

Combe St Nicholas C of E VA Primary School

Name of Policy	Collective Worship	
Approved by GB - Date	January 2024	
Next Review Date	January 2026	
Committee Responsible	Full Governing Body	

This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the school and operated within the context of our vision, aims and values as a Church of England School.

**"That they may have life, life in all its fullness"
John: Chapter 10 Verse 10**

It helps educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

Policy Statement

At Combe St Nicholas School, worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Combe St Nicholas, collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, "that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", is not relevant. Worship in Combe St Nicholas should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The governing body school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the head-teacher.

The right of withdrawal

In Combe St Nicholas there are children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the head-teacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and have requested religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

Guiding Principles

Collective worship in Combe St Nicholas aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity

- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well-known Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

This policy was agreed following consultations with staff, pupils and governors.

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and on the school website.

How Collective Worship is organised

The organisation of Collective Worship should be listed here under the headings

Leadership

- A daily act of collective worship is led by the Head-teacher or teaching staff. Wherever possible the children are encouraged to participate in the delivery and planning of collective worship. The Daily worship is organised so that the school meets together three times per week. On the other occasions there is class worship and Key Stage Worship.
- We are fortunate to have supportive Clergy who regularly come into school to lead worship and support us in Church on special occasions. We also have the support of a local Open the Book team who encourage the children's involvement in telling Bible stories, as agreed with school.
- Any visitor is given advice in advance and supplied with our Safeguarding information leaflet.

Planning

- Worship is planned to link the Christian Values with the liturgical cycle as taught through Understanding Christianity. This way, the children's Religious Education knowledge is reinforced and given a different, more spiritual focus.
- The children regularly write prayers and are used to reading these in public. In addition to this, they are supported in delivering class led collective worship for the school and parents and to plan and deliver worship based on a given theme.
- Our RE planning follows the Liturgical year and Collective Worship reflects this also. The children take part in worship, to which the community is invited, on Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Pentecost. There are also services for school leavers and any special events that take place in the year.
- The Christian values of the school are evident in every class on the 'We Are Walking With Him' displays. Additionally, the children are encouraged to notice when another school member does something praiseworthy. The slips which they complete remind them to indicate to which Christian value this action relates.
- Collective worship throughout the school year is linked to a Christian value and so these values are explicitly shared and regularly reinforced. The school follows Values for Life and Roots and Fruits, for much of the collective worship planning.
- The pattern for worship is always:
 - Gather:** In which we light our special candle and say 'The Lord is here' and the children respond 'His Spirit is with us.'
 - Engage:** In which the children may listen or watch a suitable film clip or see something enacted by others.
 - Respond:** In which the children will join in with singing. They may say the Lord's prayer, which they also sign, or our School Prayer. On other occasions the children may be silent and reflective.
 - Sending:** The children will watch the candle be blown out to signal the end of this special time. They may leave with a blessing or encouragement to take action following all they have heard.
- A variety of different materials and approaches are used to keep collective worship fresh and interesting for the children. For example, they may participate in a reflective labyrinth walk or take part in a harvest service at a local farm. When meeting together, the worship usually takes place in the church so that everyone can sit together. The children, therefore, become very familiar with this space.
- We ensure that any significant events are explored through collective worship; tragedies that they may have heard about and happy events, such as a royal wedding.
- Special attention is given to ensuring that the children understand the Christian belief in the Trinity; God in three persons. This will often be most relevant at the beginning of the year when we learn about God and at the time of Pentecost.
- We nurture spiritual growth by ensuring that we praise the children and each other for our academic and sporting successes but give equal weight to good behaviours and kindness to others. Value is given to the child's thoughts and feelings, which they are often encouraged to express in collective worship.

Organisation

- Our usual pattern for collective worship is:
 - Monday: Celebration Assembly followed by prayers
 - Tuesday: Whole school worship
 - Wednesday: Key Stage worship
 - Thursday: Class worship
 - Friday: Praise Through Song
- Regardless of setting, the worship space is made special by using:
- The liturgical colours of the seasons of the Church Year,
- Christian signs and symbols, candles, music, a focal point,
- Ritual and liturgical responses,
- Collective worship is usually held after lunch. It is a time to pause and reflect following the excitement of playtime and in readiness for the afternoon to come. Special workshops are usually held in the morning, to enable parents and carers to share the experience with us.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The governing body monitors collective worship to ensure time allocation and quality
- The head- teacher and the senior leadership team deliver collective worship and monitor the planning and delivery of collective worship by others. They ensure that resources are sufficient, that calendars are agreed and liaise with clergy and other community groups.
- Clergy and church partners support and deliver collective worship. They also help to monitor the delivery.
- Teaching staff lead collective worship and help to support the pupils when they lead
- Pupils lead collective worship as a class and as a House group. They also support special services with prayers and music.
- Parents and carers support the school at special services. They have an open invitation to share with any collective worship
- Visitors are invited to share worship in accordance with school policies.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. This is usually led by our advisor from The Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Parents and children are regularly asked to give feedback on collective worship. The Ethos Group conduct regular monitoring visits
- Children, parents, staff, link/foundation governors and clergy are all invited to comment on the quality and impact of collective worship
- Results from monitoring and feedback has resulted in us encouraging more pupil led worship and outdoor worship

Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.

Other Useful Documents: (can be found on the diocesan website) Guidance for visitors leading Collective Worship, including a code of conduct

- Example Visitors Leaflet about Collective Worship
- Collective Worship Planning Proformas
- Evaluation and Monitoring – Ideas and Systems
- Suggested Resources for Collective Worship
- Spirituality – What is it?