



**Collective
Worship Policy**
(FEDERATED VA SCHOOLS)

**PRIMARY
ADVANTAGE**

SCHOOLS ACHIEVING
MORE TOGETHER

Primary Advantage



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Revisions

Date	Summary of changes
Policy written	June 2011
Revised	April 2015
Revised	April 2019
Revised	April 2023 Revisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusion of elements from the Collective Worship in Church of England Primary Schools guidance• Inclusion of the role of the clergy in planning and delivering collective worship• Amendment to the evaluation schedule to simplify and remove the OfSTED gradings

1. Introduction

Primary Advantage Federation is a group of 8 primary schools, 4 of which are Church of England schools. This policy applies to St John & St James, St John the Baptist, Holy Trinity and St Matthias schools.

The policy has been reviewed and takes account of the [Collective Worship in Church of England Primary Schools](#) guidance published in May '21.

2. The aims of collective worship

This policy aims to ensure that everyone who is associated with our school communities recognise the place of worship within our schools and the ways in which we use and promote worship. The Church of England guidance identifies that Collective Worship should be 'Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring'.

Inclusive: Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. In the Church school pupils, their families and other adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Many pupils and staff in our schools will come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background.

Moreover, many pupils will naturally be at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. Pupils should be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Collective worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. Although part of a national legislative framework, collective worship in the Church school grows out of the local context and out of pupils' experience, including their cultural backgrounds.

Invitational: Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship should provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. The metaphor of 'warm fires and open doors captures this idea. The warmth of the fire derives from the clarity and authenticity of the Christian message at its heart. There is no value to an encounter with a watered down, lowest common denominator version of faith. Importantly the door is open, all are welcome to come in and sit as near or as far away from the fire as they feel comfortable. Pupils and adults should always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and should be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer should always be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Music and liturgies used in worship should reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship, it should connect with the theme and explore the sacred to educate and engage. Music used should reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community. Care should be taken with the music and liturgy: the traditional and modern riches of Christian hymnody and music will be drawn upon, but schools should think about what is most appropriate, at a given time, for the spiritual life of their particular community.

Inspiring: Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in a Church school to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community behaviour and actions. As a result

of inspirational collective worship, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions. There will always be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our schools and so the Church of England recognises the right of withdrawal from collective worship for those parents or pupils who wish to exercise this option. This, and how to exercise this choice, [is] explained fully in this policy.

It is our aim that worship should:

- Contribute to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of each child.
- Support the social and emotional development of our pupils.
- Give expression to, and reaffirm and practise the vision and values of the school community (appendix 1).
- Allow quiet reflection and thoughtful response to the fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings.
- Celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the schools, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals.
- Foster and enable a concern for the needs of others; a recognition of the vulnerability of self and of others.
- Give pupils experience of broadly Christian worship within an Anglican framework, to help our pupils to begin to understand the nature and purpose of worship.
- Give pupils the opportunity to reflect upon, explore and be challenged by their own beliefs and those of others
- To foster a caring attitude towards others, the environment and the wider world.
- Enable pupils to develop feelings of awe, wonder, reverence and respect.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world and to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible
- Offer an invitation to pray or reflect

3. The legal status of collective worship

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires that 'all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each day take part in an act of Collective Worship.' We seek to do our best to keep the spirit of this legislation seeking to provide as many high quality acts of worship as is practically possible.

All acts of worship are in accordance with the guidance issued in the DfEE Circular 1/94 which states that 'Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.

4. The provision of collective worship

In providing acts of Collective Worship, the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the children should be taken into account.

We recognise that there is a difference between acts of Collective Worship and the assembly of pupils. On some occasions, assembly may precede or follow an act of Collective Worship. When this happens the transition from assembly to worship will be marked in a suitable way. In this policy we refer to assembly in the context that it always includes an act of collective worship.

Schools should make a distinction between the act of Collective Worship and the assembly. Pupils need to be clear about when the act of Collective Worship begins and ends. Some helpful strategies include:

- use of a symbol to introduce and conclude the act of Collective Worship, eg candle, special object, table, etc
- a period of silence prior to and/or following the act of Collective Worship
- a short piece of music to separate the act of Collective Worship from other school business.

We acknowledge that Christians worship in a variety of ways and we recognise this diversity of practice. The Church of England guidance also acknowledges the changing and evolving nature of worship. It is therefore important that a programme of collective worship is planned for the year and the clergy engage in the planning process.

The programme will reflect the life and work of the school and local community, making appropriate links with the PSHCE scheme of work. The programme will contain themes which during the school year are likely to centre around:

- Shared Christian values
- Religious festivals and special days
- Annual events and anniversaries
- Aspects from the school curriculum
- Fundamental British Values (Appendix 2)
- Vision and values of each particular school

Those who are leading worship are encouraged to relate their worship to these themes. The themes chosen are broad enough to allow all those leading worship to approach the theme from their own perspective. This will mean that by the end of the week that the pupils will have had the opportunity to reflect on the theme from a variety of viewpoints. Alternatively, classroom teachers may develop their worship from themes and events that occur on the curriculum during the week.

This pattern is flexible and on occasion it is recognised that members of staff may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.

We seek to encourage pupils to voice their views on Collective Worship and to be part of the evaluation process.

Spiritual and Moral Development

Spiritual and moral development is a life-long process, and in the life of children it is shared between parents/carers, the school and the wider community. We acknowledge the wide variety of beliefs that make up our communities, however our policy reflects the Christian focus of our schools.

We aim to foster the values and morals based on Christian teaching, which are shared by the major world faiths. We also aim to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Prayer

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the following in their own prayers:

- praise,
- saying sorry for the things done wrong by us and others,
- asking for things for ourselves and others,
- giving thanks,
- listening to God, and
- meditating on the wonders of God and creation.

5. Guidelines for acts of collective worship

1. Collective Worship is a special time of the day and should be distinguishable from other school activities.
2. Children should be given opportunities to understand the aims and purposes of Collective Worship laid out in this policy.
3. Collective Worship should use a common form of words to help children understand the parts of the assembly and collective worship and the processes which take place.
4. Pupils should enter and leave assemblies in a quiet and orderly fashion, preferably in silence.
5. Music should be played as children enter and leave the assembly.
5. Assemblies will normally include a song
6. Prayer should be 'invitational' as described in the Church of England guidance. No child or adult should ever be made to pray or say or sing words that they do not believe.
7. There should also be an opportunity during the Collective Worship for the children to be still and reflect in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.
8. The setting should reflect the value the school places on collective worship. It is often helpful if something is set up to act as a visual focus for those present.
9. Children will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of ways, including:
 - i. Celebrating a range of educational achievements
 - ii. Performing drama, role-plays, singing, reading, listening and performing
 - iii. Playing Music
 - iv. Quietly contemplating, reflecting or praying.
10. Adults will be encouraged to participate
11. The leader of the assembly should be present at the front of the assembly when children start to arrive. Visiting speakers should be introduced by a member of staff and thanked at the end of assembly.
12. A variety of approaches will be used in assemblies:
 - i. Whole school assemblies led by a member of staff or clergy attended by all children and teaching staff, except those who have exercised their right to withdraw or who have made prior arrangements with the Head of School.
 - ii. Class assemblies led by classes on rotation, led by the class teacher
 - iii. Key Stage or class based assemblies
 - iv. Pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes conduct an act of collective worship in their classes each day. Reception pupils join whole school and phase assemblies when appropriate.
 - v. Some assemblies will contain a higher proportion of collective worship than others.

6. Rights of withdrawal

We respect the right of parents/carers to withdraw their children for Collective Worship.

Withdrawal will only be made following a discussion with the Heads of School and that this is then followed by written confirmation of withdrawal. The Heads of School will keep a record of pupils who are withdrawn from Collective Worship.

The schools have a system of suitable supervision for pupils withdrawn from acts of Collective Worship; however no additional work is set or followed during this time.

All members of staff have the right of withdrawal from the act of Collective Worship. However Headteachers will maintain statutory accountability for acts of Collective Worship.

This right of withdrawal does not extend to school assemblies.

7. Planning, recording and evaluation

The content and methodology of Collective Worship will be varied and there should be evidence of this in planning. The clergy should be part of the planning process and will often be part of the delivery of collective worship.

The provision of collective worship will be monitored by a link Governor. The School Council will provide feedback to the Headteacher on the provision of Collective Worship.

8. Resources

Appropriate resources such as books, artefacts, posters, candles, Bibles and crosses are available in the schools. In addition, the VA CofE schools have forged close links with their respective churches which provides a greater resource base to the schools.

APPENDIX 1: National Society suggested Christian values

<p>Creativity</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We teach the children to take care of our precious world • We encourage the children to think and act creatively • We use creative approaches to how we teach • We value opportunities in the curriculum to teach the creative arts
<p>Awe and Wonder</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage the children to appreciate how awesome and wonderful the world that we have been given is • We teach the children to wonder about things and to be open to being amazed • Our daily assemblies give space for children to reflect on the awesome and wonderfulness of love.
<p>Thankfulness</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We teach the children to say thank you • We encourage the children to appreciate the good things they have in their lives with gratitude • We are thankful in our worship for the good things we are given
<p>Friendship</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage children to make deep and satisfying friendships • We help children who are having problems with their friendships
<p>Generosity and Unselfishness</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage children to value the specialness not only of themselves, but of other people too • We encourage them to honour other people and respect their worth • We encourage children to show others how valuable they are by acting in generous and unselfish ways towards them
<p>Endurance</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage the children to keep going even when things are tough • We ensure that the work we give children is challenging enough that all children have opportunities to develop persistence –we want all children to experience success.....but also to appreciate that sometimes success involves struggle • We encourage children to take risks and help them to cope with success and disappointment. • We tell the children that God’s love for them endures for ever...whatever they do.

<p>Service</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage children to serve one another through acts of kindness • We also provide structured opportunities for children to serve their school through helping younger children, or through working in the library or school garden, for example • We also encourage children to serve our local community
<p>Compassion</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage the children to show concern towards people who suffer – whether that means comforting someone who is upset in the playground or giving money to charity to help people in need in other parts of the world
<p>Trust</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage children to be trustworthy people who can be relied on and who tell the truth • We make sure that all of the adults in school behave in ways that enable children to trust them • We make sure that parents can trust that their children are safe, happy, and enjoying and successful in their learning • We encourage children to trust in God and his goodness
<p>Peace</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage children to be peacemakers • We help children learn how to get over arguments quickly and fairly • We make sure we give our children times when they can be peaceful and calm as well as times that are more noisy and busy • We encourage children to share peaceful times with God through prayer
<p>Togetherness</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We stress our common humanity; that every one of us is created, loved and valued. • We teach children to value and respect differences • We encourage cooperation and teamwork through getting children to work on tasks in groups for some of their work
<p>Forgiveness</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage children to be quick to apologise if they have done something wrong • We encourage children to forgive people when they have been hurt and not to hold grudges • We teach children that God always forgives us and that nothing that we do is so bad that God won't love us anymore • In assembly, we give children time to say sorry to God in their prayers if they are feeling guilty about something
<p>Hope</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage children to be hopeful, to think positively • We work hard to bring hope to children whose lives are difficult at the moment. Our learning mentor and social worker are available to children and their families when things are tough • We are hopeful about the possibility of all children achieving and developing. • We never write anyone off. • We tell children about the hope we have in Jesus

Justice

- All children and staff in school have the same opportunities to do well
- We teach children the importance of fairness
- We expect children to be fair to one another
- We teach them about the evils of injustice; about racism and discrimination and how they have been overcome
- We inspire children with the stories of people like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King who worked for justice
- We encourage the children to try and make the world a fairer place for everybody through supporting things like fair trade and charities.

APPENDIX 2: British values

Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We listen to all views • We debate arguments for and against • We get involved • We express our view peacefully • We vote and respect the result of the majority
Rule and Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We make sure rules and expectations are clear • We know the difference between rights and wrong • We know rules protect us • We respect the rule
Individual Liberty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are responsible for our own behaviour • We challenge stereotypes and bias • We are an anti-bullying federation • We promote self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence • We model freedom of speech in a peaceful manner
Respect & Tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We promote respect • We respect the rights of others' • We discuss differences of faith, ethnicity, gender and families

APPENDIX 3: Collective worship review template	Evaluation	
	RAG	comment
The leader of the assembly should be present at the front of the assembly when children start to arrive. Expectations of all pupils are consistently high		
Pupils enter and leave assemblies in a quiet and orderly fashion, preferably in silence. Music is played as children enter and leave the assembly. There is an appropriate setting for the assembly		
Assembly is well prepared and a special time of the day, distinguishable from other activities		
Assembly has a clear message that is shared with the children. There is an opportunity during the assembly for the children to be still and reflect on that message in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.		
Assembly uses a common form of words to help children understand the parts of the assembly and collective worship and the processes which take place.		
Assembly uses a variety of learning styles to engage all pupils, eg, uses visual props, whiteboard displays images		
Subject relates to the school, RE, assembly focus or local community		
<p>Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the some of the following in their own prayers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise, saying sorry for the things done wrong by us and others, asking for things for ourselves and others, giving thanks, listening to God, and meditating on the wonders of God and creation. <p>Prayer is preceded by a reminder such as: 'We invite you now to pray with us or to do so in your own way. If you do not want to do this, please be still and quiet so as not to distract those who wish to pray.'</p>		
All children are engaged		
There are thoughtful interactions between children and adults		
Children understand the aims and purposes of assembly (see below)		
There is evidence that collective worship is meeting the aims laid out in the school policy		

Policy written:	June 2011
Amended/Updated:	April 2023
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The Central Governing Board have reviewed this policy with careful consideration of our approach to equalities as outlined in the Equalities Policy, January 2020.

We would like to acknowledge the work of other colleagues in drafting this policy. We have drawn on a range of sources including policies from other schools, good practice guides, published schemes and LA and Statutory guidelines where appropriate.

