



Collective Worship Policy

Adopted by	Full Governing Body
On date	September 2024
Next review date	September 2026

At St Leonard's VA Lower School our Christian faith and values form the basis of everything we do. We are '**growing and learning together with God's love**'.

Our school community is inspired by the Parable of the Sower. We are encouraged to think about and understand that the smallest things have the greatest potential when they are provided with the best conditions for growth.

Within our daily acts of collective worship we aim to create a school community built on the foundations of our 'Christian values', where all children feel safe, secure, welcome, included, challenges and nurtured and where they can grow personally, academically, socially and spiritually.

Policy Statement

As a Church school, worship is an affirmation and celebration of our Christian ethos where children have the opportunity to learn, worship and grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. Worship in our school is not simply a statutory duty. It is the heartbeat of our school life – a time to gather together, reaffirm our vision and associated values (see appendix 1) and celebrate 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 (see spiritual development policy).

The aims and purpose of Collective Worship as defined by the Education Reform Act 1988 are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for the children to worship God
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs
- To encourage participation and response
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes

The Legal Requirements

We seek to comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
- The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the school and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- All acts of Collective Worship in Church schools must be Christian in character. Pupils can

be grouped in various ways for worship such as the whole school, year groups, tutor groups, classes, or other combinations.

- Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
- The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises but all schools are able to hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.
- Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a Church of England school rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the Headteacher.

Principles of collective worship

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality (see Church of England's Collective Worship Guidance).¹ 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.

Implementation

In addition to the above, we seek to provide acts of Collective Worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England. Therefore:

We use the Bible as a sourcebook for inspiration and learning and make pupils familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture. We also introduce them to a variety of well-known prayers – many of which express the central beliefs of Christians throughout the ages.

We use aspects of Anglican liturgy to create a framework for worship (Gather, Engage, Respond, Send). We observe the cycle of the Anglican year including celebrations of the major Christian festivals.

At St Leonard's Lower School we aim to provide worship space[s] which are attractive and well prepared with appropriate thought having been given to colour, space, seating, ambience and

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf>

music.

We foster links with St Leonard's Heath and Reach Parish Church, involving the Reverend Noel McGeeney in leading collective worship and providing coherence between worship in church and school and we visit Church at least four times per year as part of the Christian calendar.

We recognise that different members of our school community spiritually reflect in different ways. Music, story, silence, prayer, drama and other approaches are incorporated within a varied collective worship offer.

Connections with other Christian denominations and faiths

The Anglican Communion sees itself as part of a global church and promotes ecumenism. At St Leonard's Lower School, we work to promote links with other local churches and Christian organisations and welcome their clergy and leaders as contributors to acts of collective worship. We recognise that while some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, many worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting in which the integrity of those present is not compromised, where everyone finds something positive for themselves and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.

Rights and Responsibilities

As established by the 1944 Act and reinforced through this policy, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, having chosen to send their children to St Leonard's Lower School, it is hoped that no one will exercise this right. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act.

Planning

Planning for Collective Worship is led by the headteacher and is undertaken in consultation with the school's adult community. Plans follow the cycle of the Anglican year.

Our plans are supported by the Roots and Fruits Christian Collective worship resource. This resource is rooted in Bible teaching. Each half term focuses on one value which links to the season of the Church year. We also plan worship with reference to Understanding Christianity. The headteacher ensures that leaders and visiting speakers receive copies of the long-term plans. Individuals and groups are responsible for using the plans as a basis for developing their own short term plans for individual acts of worship.

Pupils have regular opportunities to plan collective worship using the Gather, Engage, Respond and Send framework.

(See Appendix 1- Long term plan)

Organisation

An act of Collective Worship is held daily. This may involve the whole school or smaller class or key stage groups. Where collective worship forms part of an assembly, we ensure that there is a clear

distinction between the two elements of gathering.

The headteacher and other members of staff together with groups of children take turns to conduct Collective Worship. The local vicar, Reverend Noel McGeeney delivers worship to the school weekly.

We conduct Collective Worship in a dignified and respectful way expecting children to behave appropriately. We create a suitable atmosphere by using music, pictures or other artefacts to act as a focal point.

We use Friday Celebration Worship as an opportunity to share children's work and to celebrate their successes. These culminate in an act of Collective Worship and play an important role in promoting the ethos of the school.

We invite parents to Celebration Worship once a half term.

Resources

The budget for Collective Worship is distinct from the budget for Religious Education. There is a wide selection of assembly books and artefacts which we regularly update and improve. We have a collection of CDs which are used to provide suitable music as children enter and leave the hall as well as to accompany singing. Those leading worship also access professional development opportunities through the Diocese of St Albans Education Team.

Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

We recognise that although SMSC development should be fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of Collective Worship provide a multitude of opportunities in this area. For example, children will be encouraged to reflect on and celebrate the deeper meanings of life, consider their own behaviour and recognise the need for forgiveness, appreciate the contributions of others and respond to their needs, value their own culture and the cultures of others.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We aim to develop the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship by continuing to keep records of Collective Worship and surveying adults and children as to their views on its effectiveness. We intend to make the criteria for successful worship available to all those who plan and lead it before asking them to submit short term plans. The coordinator and others will routinely observe and monitor acts of Collective Worship in line with these criteria.

Inclusion

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs when appropriate.

Implementation of Policy

The headteacher as Collective Worship Coordinator is responsible for this policy which will be reviewed every two years. Its implementation is the responsibility of all those planning and leading Collective Worship.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Links to Other Policies:

- Spiritual Development Policy