

Sundridge & Brasted CEP School

Collective Worship Policy



Approved by: Governing Body

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Collective Worship Policy

At Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School, we believe that each of us is made in the image of God. God loves every one of us. We value every member of our community and support them to shine! “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.”(Matthew 5 verse 14, New International Version)

We welcome everyone to our school community, whether of Christian faith, other faith or of no faith at all. We recognise that each person has unique gifts and seek to enable them to fulfil their God-given potential. “See how very much our father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!” (1 John 3 v1, New Living Translation)

Vision tagline: “You are the light of the whole world”

How is this policy a reflection of our distinctive Christian vision?

Our vision recognises the inherent worth of each individual in our school community, valuing each person’s uniqueness. Therefore, when planning and structuring worship, we carefully consider how we can make worship inclusive and accessible for all. This means we offer worship in different styles, to allow our community to engage in different ways – whether through whole school worship, vicar-led worship, key stage worship, in class worship, interactive worship sessions or sung worship. Each act of worship is book ended with the same responses, includes times of prayer and reflection and is based on Biblical truth, narrative and values, but how these and the response are presented and engaged with, will vary.

Our weekly schedule is as follows:

Day	Worship	Reasoning
Monday	Vicar-led at church or Whole school led by C/W lead at school (NB YR&1 meet in school for an adapted worship pitched more at their level)	For the school community to experience vicar-led worship in the church setting. In school – due to the vicar working part time, she can only commit to 2 out of 4 weeks. School families are invited, so they can be a part of whole school worship (Allows better engagement and understanding)
Tuesday	Whole school led by Executive H/T	Provides more chance for a whole school worship and a focus specifically on our school vision and values.
Wednesday	Interactive worship led by C/W lead in Key Stage groups	Allows children to participate in less formal worship, developing their understanding that worship does not always look the same. Focuses on developing the children’s spirituality, giving them an opportunity to look at the wider world and respond to it prayerfully.
Thursday	In class worship led by class teachers, planned by C/W lead	Acts as a ‘response’ session to the theme of worship for the week, again allowing a chance to develop spirituality and experience worship in a different style. It also allows for engaging with worship at a more age/stage-specific level.

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Friday	Whole school celebration led by Executive H/T or HoS	Provides an important opportunity to celebrate how the children have 'shone' in the week, with the Christian school values being the core of the celebration.
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***NB** Sung worship is incorporated in these sessions in different ways. There may also be times where the schedule is changed to allow for learning new songs and more of a 'praise' focus.

An Introduction to collective worship in Sundridge & Brasted Primary School

As a Church of England school, collective worship is the beating heart of our school life. It brings and gives life to all we do. Collective worship is a sacred and significant time of each school day, where we gather as a school family. Collective worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of Honesty, Kindness, Respect, Responsibility, Forgiveness and Love and celebrates the central role that each pupil and adult has to play in our community.

Our acts of collective worship reflect the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and recognise and follow the Christian liturgical to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

Each adult and pupil experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship therefore will be:

- **Inclusive** – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.
- **Invitational** – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship will 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. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- **Inspiring** – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunity to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions.

Aims of collective worship

Collective Worship offers pupils, staff and the wider school community the opportunity to:

- Gather together to share sacred moments of joy, challenge, grief and love.
- Explore the school's distinctive Christian vision and values in action.
- Reflect on the nature of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts.
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Be still, pray and reflect.
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events.

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- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness.
- Explore Christian values and attitudes.
- Share each other's joys and challenges.
- Celebrate significant and special times in the Christian calendar.

In line with the requirements of the Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship:

- Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home.
- Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- Encourages local churches commit to partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship through invitational and inclusive language:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – for example Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost.
- Saying prayers
- Singing a variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection

We may also use elements which are more distinctly Anglican:

- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship
- Using Collects as a focus for worship.

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Implementation

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors (such as the His Story Troupe – a local church group) in consultation with the collective worship leader. This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using the Rochester Diocesan Collective Worship Planning, which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and this enables continuity.

We usually meet at the end of the school day, from 3:00 until 3:20, either in the school hall, up at St Mary's church or in our classrooms – however, when we meet in classrooms, it is the expectations that children gather in space that is different to their usual learning spaces. We may also meet outside. This will be as a whole school two or three times a week, key stage once a week and in class once a week. Whole school worship is led by our Executive Head, Head of School or vicar and in class worship being led by teaching staff, with support from the worship lead. When there is a whole school sung worship session, our music lead may lead these acts of worship.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship, including music, artistic responses (such as drawing or painting) silence, reflection, drama or discussion. Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- **Gather** – we welcome the community, for example with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle
- **Engage** – we share, for example a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message
- **Respond** – pupils, for example, discuss, share, reflect, pray and sing
- **Send** – we share, for example, the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle.

Expectations of pupils

In Sundridge & Brasted Primary School, there is an expectation that all pupils will be involved within worship on a regular basis. This may be opportunities planned ahead of time, such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter and End of year services and celebrations, or unplanned through questioning, asking for volunteers or simply responding to moments of spontaneity.

Pupils are invited to evaluate on the impact of acts of worship they have joined with. Their voice is integral to improving the structure, content and in shaping future plans for worship.

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Pupil worship leaders are supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship on a voluntary basis. Our 'leading lights' pupil worship team, work with the collective worship leader to develop their own understanding of worship, and to contribute to and help design, acts of worship to support the spiritual development of their peers.

Developing worship

Parents, pupils and adults in Sundridge & Brasted Primary School are entitled to be led in worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a Church School context.

Therefore, all those leading worship, including clergy, should have access to regular Diocesan led training. The leader for collective worship will:

- Ensure that all pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship, therefore meeting statutory requirements.
- Ensure that collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring.
- Attend regular training and network meetings with the Diocese.
- Produce and regularly review the collective worship policy to ensure that it remains reflective of current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with the Headteacher and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of collective worship across the school.
- Ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading, planning and joining worship.
- Joins those who are leading worship to provide supportive feedback on how worship could be developed.
- Evaluate the impact of collective worship on the whole school community by gathering pupil and adult voice.
- Signpost staff to a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and resources, to help develop their confidence in leading acts of worship.
- Ensure there is a school protocol that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited to lead collective worship.
- Meet with and encourage pupil leaders of worship to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.

Visitors leading worship

Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies (www.sundridge.kent.sch.uk/safeguarding-information) This should include discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of the collective worship leader and senior leaders to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship in school, will be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and our school's vision. They will be supported and monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation process of worship.

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Self-assessment and Inspection

Our school regularly evaluates all acts of collective worship and the impact they have on the school and our wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop.

Monitoring can and does take many different forms. It includes governor visits consisting of observations and conversations with pupils and staff, senior leaders gathering pupil/adult voice, staff meeting discussions, conversations between staff members and 'live' feedback from those in attendance of worship. Our Worship lead also meets regularly (at least termly) with our vicar, providing an opportunity to discuss, review and plan worship as necessary. The impact that this monitoring has is ensuring worship is delivered in a way that it is engaging and meaningful for all, and that we can make the necessary improvements and adjustments, so it meets the needs of our community.

We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils, which are considered on a regular basis and play a part in developing the spiritual growth of the school.

The impact of collective worship is independently inspected law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS)

Parent Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as special time in our school where we gather as a school family. Reflecting our ethos as a Church of England school, collective worship is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none to be present with integrity. We respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship, so would welcome the opportunity to discuss this decision with them. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw children from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.

Appendix

What is Collective Worship?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

".....Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship.'

(Dfe circular 1/94 para 57)

Corporate worship assumes a shared set of beliefs and values i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness.)

Collective worship, in recognising the collectively of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values.

Collective worship should be:

*"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes."
(Dfe Circular 1/94 p.22)*

Therefore, collective worship in Church of England schools must be inclusive and invitational or all, to ensure all can be present with integrity.

The legal requirements of collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Schools:

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- The Governing Body should ensure that all pupils **each day** engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church.
- Arrangements for collective worship, in foundations schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher (Dfe Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53)
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (Based on Biblical teachings)
- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of collective worship'.
- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at school, then the school must comply. (*Education Reform Act 1988. S9 (3)*) The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by their parents from collect worship.