



Collective Worship Policy

Recommended by:	Principal
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Ratified by:	St Stephen's CE LAGB
Signed:	<i>VE Jackman</i>
Position on the Board:	Chair of LAGB
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Next Review:	February 2027
Policy Tier:	School

To be read alongside the following policies:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- SEND Policy
- Early Years Policy
- Subject policies

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WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE CHRISTIAN ETHOS - THAT EVERY CHILD IS SPECIAL IN THE EYES OF GOD AND WE TEACH THAT ALL PEOPLE SHOULD LOVE, CARE FOR AND RESPECT ONE ANOTHER AND OUR PLANET.

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It is our ambition that all our pupils use our 5 Christian values Love, Peace, Hope, Compassion and Forgiveness to achieve our vision and mission.

‘A New Commandment I give you, ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’ John 13:34

It is from this Commandment and the teachings of Jesus that we teach our children five Christian values.



Policy Statement

At St. Stephen's CofE First School, the daily act of collective worship is viewed as an integral and important part of school life. This time provides an opportunity for everyone to develop a sense of community and unity as a whole school. Collective Worship may form part of or all the entire assembly time. It is part of the school's contribution to promoting spiritual, moral social and cultural development. It is a good time to celebrate and value everyone in our school community. Through this and in the general ethos of the school we seek to promote our mission statement and its Christian ethos.

‘We are special in the eyes of God and we believe that all people should love care for and respect one another and our planet.’

Worship is a time where we come together to share our love of God and celebrate our achievements together. Children are given the opportunity for reflection and prayer. There are opportunities during worship for stillness and a chance to think. Everyone is special and unique in our school. We have a strong belief in tradition, community, and the multicultural makeup of our school.

The worship of the school is based on Christian values which are linked to Christian theology.

We identify the values of:

Love: God loved the world so much. (John 3.16) As we are loved by God, we are called to respond in how we love God and each other (1. Cor 13.40-5)

Peace: Peace comes when we are at peace with ourselves, our neighbours and with God. Can we be willing to address differences by offering them to God? (Philippians 4.4-7 – do not be anxious...present your requests to God.)

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Hope: Christian hope points to all we can be as individuals and community. We seek to make the present more like the Kingdom of God we hope for. (Rev 21 – See I am making all things new.)

Compassion: We seek a community which seeks to be aware of individuals need and to seek transformation. (Mark 6.34 – “he had compassion on them...so he began teaching them many things.”)

Forgiveness: We seek to forgive others as we are forgiven by God. (Matthew 6.12)

Values Education

We blend Christian teaching and Values Education to create opportunities for children to develop physically, emotionally, personally, socially, mentally, and intelligently so that their self-esteem and well-being is sound and supported by ever growing emotional intelligence, leading to an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as young citizens. The systematic introduction of a common values vocabulary allows children to access moral and ethical thought.

Spirituality:

‘At St Stephen’s CofE First School we love, share and reflect to make connections with God.

And so we...

...are still and reflect,

...think, question, and explore,

...make connections with each other,

...make links with the world and how it fits together.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement stated in the 1988 Education Reform Act 6 (1) and 9 (3), which states the need for each child to attend a daily act of worship either as a whole school, class, or group.

It is our conviction that parents positively choose a church school so that their children may experience, in worship, some of the Christian expressions of belief in God as a creator, Jesus Christ as the son of God, the Holy spirit, and the trinity as an expression of God’s personality, and the Bible as a uniquely inspired Word for all the people.

Within this context we aim to offer worship that is distinctively Christian. Worship that recognises and is acceptable to all denominations. Other religious festivals are recognised within our school as our school community caters for children from other faiths. Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship either partially or wholly. Any parents wishing to do so should contact the Principal. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from leading and taking an act of Worship.

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The Purpose of Collective Worship at St Stephen's CofE First School

During Collective Worship we create and develop experiences which recognise the integrity and dignity of everyone in the school community both those who have a religious life-stance and those who do not. We are mindful that although our school has a Christian foundation a significant number of children follow the Islamic faith.

These experiences should be educational but equally stimulate inward reflection which leads to the development of an outward open lifestyle which is caring to others. Collective Worship provides opportunities for children to be stimulated to be reflective about life experiences. It is a special time when they can think about ultimate questions, as far as their intellectual and spiritual capacities allow them. It is also a time when they can celebrate social and academic achievements, a time to foster the positive values held at the school and in the wider community.

Experiences of stillness, peace, awe, wonder, mystery, reverence, and belonging are of central importance in Collective Worship in encouraging spiritual development.

Children can also express their faith in a school setting if they wish. Collective Worship at St Stephen's aims to take a holistic approach to this activity, providing time to reflect on moral issues and what is happening in the world, time to sense the security of a school community which shares common values and beliefs, and develop an understanding of aspects of their own and other cultural environments, including customs, beliefs, and attitudes.

An assembly is concerned with administrative matters and announcements about school life. Collective Worship may be part of an Assembly but always seen as distinct from it.

Organisation

We aim to provide a variety of worship experiences for the children. Our Worship themes follow our Christian themed values. These Christian Values of love, hope, peace, forgiveness, and compassion link in well with Christi theology and our overall values within school. Our current worship schedule is as follows:

Monday. Whole School: Whole School Worship led by the Principal. The themes are based on our Core Christian Values. British Values assemblies are also featured.

Tuesday: Key Stage worship in classrooms.

Wednesday: Open the Book and Values Worship. This is led by a group of volunteers who come in and lead worship based around stories from the Bible and the Vice Principal on a rota basis. Once every half term this assembly is led by Rev: Paul Lawlor of St Stephen's Church.

Thursday: Week 1: Shooting Stars. This assembly is the time to celebrate school and pupil success. There are pupil awards for good learning and achievement, for attendance and the team with the most House Points. Led by the Principal.

Thursday: Week 2: Values. This is where the ethos of the school is celebrated. Those children who have use the school's values are rewarded with certificates. This is also the assembly where birthdays are celebrated, attendance and House points. (When Shooting Stars assemblies are replaced by the Open the Book Team) Whole school singing practise, with prayer and reflection time, led by the Principal.

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Friday: Whole school singing practise, with prayer and reflection time, led by the Vice Principal with TA to support.

Summer term: Each class leads a class assembly once during the school year when parent's relatives and friends are invited to join us.

In addition to this, visiting groups and individuals are welcomed into assembly to worship with us.

Planning, Content and Detail

The themes for Monday's collective worship reflect our Values focus for that month or are linked to the Church calendar, our school ethos, or current events.

Assembly routines:

- The worship begins with the children setting up the hall for assembly.
- There is a table at the front with three candles and a wooden cross. Adult leading assembly to bring matches to light the candles.
- The children come into the hall accompanied by a piece of music that has been chosen by the children setting up the assembly.
- A member of the Worship Committee introduces.
- The adult running the worship lights the candles and says the welcome words. 'We light these candles in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.' There is a moment for reflection once they are lit. This is the start of the assembly.
- The act of worship follows the worship themes for that week. The act of worship can take a variety of forms e.g. use of story, film clip or global issues.
- There is always time for reflection.
- Prayers. This is usually either the Lord's Prayer or the school prayer with an additional prayer based on the theme. All prayers are led or read out by the Worship Committee.
- The candles are put out by a member of the worship committee, signalling the end of worship.
- Music is played as children depart.
- Chairs and equipment are tidied away once everyone has left.

Reception and Nursery have a joint assembly once a week. They also follow the themes of the week. In the spring and the summer term they join the whole school collective worship.

Prayer and Reflection

Collective Worship always includes a time of prayer and/or reflection, including singing practice. A range of prayers are used including the Lord's Prayer, prayers written by the children, prayers based on the current Christian value. They are introduced in an appropriate manner with a short time of quiet. At the beginning of the whole school worship led by the Principal or Vice Principal, a time of reflection and quiet is encouraged by the lighting of candles. A cross is also on the altar table as well as the liturgical colours of the Christian Calendar.

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At the end of the day a prayer is said in class. The school has a Prayer area, in the corridor and children are encouraged to write prayers or have a moment for reflection.

Statutory Requirements

Collective Worship at St Stephen's CE RSA Academy complies with the legal requirements as set out in the 1988 Education Reform Act and 1993 Education Act. The framework for worship as stated in law, is to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character although not distinctive of a particular nomination.

However, it is fundamental that Collective Worship be flexible enough to encompass the age aptitude and background of all children at the school. Therefore, an Act of Worship which is "broadly Christian" need not contain Christian material, only DCSF circular 1/94.

Such beliefs, that are broadly Christian, are inclusive in other world faiths. Examples are God, justice, love, peace, good, evil, greed, poverty, charity, pollution, morality, tolerance, co-operation, selfishness, war, prejudice. The scope available to anyone leading Collective Worship is wide ranging. Therefore, if a broad and flexible approach is adopted Collective Worship will not affect the integrity of anyone taking part.

Visits and Special times.

As part of the curriculum, the school ensures that appropriate visits are made available for the children for them to have first-hand experiences and gain a greater understanding of various places of worship. Visitors to the school are welcomed and enabled to share their experiences and knowledge. St Stephen's Church is our most valuable and frequently used resource, with the whole school attending and contributing towards annual Harvest Festival, Christmas service and Easter which takes place in Church school with the Rev Paul Lawlor. There is also a special Eid Celebration in school where speakers from the Muslim community come in to celebrate in school. At the end of the school Year, Year 4 have a special leaver's service as they move up to their next school.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Our School Worship is about sharing what is meaningful, significant in our school as well as globally and nationally. It is about sharing Christian ethos and scriptures and developing positive attitudes and values.

Withdrawal of Pupils from Collective Worship

Parents do have the right to remove their children from collective Worship.

Since the Principal does not have responsibility for providing alternative worship, we have an agreement that parents can come to work with their children at this time.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The outcomes of Collective Worship are evaluated through the processes of:

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- a) Observation of the children's attentiveness and level of interest shown during the worship time.
- b) Feedback from pupils
- c) Observation of the children's general behaviour and attitude towards each other and around school

Guidance for Leaders of Collective Worship

Key Issues to Remember

- Sound planning is needed to ensure that hearts, wills, and minds are challenged and engaged so that they are open to the possibilities of changes, in direction, attitude, lifestyle, aspirations. This is what Collective Worship is about.