

### Collective Worship Policy

At St Michael's we strive to develop and inspire courageous, respectful and resilient learners encouraging them to serve with kindness and tolerance guided by our Christian values so that they can flourish, living 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

**Worship is...**

*Giving honour and reverence to a supreme being.*

*Christian worship is concerned with bringing praise, prayer, thanksgiving and adoration to God.*

*It is an activity of response: in words, actions and thoughts.*

#### **Mission statement**

Collective worship plays a central part in the life of our school and we work to ensure that it is Invitational, Inclusive and Inspiring. It is a means by which the school's Christian vision is expressed. As an expression of the Christian vision, ethos and spiritual life of the school. It provides the whole school community opportunities to experience/participate in/take responsibility for the living expression of Christian worship, valued and honoured through the school's Anglican Foundation. This is set within the context of the corporate community of our school and its historic partnership with St Michael's and All Angels Church, Penkridge. We affirm every individual's unique contribution, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ability, background or religion.

#### **Legal requirements:**

##### **Trust Deed**

Our daily act of collective worship is in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school. This requires worship to be consistent with the faith, principles and practices of the Church of England.

##### **DfES guidance**

We also take into account DfES legislation. The following link will take you to the current legislation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collective-worship-in-schools>

##### **1988 Education Act**

We also take into account the 1988 Education that states,

*'.....all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall in each school day take part in an act of collective worship',*

And, that this should be,

*'.....mainly of a broadly Christian character'*

According to our pupils, worship is important because...

*"It helps us to live our lives as God wants us to"*

*"We think about our values"*

*"We learn how to be respectful to each other"*

*"We learn about God and how he sent Jesus to help us"*

*"We know more about God's messages"*

**Aims of worship**

The gathering of pupils each day incorporates collective worship. **Worship will be:**

- Appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils.
- Provided in a variety of settings, groupings and timings, with a variety of leaders as follows:
- Invitational, Inclusive and Inspiring
- Reflection of the local and National picture

Day	Audience	Leader
Monday	Whole school	Headteacher
Tuesday	Individual classes	Class teachers
Wednesday	Whole school+ Nursery	Teacher
Thursday	Whole School	Church representative
Friday	Whole school and parents	Headteacher

**It will provide opportunities to:**

- Deepen their understanding of the vision and values that underpin the school's distinctly Christian ethos
- enhance the spiritual development and response of pupils
- foster reflection, meditation, prayer and silence
- create an atmosphere in which God is both normal and natural
- foster a reverential attitude to God
- foster empathy and imagination, enabling pupils to participate in a variety of ways
- actively involve pupils in the delivery of worship in creative and imaginative ways (reading, poetry, drama, dance, quiet / silent reflection, prayer, singing)
- explore and enjoy praise, prayer and the rituals of Christianity (the Anglican tradition in particular)
- affirm the Christian faith and the central Christian status of Jesus as the Son of God
- affirm the Christian belief in the Trinity and explore the meaning of each person of the Trinity
- explore Eucharistic worship (where appropriate) within the Anglican tradition by visiting and observing Eucharist services in church, learning about it in RE and in Collective worship
- enable pupils to reflect on the experiences of Christian adherents
- foster and value a search for a faith to live by
- explore the school's Christian values to deepen pupils understanding of them and how they relate to the school, local community and wider world
- learn about and reflect upon Christian teaching, Biblical material and Christian festivals, in a way that relates to the pupils' experience and to living together in community
- worship together rather than apart
- provide an evocative setting for worship that fosters spiritual growth and reflection
- experience a broad spectrum of Christian tradition (various expressions of worship)

- inspire pupils to explore further their own faith and tradition
- encourage pupils and staff to plan, participate and lead in worship
- develop a sense of community and shared values
- consider the needs of others and to foster charitable works
- inspire courageous advocacy and social action
- celebrate the highest achievements of the human spirit
- celebrate achievements of members of the school in every aspect of school life
- foster a thought provoking atmosphere allowing for spiritual reflection and response
- make regular use of local church buildings for worship
- build and reflect upon their own world views

**Other opportunities that worship can offer are:**

- celebrate the beliefs and cultures of others particularly those represented in our school
- celebrate of achievements of members of the school community
- reinforce school expectations, good behaviour and school routines
- share local school and community information

**Management of worship**

Overall responsibility for collective worship lies with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. However, the role of planning, resourcing and evaluating worship is owned by the whole school community including but not limited to pupils, vision ambassadors, church representatives and Diocesan advisor. In addition, all teachers in a church school are 'spiritual leaders' and have a responsibility to help pupils develop spiritual awareness in accordance with our spirituality policy.

**Resourcing worship**

We are committed to ensuring that collective worship is resourced well reflecting its importance to our school community and our shared Christian ethos. When planning and leading worship, a range of resources are drawn upon including but not limited to:

- Diocesan training materials
- National publications such as Church of England's Collective Worship Guidance
- Roots and Fruits
- Picture news

We highly value the contribution that pupils make to worship and, as such, they are provided regular opportunities to plan acts of worship (whole school, year group, key stage or class), so that they have ownership of it. Pupils plan and deliver class worship weekly, supported by an adult and each class take responsibility for planning and leading a whole school worship at least once per year.

At St Michael's, Vision Ambassadors take the lead in planning prayer and reflection areas around school, focussing on the value of the half term. Areas are often linked to a high quality text and offer pupils opportunities for stillness, reflection, action and prayer. When

approaching a new half term, children are asked to consider the value for the next half term and how they have learnt about this value through the bible previously. They also have the opportunity to share their knowledge of courageous advocates who demonstrate the value. These ideas are used to support worship planning and resourcing.

### **Monitoring, evaluating & action planning worship**

Worship is monitored and evaluated frequently in order to ensure that it meets the needs of all who take part and is relevant to our context and community. All stakeholders' opinions are sought in a variety of ways. Pupils across school evaluate worship both as a whole class, and in small groups. These evaluations are reviewed regularly by the vision ambassadors and any development areas are actioned. Parents views are gathered at different points during the year both informally and through parental surveys. The school engages termly with an allocated Christian Distinctiveness Advisor who evaluates collective worship and provides support around development areas. These evaluations are shared with Governors. Governors take an active part in the monitoring of worship provision through school visits, pupil voice sessions and through the weekly visit made by the vicar. A yearly action plan which feeds into the school development plan is written and revised to ensure that worship remains relevant and up to date.

### **Worship themes and current practice**

The school's worship provision reflects the school's Christian Vision and six core Christian values. Worship is planned around a value for the half term and, reflects significant events in the church calendar. As a school, we maintain close links with St Michael's church and as a whole school, visit half termly. Further visits are made by individual year groups during the year as part of RE programmes of study. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also have the opportunity to observe a Eucharist service at least once per year at St Michael's Church.

A daily act of worship at St Michael's has a clear structure and usually includes:

- **Preparation time**- The time just before collective worship where pupils are quiet and thoughtful. This is often accompanied by some quiet music which reflects the value of the half term. Children prepare for an act of worship before they leave their classroom. In class worship, music is played and often the lights are dimmed as pupils prepare for their worship time.
- **Greeting**- The greeting can vary in type but is often a call and response or an agreed set of welcome words. This is accompanied by the lighting of a three wick candle representing the trinity.
- **Engaging** - During this section of the worship children engage with a story, video, picture or other stimulus. This could be a bible passage or linked to a given bible passage.
- **Responding**- During this time child may engage in quiet reflection, group discussion, or prayer as they respond and reflect on what they have seen/heard. Response can take many forms but should prompt pupils to take action either to better themselves or to be drivers of positive change.

- **Sending-** At the end of collective worship, a prayer is said. Pupils are invited to join and this can be led by staff, visitors or pupils. The extinguishing of the worship candles signals the end of the worship and the blessing is sung as this is completed.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is important that Collective worship continues to meet the needs of the community it serves and therefore will be subject to ongoing evaluation and review. This will be completed by vision Ambassadors, school leaders, teachers, Governors and external advisors/inspectors in a varied of ways including:

- Pupil/staff voice
- Worship evaluations
- VA meeting minutes
- Planning scrutiny
- Learning walks
- Parent questionnaire

**The right of withdrawal – see appendix 1**

- We recognise the right of withdrawal from worship for pupils at the request of parents and for staff, but encourage discussion with the relevant individuals to ensure that there is understanding of the aims and objectives of worship, and strategies for minimising the disruption caused by any withdrawals

**Approved and adopted by the Governing Body on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024.**

Headteacher/Principal.....

Chair of Governors.....

## Appendix 1

### **Guidance for schools and academies on the right to withdrawal from Religious Education and Collective Worship March 2017**

#### **Collective Worship**

The **1944 Education Act** gave the right to withdraw from RE or collective worship to parents who wished their children to receive different form of RE or worship. This right is also confirmed in section 71 of the **School Standards and Framework Act 1998**. In the case of collective worship, the government guidance document is **Circular 1/94: Religious Education and Collective Worship**.

Collective worship in all Church of England schools and academies should honour the school's trust deed and Christian foundations. Worship is central to school life, offering an opportunity for the whole school community to explore the distinctive beliefs and narrative that underpins the school's Anglican foundations and distinctive Christian character. Worship is the responsibility of the governing body in conjunction with the headteacher, working in partnership with the staff and the local parish church.

Our Church of England schools should strive to ensure they are consistently excellent, distinctive, and inclusive, and that the whole curriculum is underpinned by Christian values. Religious Education is an important part of the curriculum in all Church of England schools and academies. Its nature, objectives, and content should be shared with parents each term to ensure that parents are able to recognise that RE is of educational value to all pupils, whatever their belief background. In the same way, collective worship should lie at the heart of school life, proclaiming its distinctive character and faith in a way that is relevant, inclusive and that leads each pupil a little further in their spiritual journey. In this way, the likelihood for parental requests for withdrawal should be reduced. However, when they are made they must be handled accordingly to the legal guidance, while there is scope for a little realism and adaptability in order to ensure the best for every pupil.

In many of our schools within the Diocese of Lichfield, there is a large percentage of children whose families are members of another faith. It is the purpose and duty of every church school to be distinctive as a Church of England school. In each school, it is part of the mission of the church to welcome those of other faiths and no faith. In most cases, parents will have chosen the school for their child, making a specific choice of the school because of the ethos and education it offers. In a small number of cases, parents of other faiths will have been offered a place at a church school because no other school has a place for their child within a reasonable catchment area.

The right to withdraw from collective worship should be at the instigation of the parents or pupils above the age of 16.

#### **The right of withdrawal from collective worship**

The right of withdrawal from collective worship would normally be exercised through the physical withdrawal of the pupil from the place where the act of worship is taking place. Indeed the school could insist that this is the way the right is to be implemented. If, however, both the parent and the school agree that the pupil should be allowed to remain physically present during the collective worship but not take part in it, nothing in the law prevents this.

Experience suggests that, to avoid misunderstanding, a Headteacher / Principal will find it helpful to establish with any parent wanting to exercise the right to withdrawal:

- the elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part;
- the practical implications of withdrawal; and
- 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 request religious worship according to a particular faith or denomination, the governors and Headteacher / Principal will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school; and
- that the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in **Section 1 of the 1988 Education Act. (Circular 1/94)**