



Collective Worship Policy

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'In the light of Christ we will shine together'

Jesus said: I am the light of the world. John 8.12

Live as children of light – for the fruit of light is all that is good and true and right. Ephesians 5.8-9

Our ambition is to serve our community by providing an excellent education, which is inclusive and distinctive within the context of Christian belief and practice, upholding our values in the daily life of the Academy and in our relationships with others.

1. OUR ACADEMY VISION FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

“ First of all, my child, worship and adore God, think of Him magnificently” - William Law

As a Church of England Academy, we hold to a vision that worship is primarily an opportunity to encounter and meet with God. During this time, who God is can be experienced, affirmed and celebrated. This time is an opportunity for all to learn, worship and grow in their understanding of God and themselves. It is not simply a statutory duty. In our Academy, we want to see Collective Worship enable children and staff to gather together to respond to the presence, power and peace of God through prayer, reflection, singing, celebrating and sharing feelings. Worship should enable participants to develop an understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We recognise that not all staff or children have a Christian faith. We welcome everyone to Collective Worship and offer it as a shared space for reflection and spiritual growth where our communities grow together in love and respect.

2. OUR MISSION

St Mary's is a Church of England Christian school where 'we promise to shine together'.

Worship is an important part of the school day as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a school community to praise and worship God. It is attended by pupils, staff and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in.

3. OUR VALUES

- 3.1. Our values were chosen by our school family and we aim to embody them in all we do. They guide us, ground us and bind us together.
- 3.2. Our Christian Values are:
 - **Love**-Being recognised as a place of LOVE, with caring nurturing relationships, respecting others and allowing each individual to develop emotionally, socially and spiritually.
 - **Joy**-Developing JOY in the lives of our pupils, by nurturing well-rounded, happy children, set in an environment where the whole child matters and a playful delight in learning is encouraged.
 - **Wisdom**-Providing a broad and diverse child-centred curriculum that encourages a reflective WISDOM and curiosity, as well as the courage to face new challenges, including an awareness of our natural world and the impact we have on it.



- Encouraging children to think 'BIG' and progress to the next chapter of their lives with the skills, knowledge and experiences to achieve, whilst having a concern for those who are vulnerable in our community, society and globally.
- **Hope**-Realising our responsibility as stewards of creation, living with HOPE and integrity and working together with families as partners to raise standards of achievement and wellbeing.
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4. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND THE LAW

4.1. All Academies must take note of the Academy Standards and Framework Act 1998 (section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

1. All registered children (apart from those whose parents exercise right to withdrawal) must on each Academy day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
2. The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the Academy and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
3. All acts of Collective Worship in Church Academies must be Christian in character. Children can be grouped in various ways for worship such as whole Academy, year groups, tutor groups, classes, or other combinations.
4. Acts of worship must be appropriate for the children in that they should take account of the children's age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
5. The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the Academy premises but all Academies may hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.
6. Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a Church of England Academy rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the Principal. Foundation Governors have a special role in ensuring the Collective Worship is linked to the Trust Deeds.
7. The Principal has a responsibility to ensure all arrangements for CW are secured.

5. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP SHOULD BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCHOOLS TRUST DEED

- 5.1. All acts of worship are in accordance with the school's Trust Deed and reflect the Anglican status of the school. In addition to the daily act of worship, special celebrations take place in Church.
- 5.2. The Academy provides acts of Collective Worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England.
- 5.3. We use the following indicators:

BIBLICAL - the Bible is used to encounter the teachings of Jesus and as a source for inspiration and learning. Children are made familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture.



LITURGICAL - aspects of Anglican liturgy, such as greetings, are used to create a framework for worship; children are also introduced to a variety of well-known prayers - many of which express central beliefs of Christian throughout the ages.

EUCCHARISTIC - we introduce children to the central act of Anglican worship, either in Belief and Values, or through our own Academy celebration with the local priest.

SEASONAL - we observe the cycle of the Anglican year, including celebrations of the major Christian festivals.

SYMBOLIC - we use Christian symbols as a focus for reflection.

ECUMENICAL - we work with other local Christian denominations.

DIVERSE - we provide opportunities to discover the variety of worship in Anglican churches and wider faith communities, through visits to a range of places of worship in our Beliefs and Values curriculum, as well as through work with our link diocese of Kagera. In our worship in school, we value both mediation and silence, dance, prayer, reflection, story, quiet songs and louder expressions of praise.

- 5.4. We seek to provide a worship space which is attractive and well prepared with thought given to colour, space, seating, ambience and music.
- 5.5. We foster links with the local parish Church, involving clergy in leading / joining us for collective worship and providing coherence with worship in church.
- 5.6. We aim for year groups to visit the parish church regularly as part of the Christian calendar and to offer the opportunity for all children to experience worship in the wider church.
- 5.7. We aim for our Collective Worship to be creative and to inspire children into action. The Academy recognises and encourages all staff and children to understand that there is a difference between Acts of Collective Worship. When this happens the transition from Assembly to worship will be marked in some suitable way e.g. the lighting of a candle or reflecting on an image on display or a moment of silence and reflection.

6. CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS AND FAITHS

- 6.1. The Anglican Communion sees itself as part of a global church and promotes ecumenism. In our Academy, we work to promote links with other local churches and Christian organisations and welcome their clergy and leaders as contributors to acts of collective worship.
- 6.2. We recognise that some of our children and families belong to Anglican churches, some worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none.
- 6.3. We endeavour to provide a setting in which no-one's integrity is compromised, where everyone finds something positive for themselves, and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.

7. AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP



7.1. Inclusive

Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. Our children, families and other adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of and fully accessible to all.

Collective worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole Academy community, including children. It is recognised that children will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires children's involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship.

Although part of a national framework, collective worship in our Academy grows out of the local context and out of children's experience, including their cultural backgrounds.

7.2. Invitational

Parents, children 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 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.

Children 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.

7.3. Inspiring

Children and adults can expect the worship they encounter in our Church Academy to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable children and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do.

It should motivate children and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's 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.

8. IMPACT OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

8.1. For our Academy

Collective Worship contributes significantly to the ethos of St Mary's. It is a time when the Academy community can:

- Share our values



- Strengthen our community spirit
- Explore together our understanding of the world in which we live
- Celebrate achievement and special times
- Offer opportunities to share worship with parents, governors and members of the local community
- Find space to consent, and dissent
- Participate and to stand back

8.2. For our children

Collective Worship contributes to the development of the whole child by providing opportunities to:

- Worship God
- Contemplate spiritual and moral issues
- Explore their own beliefs
- Develop their own spirituality
- Reinforce positive attitudes
- Participate and respond
- Reflect on what it means to be human
- Consider the wonders of the world

8.3. For our curriculum

Though Collective Worship is distinct from curriculum time, it features and supports aspects of the curriculum, including Beliefs & Values. The provision of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is in line with the Academy ethos, which informs our practice. Therefore, Collective Worship will address a wide variety of themes and topics aligned with our values, using diverse stimuli and resources to provide children with an opportunity to respond at their own level.

9. CHRISTIAN ETHOS IN OUR ACADEMY

9.1. It should be clear in every classroom that we are a Church of England Academy. How this looks is up to each individual teacher. However, each class should have:

- A cross on clear display
- A class candle
- A class Bible
- An area or resources for reflection
- A prayer should be said before lunch and at the end of the Academy day

10. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- 10.1. The Trustee Directors hold overall responsibility for ensuring that the legal requirements for worship are met.
- 10.2. The Principal takes on the responsibility for implementing and monitoring provision for Collective Worship. Local Clergy and worship leaders are also invited to be involved in the planning and



preparation of Academy worship as this enables continuity between the worship in the Academy and in the parish or parishes.

- 10.3. It is however made clear to all staff and clergy who lead collective worship that they should do so in a way that ensures that all present can take part with integrity.

11. THE TIMING OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- 11.1. Collective Worship is given a special period in the Academy day; a time when various groups within the Academy can meet together for prayer and reflection.
- Collective Worship normally takes place at the start of the Academy day, but occasionally takes place at different times or in different groupings.
 - Worship takes place in a variety of settings, for example: in the Academy hall, in the Hub or Studio, in a class or year groups area, outside, in the local church or church hall.
 - The 1998 Education Act allows Academies, on special occasions, to hold their daily Act of Worship elsewhere than in the Academy.
- 11.2. The Collective Worship plan is reviewed each year; the programme will include opportunities for Reflection, Signing, Bible Study, Worship, Celebration, 'Open the Book', Visiting worship leaders including the Vicar, youth workers and guest speakers.

12. DELIVERING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- 12.1. Collective worship is treated like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing and evaluation. The content and methodology of Collective Worship is planned to be inclusive, invitational and inspiring, through variety in style and presentation. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.
- 12.2. The act of worship includes four distinct stages of worship - elements as outlined in the Diocesan publication entitled "Flippin' Praise"
- Gathering - arrival, greeting
 - Engaging - the message, bible verse
 - Responding - prayer, song, reflection
 - Sending - conclusion
- 12.3. A candle is lit before the Gathering to focus the children and signal that Collective worship is taking place. This is extinguished after the Sending.
- 12.4. Each half-term there is a theme for Collective worship based on one of our six Core Values. Those leading worship are encouraged to relate their worship to approach the theme from their own perspective. This will mean that by the end of the week the children will have had the opportunity to reflect on the theme from a variety of viewpoints.
- 12.5. Alternatively, class teachers may develop their worship from themes and events that occur in the curriculum during the week. Once a week, worship takes place in the classroom and the Academy



makes use of the Diaries of Reflection and other resources available from the diocesan recommended websites.

- 12.6. This pattern is flexible and recognises that on occasions teachers may feel they need to respond to local or national events.
- 12.7. We seek to encourage children to voice their views on collective worship and to be a part of the evaluation process. The Faith Council seeks the views of their classmates and reports these findings to the leadership team.

13. PLANNING FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

13.1. When planning for Collective Worship, staff will ensure it:

- Inspires interest and engagement
- Is clearly planned and relates to our core Christian values and Christian festivals
- Is appropriate for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of the children
- Offers opportunities to worship and pray to God
- Is inclusive and respects each individual's integrity
- Offers opportunities for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Reflects some of the practices and traditions of the local church
- Provides an opportunity for children to reflect on human existence
- Helps children explore and develop their own spirituality
- Enables children to explore and evaluate their own beliefs
- Celebrates special occasions in the Churches year and the life of the community
- Shows appreciation for the God given gifts and talents of the Academy community
- Celebrates the range of children's unique gifts, character and qualities
- Is regularly monitored and evaluated
- Underpins the Christian values and ethos of the Academy
- Celebrates the values and worth of the Academy community

13.2. The content and process must be sufficiently stimulating to evoke a response in the individual. This may not be visual, but opportunity must be provided to express this response through reflection and prayer.

13.3. Prayer

Collective worship should offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all children and adults, to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.

Christians believe that prayer is a communication process that allows them to talk directly to God, whilst spending time listening to what God has to say to them. It is a two-way process of talking to their best friend.

A collection of prayer books and a folder of prayers and readings for collective worship will be available in the hall.



14. EVALUATION OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- 14.1. Following the planning of worships, the evaluation and recording need to be an integral part of the process. Worship can be evaluated by those leading the worship, other staff, the children for whom the worship is intended or members of the governing body. Feedback from any of these groups helps to improve the quality of worship offered to the children. Visitors and Parents are also encouraged to evaluate acts of collective worship by completing a comment card as found in the Welcome Lobby. These are followed up by the Faith Council and Worship Coordinator.

Monitoring of Collective Worship

- 14.2. A nominated Governor from the Ethos and Mission Steering group or one of the Academies Foundation Governors, has a role monitoring Collective Worship at the Academy.
- 14.3. The monitoring of the planning and provision of worship should be carried out on a regular basis. The foundation governors have a key role in this process, to ensure that the legal requirements are met and that the worship offered to the children is of the highest quality. It is recommended that the Collective Worship section of the National Society self-evaluation toolkit to be used as a basis for this process.
- 14.4. Children are actively encouraged to plan and lead acts of worship. The Academy makes full use of a wide range of resources to enable children to be inspired and supported. Various symbols and artefacts are used as a focus for the act of worship. Lighting the Candle, music, banners, flowers and books including the Bible enable children, staff and governors to engage in this process. In this way children can take responsibility for surveying children.
- 14.5. The Community, Ethos and Mission Committee engage in a range of activities to review and develop the worship policy, they also attend worship events and discuss outcomes with a cross-section of children.
- 14.6. The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich provides advice, support and training to raise the profile and effectiveness of collective worship.

15. RIGHTS OF WITHDRAWAL

- 15.1. At St Mary's C of E Academy, we seek to be an inclusive community. However, we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children for Collective Worship. This Academy expects that withdrawal will only be made following parental discussion with the Principal followed by written confirmation of withdrawal.
- 15.2. The Academy has a system of suitable supervision for students withdrawn from Acts of Collective Worship. However, no additional work is set or followed in this time.
- 15.3. All teachers in St Mary's, including the Principal, are expected to participate in the Act of Collective Worship but have the right of withdrawal from the Act of Collective Worship. The Principal maintains statutory accountability for Acts of Collective Worship at St Mary's.



16. RESOURCES

- 16.1. Resources for worship are displayed around the Academy and stored in the Hub and Worship Cupboard. The Academy is able to apply to the Farmington Fellowship and other charities for extra funding for Training and Collective worship resources. Time is allocated to enable staff to attend training and Staff meetings are used to inform and develop knowledge and understanding of staff as part of our CPD policy.

Inclusion

In line with the Equalities Act 2010, we are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability, religion, physical or sensory disability or any other protected characteristic. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs as appropriate, for example, taking account of different learning styles and using multi-sensory approaches.

17. MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

- 17.1. The Principal will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. It will be reviewed annually by the Community, Ethos and Mission Committee; or before at any time, if there is new relevant legislation or guidance.