

Collective Worship Policy (CW)

“Love your neighbour as yourself.” Mark 12:31



In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do. Inspiring confident learners who thrive in a changing world which is rooted in the Christian principle of love your neighbour as yourself Mark 12:31.

‘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

In Swinford School 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 Swinford School 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*¹) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.²

¹ 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.

² “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

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Collective worship policy at Swinford draws on guidance from the Church of England³. 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, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. 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. In other words the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, “that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, is not relevant. Worship in Swinford school which is part of the Embrace Academy should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The governing committee 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 Swinford 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

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



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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

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 our school gives children and school staff the opportunity to:



- Engage in an act of community
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges



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• Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar

Our Collective Worship takes many forms. Sometimes they are quiet and reflective; at other times they are loud and interactive. Many different activities help us to give thanks to God and to celebrate being part of our community.

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

How Collective worship is organised

Collective worship is planned on a term or half termly basis by the headteacher.

Leadership

Different teachers lead CW, supported by our pupils in the Flying Fish group. Each child in the school is invited to be part of the Flying Fish group for about two weeks in any school year. We have a very involved and active Flying Fish Team. The Flying Fish have the important role of preparing and setting up for worship each day, including dressing and preparing the altar table which is the focal point for worship. They organise the candle, Bible and cross and prepare the hall ready to receive all the staff and children to participate in the worship. As part of the group, they are responsible for welcoming, praying and sending pupils in the collective worship.

The headteacher supports and provides guidance for any visitors and staff leading collective worship.

Planning

Collective Worship is planned on a half termly basis around a theme. Each year the CW covers the school vision and values and what that means in practical terms, character muscles, key Christian festivals and national events. We meet together daily as a whole school for collective worship apart from on Wednesdays when we meet in class/key stage groups.

During Collective Worship, whether in the hall, classroom or outside, we will apply the following 'central attributes' of worship:

Gathering - Making special and significant this part of the day through appropriate symbol and ceremony

Engaging- Using the best available techniques to stimulate interest in the content often these will use Bible stories.

Responding-Ensuring there is time and opportunity for individual, group reflection and thought, so those attending can respond in a variety of ways and in addition



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Sending- Summarising the worship in a meaningful short message used to create an opportunity for those attending to implement the ideas covered and to conclude the worship

Once a week we use Picture News which helps to broaden the children's awareness of the world beyond their locality.

There is a range and variety of materials used, including: websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g. a picture or candle.

The centrality of prayer

During the Collective Worship there will be a time for response and reflection, to ponder on a question, statement or thought. This may also be reflected in a prayer, offered spontaneously by a pupil or adult, read out or recited. We hope that this will enable:

- Children to understand the nature and purpose of prayer.
- Children to understand the part prayer may play in their lives and the life of the school community.
- Understand that prayer contributes to the spiritual development of individuals and the whole school community.

There will also be appropriate opportunities for prayer and other worship activities, including reflection, outside of Collective Worship.

We are incredibly fortunate to have Collective Worship led by a member of our ministry team: Sharon March. She also leads us in many celebrations and events throughout the year, such as Harvest Festival, Remembrance Day, Christmas and Easter.

Our Fridays, Collective Worship is a special time to celebrate progress in learning as well as celebrate children who have demonstrated our core values that week.

Parental involvement

Parents are actively encouraged to participate in Collective Acts of Worship, church services and celebration worships. They are invited to several collective worship sessions each half term.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Monitoring and evaluation

We encourage the Flying Fish group to monitor and evaluate the collective worship at the end of their 2-week period. The SLT monitors and evaluates the collective worship, supported by the foundation governors and local clergy.

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.



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Version	Date	Approved by
Version 1	2024	Staff, Governors
Version 2	December 2025	Staff, Governors