



Together we love to learn  
and learn to love

# **St. Mary's CE Infant School**

## **Collective Worship Policy**

St Mary's Infant school is committed to inspiring every child. We embed the Christian value of love across school life because we believe that a child who feels loved, secure and happy is a learning child. We encourage our children to achieve their potential, develop their talents, celebrate their uniqueness, and rejoice in their relationships with others.



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St. Mary's is a member of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST). ODST has a clear Church of England ethos, and its schools are inclusive and creative communities that build understanding, respect and empathy in children. Pupils, staff and parents of all religious faiths and none are welcome. Our schools celebrate religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and encourage dialogue and understanding. We believe that we can all learn from each other and that collective worship is an educational entitlement for all.

In worship we create the opportunity to explore the place of faith in each of our lives, and in the community in which we live. In regular acts of collective worship the school community has the opportunity of offering thanksgiving and praise to God through a range of liturgical patterns that reflect our Church of England heritage.

### **Legal Requirements**

*"Worship will be - appropriate to the age, aptitude and family backgrounds of pupils, - provided in a variety of settings, groupings and timings, with a variety of leaders." (DFES)*

Our daily act of Collective Worship is in accordance with the Christian character of our school as a member of ODST.

### **Aims of Collective Worship**

There are three fundamental principles underlying the provision of our acts of Collective Worship.

1. Collective worship contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
2. Collective worship is inclusive in nature.
3. Collective worship is educational.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural**

Acts of Collective Worship will aim to:

- nurture and maintain the dignity human beings who are made in the image of God through working for social justice and encouraging pupils to consider the needs of others;
- nurture reflection, meditation and prayer;
- provide pupils with opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of their lives through music, images and words;
- provide a sense of occasion that separates the worship from the rest of the school day;
- foster an appreciation of the natural created world and our shared responsibilities for maintaining it;
- develop clear partnerships between worship in the school and the wider community.



## **Inclusive**

Christianity is an inclusive faith that reflects the attitude of Christ in the Gospels. The school thus welcomes pupils and staff of all faiths, religious or not. Through their Christian character our acts of Collective Worship will:

- recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, life styles and faiths which exist in our school and local community;
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for every pupil to attend ;
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils;
- foster the active participation of pupils and other members of the school and local community in preparation, participation and leadership.

## **Educational**

Our acts of Collective Worship will aim to provide wider opportunities to:

- reflect the aims of the school, and foster wide ownership of our vision and values;
- assist pupils to have increased awareness, and to reflect upon, fundamental issues;
- enhance, complement and extend curricular work;
- develop pupils understanding of the Christian faith and Anglican practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical content;
- identify opportunities for Christian celebration;
- include scope to celebrate the academic, social, personal and wider achievements of pupils.

## **Rights of withdrawal**

The right of withdrawal was established in the Education Act 1944, re-enacted in the Education Reform Act 1988.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Parents are asked to discuss the matter with the Headteacher in the first instance.

If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. The school remains responsible for the supervision of any pupil withdrawn from collective worship, unless the pupil is lawfully taking part in collective worship elsewhere.

## **The planning of collective worship**

Each term a plan for collective worship is produced by the Headteacher and the RE co-ordinator, with help, as appropriate, from foundation governors and the Parish ministry team. It states the theme, and indicates how the collective worship will be delivered on a day-by-day basis.



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### **The structure of collective worship**

Collective worship takes place every day and lasts for about 20 minutes.

- On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday it is led by a member of staff.
- On Wednesday it is usually led by a member of the ministry team, according to a rota produced by the parish.
- On Friday there is a celebration assembly, at which the achievements of individuals and groups within the school are recognised.

### **Special services**

There is also a regular pattern of special services at St Mary's Church. These include Harvest celebration, the Nativity Play, Holy week worship, the leavers' service. These are usually led by a member of the ministry team.



## Appendix 1 – Guidelines on Implementation

### Overview

Our assemblies are of a clearly Christian character, recognising the diversity of the school community, and provide occasions when pupils meet together in larger, more formal settings where a positive tone and focus for the day can be established. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on relevant Christian, moral and spiritual issues, drawn from a variety of sources, thereby enriching their experience of life.

Staff have a key role in the delivery of Assemblies and Collective Worship in the school. The Head Teacher and RE Coordinator have a key role in providing a lead in this area, ensuring that Acts of Collective Worship in the school are of high quality, well-coordinated and delivered effectively, in line with these overall policy guidelines. Guidance will be sought from the Rector as well.

Assemblies are also an essential means of recognising and celebrating school values and achievements in their broadest sense. Within Celebration Assemblies pupils are recognised for their personal achievement, both school based and in the community and groups of pupils are also commended for their corporate achievements. In Celebration Assemblies Pupils are awarded certificates for their achievements.

Pupils are encouraged to play an active role in preparing, presenting and responding to assemblies, thereby giving them a platform for positively contributing to the ethos of the school and for providing role models for other pupils. The involvement of pupils in assemblies, irrespective of race, gender, age or ability, is an effective vehicle for developing their self-confidence and for encouraging co-operation, respect and tolerance amongst all pupils.

#### 1. Collective worship will:

- have a clear message;
- be acceptable to the whole community, staff and students;
- include a variety of elements at different times;
- involve the pupils;
- have a dedicated focus which signifies what is being reflected upon.

#### 2. In achieving a meaningful act of worship it is important to distinguish between worship and ritual. Rituals are a means of enabling worship and include:

- stories and readings;
- songs, hymns and music;
- drama;
- prayer, meditations;
- creative silence;
- sacred/secular readings;
- artifacts and natural materials;
- pupils' contributions.

The school is aware of the timing of religious festivals and any specific requirements relating to them.



3. It can be helpful to consider three aspects:

- Experiences that have the character of pre-worship e.g. joy;
- The essence of worship – attending to the divine;
- Consequences of worship – e.g. moral and ethical values renewed and directed e.g. courage.

As part of our collective worship pupils will have the opportunity to be quiet and reflect on what has been shared. Pupils will sometimes lead the prayer session.

4. It is not appropriate to:

- make pupils repeat a prayer if they do not wish;
- join their hands if they do not wish;
- say 'Amen' if they do not wish.

5. We expect pupils to:

- be respectful;
- act in an appropriate manner;
- have the daily opportunity for a sense of togetherness which engenders a sense of belonging;
- have an understanding that worship is not done for pupils but is an experience for all who attend.

6. We expect staff to:

- lead where applicable in the agreed manner;
- respond to collective worship in an appropriate manner.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.