



Walmsley C of E Primary School

# Collective Worship Policy

**Date of Issue:** November 2023




**Next Review Date:** January 2025

## Policy Cover Note

Title of the Policy	Collective Worship Policy
Summary/Reason for bringing to Governing Board for Approval	For information – approval by Headteacher
Statutory Requirement	No
Decisions to be made / recommendation on options	To be adopted
Name of the author	Joanna Atherton
Date written	November 2023
Date for Review	January 2025
Policy/Procedure to be published on the school website	No
Amendments/Updates	New policy based on model policy

### **Mission Statement**

As a school we pledge to:

-  Be a happy school where pupils are encouraged and challenged to reach their full academic and social potential in a creative, friendly and safe Christian environment.
-  Work as a partnership with pupils, their families, staff and the wider community to provide an environment of honesty, responsibility and integrity.
-  Give ownership of the opportunities presented to the school family, thus enabling them to reflect on their time at Walmsley with pride.

## Walmsley Church of England School

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do. Guided by God, we will provide rich, memorable learning experiences which will build character in each individual child.

We will ensure that all children are able to flourish and experience God's wonderful world in all its fullness. Together as a family we aim to love, respect, aspire, trust, show compassion and be resilient.

Our vision is inspired by the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23). We believe, as Jesus taught, that our school prepares the soil (our children) using the tools of our Christian values led environment, worship, culture, aspiration and pastoral care through our carefully selected seeds (opportunities) in our learning opportunities, curriculum and the wider Walmsley Experience.

The growth of the seeds represents how well the soil (our children) have received, nurtured and flourished in our Walmsley family.

'Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

### Policy Statement

At Walmsley CE Primary, worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Walmsley CE Primary collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*<sup>1</sup>) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

<sup>2</sup> "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God". William Temple (1881-1894)

## Church of England Guidance

Collective worship policy at Walmsley CE Primary draws on guidance from the Church of England<sup>3</sup>. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

## Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils. This can take place at anytime in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England.

The Governing Board of the school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

## The right of withdrawal

In Walmsley CE Primary there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- 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 their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

*(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)*

### **Guiding Principles**

Collective worship in Walmsley CE Primary aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

### **Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation**

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community