

Collective Worship Policy



St. Michael's C of E Primary School

Inclusive ❖ Invitational ❖ Inspiring

October 2025

1. Background: Collective Worship Legislation and Guidance

All maintained schools must provide daily Collective Worship for all registered pupils and promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development¹.

In community schools, Collective Worship must be ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’¹.

In Church schools, the requirement is instead to reflect the Anglican status of the school as expressed in its trust deed.

Best practice in delivering Collective Worship² requires it to be:

- **Inclusive:** so that is accessible and meaningful to all, whatever their faith or none.
- **Invitational:** so that there is no compulsion do ‘do anything’ just a warm offer to be present and engage with integrity.
- **Inspiring:** so that it motivates pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and wider community’s behaviour and actions.

2. Collective Worship and Vision:

Collective Worship is the most special time of each day at St Michael’s C of E Primary School. It is the time when we gather together, pause and reflect in our classes, Key Stages or as whole school.

Collective Worship is an expression of our Vision and contributes significantly to the flourishing of all. It offers pupils the *opportunity to share and express love and gratitude, to work together, develop friendship, reflect as thinkers and learners whilst also giving pupils the chance to make themselves heard. Pupils celebrate success and are able to let their light shine*. It enables pupils and adults to develop spiritually, emotionally and socially, asking, reflecting on and answering big questions about meaning and our responsibilities as part of a global community including, *‘Who am I?’ ‘Why am I here’ ‘How then shall I live?’*

2. Invitational Worship and Spiritual Development:

Our word ‘Worship’ comes from an Old English word meaning to acknowledge or attribute worth. If we choose to worship, we are acknowledging how and why God is worthy of praise and thanks. It is a personal experience which depends on an individual’s attitude. Worship which is directed by, or insisted upon, by someone else is not, in fact, worship.

At our school, worship is invitational. All are offered the chance to worship daily, including through prayer and through song, but it is not expected. Collective Worship does not pre-suppose shared beliefs or convictions. It does not seek a uniform response from pupils or adults.

Through our Religious Education (RE) curriculum, our Personal, Social, Health and Emotional (PSHE) curriculum, Forest School, Opal we support pupils in developing their own personal convictions. Our school offers pupils a safe space in which to explore their feelings, thoughts and beliefs and develop spiritually.

Every day, all members of our school community are taken to the threshold of worship. Whether or not to cross it is for the individual to decide.

3. How Collective Worship is made special:

We take the time to make our Collective Worship time special every day by:

- Creating an atmosphere which is conducive to worship and/or reflection (through use of music, a visual focus, artefacts and lighting our three candles).
- Careful and intentional timetabling so that Collective Worship time is not disrupted by other activities occurring on the school site and occurs at a time when pupils are most responsive.
- Ensuring every member of the school family is present. Pupils at this school are never withdrawn from Collective Worship for interventions or 'catch-up' time.
- Choosing themes and content which are appropriate to our school context, reflect our vision and are pitched appropriately for those present.
- Inspiring each member of our school community to reflect on their own behaviours and how they might make a change for their own sake or for the sake of others.

4. Aims of Collective Worship:

We aim to make every act of Collective Worship meaningful, engaging and relevant to those present, whether they choose to worship or not. As a Church of England school, our worship is predominantly Christian in nature.

However, at this school, we ensure that everyone, whatever their faith or none, can **take part with integrity**. For example, a Bible story illustrating Jesus' teachings (on loving one another, on caring for the vulnerable, on generosity or any other theme) will regularly be shared. The message of that Christian story is unpacked and made relevant to everyone in attendance so that **all** may be inspired by it.

Collective Worship sessions offer rich opportunities for teaching and encouraging reflection. At this school, we have the following aims for acts of Collective Worship:

- To offer pupil-centred sessions which either reflect pupils' experiences or appropriately expand and broaden them (content).
- To provide variety (in terms of content, the ways in which pupils are encouraged to interact, the use of music etc) to appeal to the preferences of **as many pupils as possible**.
- To afford pupils and adults space to reflect on the spiritual, acknowledging the capacity of our pupils to seek meaning beyond the material and physical .
- To allow time to respond to social and moral issues and the questions which relate to life as a global citizen.
- To provoke in those present a sense of meaning, wonder, , joy and celebration or thanksgiving.
- To enable pupils and adult to explore the use of silence for stillness reflection, meditation, exploring inner thoughts and feelings and, as appropriate, prayer.
- To heighten pupils' awareness of questions relating to the ultimate mysteries of life and to explore the responses that have been made to these questions by people of faith.
- To develop an understanding of how the teachings of Jesus and the Bible are relevant to each of us, **whatever our personal convictions**.
- To provide opportunities for pupils and staff to explore and celebrate the Christian values on which the school is based.
- To enable the school community to explore a range of forms of worship and recognise the rich traditions of the Anglican church (locally, nationally and around the world).
- To develop an understanding of the Christian belief in a God of three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

5. Use of Music

The use of music at St Michael's C Of E School is very important. We use music which reflects our school's vision. Music plays an important part in developing our pupils as respectful and loving global citizens, and in helping them develop spiritually. We introduce our pupils to a diverse range of musical styles and genres to help them find a music which is most helpful to them for reflection or worship. We also represent (through video) a diverse mix of cultures and backgrounds to help our pupils to make sense of the rich global musical community and how music is used in worship across the globe.

Music is chosen carefully to avoid asking those to declare a faith in God they may not have. Some of our music contains elements which are confessional (they declare a faith in God or desire to worship). However, where such songs are used, we explain what the lyrics mean to Christians in order that pupils (and staff) may decide, for themselves, whether to sing them. We take the time to explain that some songs, sung by Christians, involve the artists singing to God. However, the words of such songs lend themselves to our school family choosing to sing to whomever they wish – God, a family member, a friend. For example, *My Lighthouse, One More Step Along the World I Go* written aimed at singing to God but work just as well singing to someone else e.g.]

Some worship songs used are great for music-based learning opportunities (regardless of whether the lyrics are reflective of pupils’ beliefs) and, as such, have great worth as a teaching tool. An example is, *Our God is a Great Big God*. Whether or not pupils agree with the sentiment of the lyrics, they can benefit greatly from the opportunity for teaching rhythm (semi-breve, minim, crochet, quaver). By using worship songs for more than just their lyrics, they are made **invitational** and relevant to all.

6. Organisation

An act of Collective Worship takes place daily¹ and usually lasts 20 minutes.

Day	Time	Nature of Worship
Monday	2pm	Whole School
Tuesday	2pm	Key Stage Worship (EY/KS1); Class Worship KS2
Wednesday	2pm	Whole School
Thursday	2pm	Key Stage Worship (KS2); Class Worship (EY/KS1)
Friday	2pm	Whole school celebration

Visitors play an important part in the life of our school and regularly contribute to acts of worship. We invite members of charitable organisations who offer their expertise to the school (For example NISCU, the NSPCC, foodbank) to lead us in worship.]

At Harvest Festival time, Christmas, Easter and to say ‘goodbye’ to our Year 6 Leavers, the whole school, and our family and community, visits the church for an act of worship led jointly by the pupils and the church.

7. Content

Content for individual worship is planned but not prescribed, in order to allow for those leading to draw on topical or world events, personal experiences, situations which have arisen in the school or wider community.

However, planning always includes:

- an explanation of how the content helps us to live out our vision
- links to the Church year
- suggested relevant Bible stories
- reference to relevant world faiths/festivals/celebrations occurring
- relevant links with PSHE, SMSC and British Values or any other part of the school curriculum
- suggestions for activities or opportunities for children’s participation through role play, drama, discussion, reflection stations, singing etc
- ideas for following up whole-school worship either in Key Stages or in the classroom
- suggestions for reflection stations relevant to the theme of the half term.

Crucially, our planning also reflects the input of the pupils either through talk partners, active feedback or involvement.

8. Training

Any leader of worship (pupil or adult) at this school has access to training to support them in their role. In particular, through training, we ensure a consistent approach to the use of **inclusive** and **invitational** language in all sessions.

9. Visitors

Visitors play an important part in the life of our school and regularly contribute to acts of Collective Worship. We are very grateful to those people in our local community who give their time to lead worship in our school. Pupils benefit greatly from the varied experiences they provide.

A copy of this policy, together with planning for the current half term is shared with all visitors who lead Collective Worship.

10. Evaluation of Collective Worship

The effectiveness and impact of Collective Worship is monitored by our Collective Worship leader. Monitoring involves the whole school community.

The views of pupils are fed back to and their views inform future planning.

11. Right of Withdrawal

Given the **inclusive** and **invitational** nature of our acts of Collective Worship outlined above, we hope that every parent or carer would wish their child to take part in this special part of the school day. However, parents do have the legal right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. There is no requirement to explain or give reasons for a request of withdrawal. However, if this is something you are considering for your child, you are warmly encouraged to contact the Headteacher, who will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

12. Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

13. References

¹Education Reform Act 1988, section 7(1); DfE Circular 1/94 (1994)

²Collective Worship in Church of England Schools Guidance Document: Inclusive Invitational Inspiring