Godley Community Primary Academy

Collective Worship Policy

Policy owner	Principal
Approved by	Local Governing Body
Approval date	November 2026
Review date	November 2027

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how Godley Community Primary Academy provides collective worship for all registered pupils. It applies to all pupils, staff, visitors and governors involved in planning, leading, monitoring or evaluating collective worship. Collective worship is distinct from religious education and from ordinary curriculum or assembly activities, although themes may complement wider learning.

2. Statutory framework

As an academy without a religious designation, the Academy is required through its funding agreement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all registered pupils. The Academy has regard to the legal framework in the Education Act 1996, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Department for Education guidance, including Circular 1/94, so far as it remains applicable.

Collective worship will:

- be provided on every school day for all registered pupils, except where a pupil has been withdrawn by a parent or where a lawful exemption applies;
- be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character over a term, while not being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination;
- reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational, and also recognise the diversity of faiths, beliefs and worldviews represented in the school and wider community;
- be appropriate to pupils' ages, aptitudes, family backgrounds and educational needs; and
- provide a genuine opportunity for worship, reflection and response.

If the Academy considers that the broadly Christian requirement is not appropriate for some or all pupils, it will seek advice from Tameside Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and follow the applicable determination process. No departure from the requirement will be made without the appropriate formal determination.

3. Aims

Collective worship at Godley aims to:

- create a shared sense of community, belonging and identity;
- give pupils time to pause, reflect and consider questions of meaning, purpose and value;
- promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- help pupils understand and respect Christianity and a range of religions, beliefs and worldviews;
- promote the school's values, mutual respect and the protected right of people to hold different beliefs;
- celebrate achievement, service, significant events and the life of the school community; and
- support pupils' personal development and preparation for life in modern Britain.

4. Character of collective worship

Collective worship is inclusive, invitational and respectful. Pupils are enabled to participate without being compelled to make a statement of faith. Prayer may be used, but pupils will be invited to pray, reflect silently or consider the words in a way that is personally meaningful. The school will not assume that all pupils or adults share the same beliefs.

Acts of worship will normally include a clear focus or gathering, an opportunity to explore a theme, time for reflection or prayer, and a purposeful conclusion or response. Notices and routine administration will be clearly separated from the act of worship.

5. Organisation and frequency

Collective worship takes place every school day. It may be organised for the whole school, phases, year groups or classes. Pupils will not be separated into groups only by reference to age or school grouping unless this is appropriate for the organisation and purpose of the act of worship.

Sessions will normally last approximately 15 to 20 minutes. The precise timetable and groupings may vary, but the daily statutory entitlement will be maintained and recorded through the school's worship timetable and planning documentation.

6. Planning and content

Collective worship is planned termly and reviewed regularly. Themes may draw upon:

- Christian teachings, stories and festivals;
- the school's values and community life;
- other religious and cultural festivals, beliefs and worldviews;
- moral and ethical questions, global events and age-appropriate current issues;
- pupil voice, achievements and contributions to the community; and
- the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Planning remains responsive to significant local, national or global events. Content will be checked for age-appropriateness, balance, factual accuracy and sensitivity, particularly where themes may affect pupils who have experienced bereavement, conflict, discrimination or trauma.

7. Leadership, roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Body will:

- approve this policy and monitor that the statutory duty is met;
- receive appropriate assurance about the quality, inclusivity and impact of collective worship; and
- ensure that complaints or concerns are managed through the Academy's published procedures.

The Principal, supported by the Vice Principal as collective worship co-ordinator, will:

- ensure daily provision, appropriate planning and staff guidance;
- maintain an overview of themes, leaders, groupings and evaluation;
- ensure that withdrawal arrangements are safe, respectful and properly recorded; and
- ensure that visitors understand the Academy's inclusive, non-denominational expectations.

Staff and visiting leaders will follow agreed plans, safeguard pupils, use age-appropriate language and avoid proselytising or promoting partisan political views. The Principal retains responsibility for approving visiting speakers and their proposed contribution in line with the Academy's safeguarding and visitor procedures.

8. Pupil participation and response

Pupils may contribute through readings, music, drama, artwork, discussion, silence, prayer or personal reflection. Participation will be appropriate to age and need. No pupil will be required to pray, disclose a personal belief or take part in an act that conflicts with their conscience. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can participate meaningfully.

9. Right of withdrawal

A parent has the right to request that their child be wholly or partly withdrawn from collective worship. A request should be made to the Principal, preferably in writing, and does not need to give a reason. The school may invite the parent to discuss the request so that its scope is clear, but this discussion will not be used to discourage or delay the exercise of the right.

The Academy will:

- record the request and the agreed extent of withdrawal;
- provide appropriate supervision and a safe, purposeful alternative activity during the period of withdrawal;
- ensure that the pupil is not disadvantaged, made to feel excluded or asked to undertake additional work as a sanction; and
- keep the arrangement under review with the parent, while recognising that it remains in force until the parent changes or withdraws it.

Staff rights relating to attendance at or participation in collective worship will be respected in accordance with the applicable legal framework and terms of employment. Staff should raise any request with the Principal.

10. Inclusion, equality and safeguarding

Collective worship will be planned and delivered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Academy's safeguarding, equality and special educational needs policies. It will not stereotype, demean or discriminate against people because of religion or belief, race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy or maternity, or marriage and civil partnership. Content and visiting speakers will be subject to the Academy's normal safeguarding expectations and risk management procedures.

11. Monitoring and evaluation

The quality and statutory delivery of collective worship will be monitored through planning records, the daily timetable, observations, pupil and staff feedback, and periodic review by leaders and governors. Evaluation will consider whether worship is inclusive, broadly Christian over time, age-appropriate, distinct from ordinary assembly business, and effective in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Findings will inform future planning and staff development.

12. Complaints

Concerns should first be raised with the Principal. If they are not resolved, the Academy's published complaints procedure should be followed. Matters relating to the statutory provision of collective worship may also require advice from Enquire Learning Trust, the Department for Education or Tameside SACRE, depending on the issue.

13. Related documents

- Academy funding agreement and articles of association;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Equality Information and Objectives;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy;

- Visitors and External Speakers procedures; and
- Complaints Policy.

14. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if legislation, Department for Education guidance, the Academy's funding agreement or local arrangements change.