vehicle for pupils to explore and share beliefs, consider the importance of prayer, meditation and silence, the relevance of ideas and beliefs to their own lives, think about the needs of others and develop a sense of community

To create a sense of occasion for worship and to enhance the atmosphere and demonstrate the value which is placed upon it, the school has established a number of elements to ensure that Acts of Collective Worship are distinct and different to the normal curriculum:

- † The school community is called to the hall by the ringing of the school bell.
- † Pupils enter in silence as music is played.
- † The leader of the Act of Collective Worship opens the Act with a greeting such as 'Peace be with you' to which the children and adults reply 'And also with you'. This may be followed by the sharing of the Peace.
- † A candle will be lit to signify that this time is set apart as a special time. A comment about the candle as it is being lit sets the scene.
- † There will also be a cross prominently displayed.
- † The specific elements that should be incorporated into an Act of Collective Worship are:
  - ✦ Reflection or stillness so that the pupils can think about the content of the worship and reflect on its meaning for themselves.
  - ✦ Prayer
- † The end of the Act of Collective Worship is closed with a closing comment such as 'Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord'. To which the children and adults reply 'In the name of Christ. Amen'.
- † Administration items may take place preceding or following an Act of Collective Worship, but there must be a clear beginning and end to the Act itself, so that the two things are separate.
- † Pupils exit silently as appropriate music is played.

Appendix C (version from St. John's C of E Primary)

### **The Lord's Prayer**

(modern version)

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and forever.

Amen