

# Collective Worship Policy

## Long Wittenham CofE Primary School

This policy supports the school vision, 'Show our love through kindness, determination and curiosity; strengthening ourselves and our community.'



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| <b>Approved by:</b> | Governing Board |
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| <b>Last reviewed on:</b> | July 2024 |
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| <b>Next review due by:</b> | July 2028 |
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## Introduction

Collective worship is central to the life of our school, worship offers the pupils and others in our school an opportunity to reflect on our values (kindness, determination and curiosity) and issues in the context of our Christian vision and ethos:

***Show our love through kindness, determination and curiosity; strengthening ourselves and our community.***

Our vision and values originate from the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

It is an expression of our vision and shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school. We warmly invite all members of our school community to join our worship.

Our collective worship<sup>3</sup> provides pupils and staff the opportunity to:

- Celebrate -
  - Christian seasons and festivals;
  - School values associated with our vision;
  - Pupils' and adults' achievements;
- Experience prayer, stillness, worship and reflection;
- Grow in understanding of and participation in prayer;
- Create a reflective approach to life including the exploration of deep questions;
- Develop as a community centered on our clear and distinctive Christian vision;
- Experience a variety of styles of worship;
- Participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship;
- Feel safe and affirmed;
- Worship God on their own terms.
- Work in partnership with the children, their families and the local parish

Worship will reflect aspects of the curriculum and in particular will:

- Nurture spiritual growth;
- Enable participants to consider moral questions in a Christian context;
- Enhance social understanding and encourage responses to issues through courageous advocacy;
- Give participants a chance to reflect on the place and importance of faith in the lives of people today;
- Encourage participants to explore beliefs drawn from their own cultural heritage<sup>6</sup>;
- Reflect on the teachings of Jesus and a trinitarian theology.

## **The Pattern of Collective Worship**

Collective worship takes place in a variety of groupings: in the school hall, in classrooms and on occasions outside. On occasion worship takes place in St. Mary's Church, our local church. We follow the seasons of the Church year and within these, significant festivals and other special days are observed. These always include Harvest, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Pentecost; other days are celebrated occasionally. Other important days in the calendar such as Remembrance and the Leavers' Service also feature in collective worship.

Whenever worship takes place, it is planned to promote participants' thinking beyond the time given to worship itself.

## **Leading worship**

Worship has a variety of leaders from both within school and from the local Church Community. Pupils are given opportunities to lead worship throughout the year. Visitors are welcome to contribute to collective worship from time to time and are given guidance from our worship policy. Leaders from faiths within the area help us to increase the pupils' awareness, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these faiths.

## **Planning Acts of Collective Worship**

Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience. Leaders, including the children, plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme and the needs of the pupils. The themes of worship are chosen to both express and explore our vision and the way in which this vision is experienced in school through the associated values. Throughout their time at our school children will encounter a wide variety of activities such as dance and drama alongside more traditional elements of worship such as prayer and song. We will also introduce pupils to a range of approaches to worship and when appropriate use symbols such as lighting a candle.

Prayer is a vital part of our worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to God reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Pupils who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

We also arrange Prayer Spaces that give our children an extended opportunity for reflective and prayer time using a range of activities.

Our worship is regularly reviewed through discussions with participants, observation and reflection and our evaluations are fed into the planning for future worship.

## **A legal note**

By law, Collective Worship must:

- be provided for every child on register every day;
- reflect the school's Trust Deed.

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can also exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own RE. This provision will be the parents' responsibility. This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE and can do so without giving any explanation. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. However, this does not apply to teachers who have been specifically employed to teach or lead RE. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the teaching of RE, a letter requesting this must be submitted to the head of the school and its chair of governors. If a teacher withdraws from the teaching of RE, the school must still make provisions for the pupils to receive their entitlement to RE.

When a request to withdraw is received by a school, the request should be granted without delay. The school may offer to speak with the parent to try to understand the basis for the withdrawal but only after the request has been granted. The school must make clear that the parent's right to withdraw their child has been granted and that parents are not required to give reasons for their request.