Collective Worship Policy - Sturry

Reviewed February 2026

The Stour Academy Trust

Sturry Church of England Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

How is this policy a reflection of our distinctive Christian vision?

At Sturry Church of England Primary School this will be achieved in an environment influenced by our Christian Vision of "Go and Do Likewise"

At Sturry Church of England Primary, the daily act of Collective Worship is viewed as an integral and important part of school life and all members of the School Community attend.

An Introduction to collective worship in xxx school

As a Church of England school collective worship is the beating heart of our school life. It brings and gives life to all we do. Collective worship is a sacred and significant time of each school day, where we gather together as a school family.

Collective worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of **Perseverance, Leadership, Aspiration, Collaboration, Empathy and Support** and celebrates the central role that each pupil and adult have to play in our community.

Our acts of collective worship reflect the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality**.**

Collective worship therefore will be:

- Inclusive – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.

- Invitational – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship will 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. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- Inspiring – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions**.**

What is Collective Worship?
Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

"… Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'. (DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)

Corporate worship assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness).

Collective worship, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values.
Collective Worship should be:
"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes."
(DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)
Therefore, collective worship in Church of England schools must be inclusive and invitational of all, to ensure all can be present with integrity.

The legal requirements of collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools.

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England
- The Governing Body should ensure that all pupils each day engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church
- Arrangements for collective worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher *(DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53)*
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)
- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of collective worship'.
- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, then the school must comply. *(Education Reform Act 1988. s9 (3))* The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from collective worship.

Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as special time in our school day where we gather as a school family. Reflecting our ethos as a Church of England school, collective worship is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none to be present with integrity. We respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship, so would welcome the opportunity to discuss this decision with them. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw children from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.

Aims of collective worship

Collective Worship offers pupils, staff and the wider school community the opportunity to grow spiritually. As part of our commitment to the spiritual flourishing of all members of our community, there are opportunities to:

- Gather together to share sacred moments of joy, challenge, grief and love.
- Explore the school's distinctive Christian vision and values in action
- Reflect on the nature of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still, pray and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Explore Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate significant and special times in the Christian calendar

We aim to ensure that collective worship:

a. Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home.
b. Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
c. Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God and its language.
d. Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
e. Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship through invitational and inclusive language:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Saints Days amongst ordinary days
- Saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the blessings in common use
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning

- The use of prayer, silence and reflection
- Using Psalms with simple responses – Taizé style

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship
- Using Collects as a focus for worship
- Celebrating Eucharist

Implementation

What are the arrangements for collective worship? Why are these arrangements in place? (SIAMS Framework 2023)

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors in consultation with the collective worship leader. This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using *Canterbury Diocesan Collective Worship Planning* which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and this enables continuity.

We meet *daily. Monday worship lead by a member of SLT, Tuesday Picture News in class, Wednesday worship lead by a member of SLT, Thursday Sining worship lead by Class teachers, Friday Celebration worship*

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship. These include: *music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT.*

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- **Gather** – we welcome the community, for example, (*with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle)*
- **Engage** – we share, for example, (*a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message)*
- **Respond** – pupils, for example, (*discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing)*
- **Send** – we share, for example, (*the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle)*

Expectations of pupils

In Sturry CE Primary school, there is an expectation that all pupils will be involved within worship on a regular basis. This may be opportunities planned ahead of time *ie weekly celebration worship lead by classes, worship warriors and Lighting the candle group termly* or unplanned through questioning, asking for volunteers or simply responding to moments of spontaneity.

Pupils are invited to evaluate and reflect on the impact of acts of worship they have joined with. Their voice is integral to improving the structure, content and in shaping future plans for worship.

Pupil worship leaders are supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the collective worship leaders during *(lunchtime/ after*

school club) to develop their own understanding of worship and to design an act of worship to support the spiritual development of their peers. *(Worship warriors and Spiritual agents)*

Developing worship

Parents, pupils and adults in Sturry CE Primary school are entitled to be led in worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a Church School context. Therefore, all those leading worship, including clergy, should have access to regular Diocesan led training.

The leader for collective worship will:

- Ensure that all pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship, therefore meeting statutory requirements.
- Ensure that collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring.
- Attend regular training and network meetings with Canterbury Diocese
- Produce and regularly review the collective worship policy to ensure that it remains reflects current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of collective worship across the school.
- Ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading, planning and joining worship.
- Join those who are leading worship to provide supportive feedback on how worship could be developed.
- Evaluate the impact of collective worship on the whole school community by gathering pupil and adult voice.
- Signpost staff to a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and resources, to help develop their confidence in leading acts of worship.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited to lead collective worship.
- Meet with and encourage pupil leaders of worship to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.

Visitors leading worship

Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies: *Sturry-Child-Protection-Policy-September-2025-1.pdf*

This should include discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of the collective worship leader and senior leaders to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship in school, will be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and our school's vision. They will be supported and monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation process of worship**.**

Self-assessment and Inspection

Our school regularly evaluates all acts of collective worship and the impact they have on the school and our wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop. ***Our procedures include:***

- Regular monitoring by school leaders: Senior leaders carry out scheduled observations of collective worship using an agreed proforma. These observations focus on the quality, inclusivity, engagement, and theological depth of worship, as well as how effectively themes link to our school values and Christian ethos.
- Staff reflection and contribution: Teaching staff provide feedback on the appropriateness of content, pupil participation and the impact of worship on classroom climate and behaviour. Staff also help identify ways in which themes explored in worship can be reinforced throughout the curriculum.
- Pupil voice: We actively involve pupils through questionnaires, focus groups and informal discussions. Our Worship Council (or equivalents) contributes ideas, evaluates experiences and helps shape future worship. Their views are essential in ensuring worship remains meaningful, age-appropriate and engaging.
- Governors' involvement: Foundation governors participate in observations and review feedback collected throughout the year. Their perspective ensures that worship remains rooted in the school's Christian foundation and aligned with statutory expectations.

Impact of this monitoring includes:

- A clear understanding of strengths and areas for development in collective worship.
- Increased pupil engagement and ownership of worship through pupil-led elements.
- Stronger links between worship themes, school values and daily school life.
- Improved consistency and quality in the planning and delivery of worship.
- A culture of continual reflection, ensuring worship remains vibrant, relevant and spiritually nourishing for the whole community.

This reflective cycle enables us to adapt practice promptly, celebrate successes and ensure that collective worship enriches the life of the school in a deep and meaningful way.

We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils, which are reviewed and considered on a regular basis. These are shared with our *(worship committee, during full governing body meetings)* and play and integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school.

The impact of collective worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).