



# **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY**

**The Deanery Church of England High School**

November 2024

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As a Church of England school, worship is at the heart of the daily life of The Deanery Church of England High School.

We aim to follow these Christian values in our lives together:

*Faith, Hope, Love, Wisdom, Courage and Integrity*

This policy is implemented within the spirit of the school's Mission Statement:

*As a Church of England school, we aim to provide **an education for life**, enabling all of our community to **flourish and live life to the full.***

**Jesus said 'I have come that they might have life – life in all its fullness.'**

*John 10:10*

### **Collective Worship**

Worship is at the heart of our school life and is seen as an essential part of all pupils' education. It is an opportunity for all members of the school community; staff pupils and visitors, to explore various aspects of the Christian faith, to reflect and pray together. It may be as simple as reading a prayer or reflection, or it may involve leading a year group during morning worship assembly, or engaging with our special worship occasions at our local churches

Our Chapel creates a quiet space within the school for pupils and staff. It is used every day and is available before and after school and for private reflection. It is also available during lesson times for the use of classes for worship. Communion services for staff are held once a week.

We very much encourage and support pupils in becoming involved in and leading worship, acknowledging the importance for pupils of seeing their peers actively participating in the spiritual dimension of our school. Every form group has at least one Worship Ambassador who will support in the organisation and delivery of form worship.

We seek to develop the same love, respect, tolerance and care of each individual as exemplified by Jesus Himself. Our daily acts of worship make a significant contribution to achieving this purpose.

All form tutors are expected to begin each day with an act of worship, opening each day with a prayer and once a week, a more substantial form worship. The Senior Leadership Team and Senior Progress Leaders take an active role in collective worship, both leading and facilitating worship spaces within school. Students are also encouraged and enabled to evaluate, plan and lead worship where appropriate. This reflects the importance placed on involvement in worship throughout the school.

### **Statement of Aims**

Worship is mainly, though not exclusively, Anglican in character. It will aim to develop pupils spiritually so that they:

- Learn and develop the ability to pray
- Learn to be still and reflective
- Increase our collective and personal knowledge of God
- Understand what worship is and what people do when they worship
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder at creation
- Explore the mystery and the important questions about life and creation, including suffering, loss, death, evil etc.
- Explore that which is of value in life – truth, love, goodness, beauty etc.

Help pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, so that they:

- Learn about the place and significance of the Bible, Church life and Christian practice
- Experience different forms of worship
- Celebrate the festivals and Saints days of the church year
- Begin to understand the nature of God as revealed in Jesus and the significance of Jesus in their lives
- Understand that God is concerned with all areas of life

Contribute to the general development of pupils by:

- Providing them with the opportunities for Christian leadership and developing performance skills

- Exploring moral issues and concerns and the process of decision making with regard to morality
- Helping pupils to reflect on their own values, commitments and beliefs
- Helping pupils to reflect on the news and current affairs
- Helping pupils to be aware of the needs of others

Appreciate and celebrate and take note of the life of the school by:

- Celebrating work undertaken by pupils in all areas of the curriculum
- Building up the sense of community of the school
- Developing and reflecting on the values of the school
- Sharing the achievements, joys and difficulties of all members of the school community

Collective worship takes place in year group settings and also within the form group.

### Content of the Acts of Worship

The content of our worship is varied and can contain any of the following.

- **Elements of faith:** understanding the Bible, Old Testament Stories, stories about the teaching of Jesus, Church history, Church seasons, festivals and beliefs
- **Prayer and God:** exploring ideas about God and prayer
- **Variety in Prayer:** adoration, confession, thanksgiving and personal supplication and intercession for others; meditation and reflection
- **Topical events:** crises and continuing issues, such as Developing World needs, wealth and poverty
- **Stories** which illustrate faith or spiritual themes, e.g. awe and wonder, love, compassion, myths and legends, literature and children's literature, stories which explore metaphor, truth bearing stories
- **Sharing and taking note of experiences of others** and expressing concern for others, both in school and in the news
- **Encouraging the Ministry of Giving:** support for a variety of charities, especially those with a Christian foundation; community gifts to the elderly and nearby local and national charities
- **Exploring common values, standards and rules:** how to treat others, self-discipline, good and evil, understand that Christian values are perfectly embodied in the person of Christ
- **Sharing common experiences:** loss, anger, thankfulness, sorrow, joy, fear, jealousy, beauty
- **Music:** hymns and songs from the Christian tradition, Taize chants for meditative worship etc. to reflect the music used to enhance the worship of God, contemporary music which is meaningful and engaging to pupils
- **Sharing communion**

### Collective Worship Protocols

Music – to set the tone, not necessarily a hymn (see "invitational" below)

Gathering – a welcome message to show the focus of the gathering, or a more general one such as: ***'The Lord be with you – and also with you'*** speaks of mutual prayer for one another and an expectation of God's presence\* OR a sentence of Scripture as the first utterance puts the emphasis firmly on God

Engaging – a story based on the theme of the week. A modern story or example to link to the Biblical story.

Responding – pupils must participate, at the lowest level this would be a prayer that they are expected to respond to, at the more meaningful level, this would be interaction (Q&A), pupils reading, pupils displaying objects/ photos. At the deepest level this will be pupils actively leading parts of the worship.

Sending out – a prayer/ reflection/ moment of silence to contemplate the meaning of the worship and link to the day/ week ahead. An example might be ***"Go in peace to love and serve the Lord", pupils may respond with "in the name of Christ, Amen"*** OR the words of The Grace may be said together: ***"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen"***.

### Structures and Support

#### Weekly Year Group Worship

Year group collective worship is held on average every other week, in the hall Monday to Friday. Worship is led by a variety of people; the Collective Worship Co-ordinator produces a rota staffed by the Chaplain, SLT, student bodies within the school and a number of volunteers. Outside speakers may also be invited to lead worship and assemblies.

### Weekly Form Group Worship

Form tutors are expected to manage one act of collective worship per week in form time. Resources are provided for all tutors by the Chaplain. They are facilitated by form Worship Ambassadors who are encouraged to take a leadership role. It is recognised that to be effective the acts of worship require a comfortable and stimulating environment conducive, for example, to quiet reflection and contemplative activities. The materials, ideas etc. need to be relevant to the world of young people, appropriate to their level of understanding, their degree of faith and their experiences.

### Daily Act of Worship

On days when students are not engaged in Form or Year Group worship, form tutors ensure that the day is opened with a prayer. Pupils in Y7-9 also say the Grace before leaving school at the end of the day.

### Staff and Pupil Support for Collective Worship

We recognise that staff and pupils who lead acts of worship require support, including induction for new staff, in-service training for all staff and resources that are meaningful, varied and readily available. Worship Ambassadors will be supported by their Form Tutor and our Chaplain to develop confidence, skills and resources to lead worship effectively. Although there is a very strong Christian ethos at the school, within the group of staff and pupils assembled for worship there is a plurality of beliefs and views. The support given will reflect this scale of belief and confidence.

### **Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring**

**Inclusive:** Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. In the Church school pupils, their families and other adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Many pupils and staff in our schools will come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. Moreover, many pupils will naturally be at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. Pupils should be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider.

It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching. Collective worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. Although part of a national legislative framework, collective worship in the Church school grows out of the local context and out of pupils' experience, including their cultural backgrounds. We recognise the scale and plurality of beliefs of staff and pupils. It is our belief that this should be reflected in both the style and content of worship and that collective worship should be an experience from which all staff and pupils can gain and to which all can contribute, no matter what their personal commitment or life stance may be.

**Invitational:** Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship should provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. The metaphor of 'warm fires and open doors' captures this idea. The warmth of the fire derives from the clarity and authenticity of the Christian message at its heart. There is no value to an encounter with a watered down, lowest common denominator version of faith. Importantly the door is open, all are welcome to come in and sit as near or as far away from the fire as they feel comfortable. Pupils and adults should always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and should be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer should always be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Music and liturgies used in worship should reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship, it should connect with the theme and explore the sacred to educate and engage. Music used should reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community.

**Inspiring:** Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in a Church school to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational collective worship, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions. There will

always be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our schools and so the Church of England recognises the right of withdrawal from collective worship for those parents or pupils who wish to exercise this option. This, and how to exercise this choice, should be explained fully in the school's Collective Worship policy and referenced on the school's website.

It is important to differentiate between **worship** and **assembly**. Our acts of worship should stand alone and not be diluted by notices.

Our collective worship/ assembly rota clearly differentiates between worship and operational assemblies. The majority of the information contained within this document is relevant to full year group collective worship and form worship. Guidance is provided below regarding our assembly expectations.

### **School Assemblies**

Whole school assemblies take place on average, every other week. These gatherings *are* different and *feel* different from a collective worship. We recognise that difference but also value the importance of such operational gatherings which support personal development and our objective of impeccable behaviour. ***As a Church of England School, it is worth clarifying that such assemblies will contain at the very least, a Christian welcome (gathering) and a prayer (eg: the school prayer).***

Collective worship, assemblies and form worship are quality assured by colleagues and the Christian Ethos governor, regularly throughout the year.

### **School Eucharists**

The Eucharist shall normally be celebrated at the end of each term. It is expected that all pupils and staff attend. Staff and children are invited to receive communion if this is their normal practice within their own church and others are encouraged to receive a blessing. Prior to communion services, pupils from other faiths will have the opportunity to have the nature of these services explained to them by the Head of RE. All Year 7 pupils also participate in a teaching Holy Communion which is organised by the Chaplain. Confirmation classes are offered by the school in collaboration with Wigan Parish Church. Eucharist is also celebrated weekly, in the school chapel. (traditionally on Wednesday morning at 8.15am) all members of the school community are welcome to attend.

### **Legal Status of Collective Worship**

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires that *'all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each day take part in an active of Collective Worship.'* The school seeks to fulfil this obligation by delivering high quality Collective Worship, reflecting the Anglican status of the school. Also, in addition to daily school worship, special services take place in the school and local churches during the course of the academic year, with the Eucharist being celebrated regularly.

### **Right of Withdrawal**

Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from worship. However, in view of the religious foundation of the school, the Governors would be extremely concerned if any parent expressed this wish. Any parent who does wish to exercise the right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship should contact the Headteacher.

The school accepts that it is the legal right of parents to ask for their children to be exempted from acts of collective worship, but would hope that this policy and its implementation would minimise the need for them. It is extremely important, that all pupils, including those of other faiths, feel that they belong to our Christian ethos at the Deanery Church of England High School. School will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of students withdrawn from acts of Collective Worship. However, no additional work is set or followed in this time and parents are asked to supply suitable material for reflection appropriate to their child's needs. Please note that the right of withdrawal does not extend to assemblies.