



*Jesus is the centre of our lives
our learning and friendships,
in a safe, happy, caring community
where all are welcome.*

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

JULY 2021

REVIEW BI-ANNUALLY

Introduction to Collective Worship in our Catholic School

Collective worship in a Catholic school is concerned with the revelation of God's presence so that praise, honour and thanksgiving may be given to Him. Collective worship strengthens this Eucharistic community, which is called together to give witness to Jesus Christ. Collective worship is this community's response to God, which invites us to enter into a loving relationship with Him, made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Legal Requirements

We fulfil the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This takes place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said by either the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be considered as part of the RE lesson (for time purposes). In this Catholic school, responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the governing body after consultation with the headteacher.

Definitions

Liturgy

Liturgy literally means 'work of the people' and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is the formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action.

Prayer

One of the early fathers of the Church described prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God or requesting of good things from God." These words of St. John Damascene, now found in the catechism, illustrate why in this Catholic school we begin and end each session with a prayer.

Collective Worship

Collective worship is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into a relationship with Godself, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and witness of the Holy Spirit.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that collective worship considers the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:-

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in Church;
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of Church;
- Those from other Christian traditions, or none;
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to our Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Collective Worship

We believe that collective worship in our school community will provide a variety of opportunities to deepen our relationships with God and develop the following:-

- To contemplate the mystery of God;
- To unite our worshipping Eucharistic community;
- To develop the necessary skills of:
 - reverence
 - contemplation
 - reflection
 - interpretation
 - empathy
 - meditation

which will enable our relationships with God to be deepened.

Full participation in our faith will allow us:

- To grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding;
- To grow in understanding of our living faith tradition;
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ;
- To examine and reflect upon our own individual faith journeys;
- To develop the skills of prayer.

Implementation

All acts of worship should:

- Give glory and praise to God;
- Be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants;
- Be kept to the point (and brief wherever possible);
- Be clear in their liturgical focus and varied in their delivery;

Collective worship in our school may follow the pattern or variation of the pattern detailed below:

- Gathering - how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/ reflective music, lighted candles, statues, sign of the cross, focus and examination of conscience etc);
- Word - a reading from the Scriptures (or another suitable source), breaking the word, time to reflect on this and prayers to fit into the theme;
- Action - a ritual movement that everyone can join in with that fits with the theme (gestures such as shaking hands, holding hands, lighting a candle, prayers, responses to prayers, etc);
- Mission - the sending out from the celebration, giving the children something to hold onto from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.
- Celebration of the Eucharist

Policy Monitoring and Review

In this Catholic school, it is the overall responsibility of governors, in consultation with the headteacher, to ensure that the legal requirements are met and opportunities for quality collective worship are being delivered. Those responsible will ensure that acts of worship are in accordance with the school's trust deed and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

This policy is monitored by the R.E. co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff every two years. Governors should review reports on the prayer life of the school on a termly basis. This will form part of the headteacher's report to governors.

The following will be monitored:-

- Time set aside for collective worship;
- Whether the observed practice is consistent with agreed policy;
- Whether collective worship is resourced in terms of materials, visual aids etc;
- Staff development on collective worship and its impact;
- Prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing pupils into prayer;
- Impact on pupils and members of the school community;
- Opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access worship and prayer;
- Records of themes and teachings of the Catholic Church covered in collective worship.
- Observation and monitoring records should be kept and should form part of the self-review process.

Outcomes of monitoring will be communicated to staff and governors with recommendations for future action.

Right of Withdrawal:

Parents reserve the right to remove their child/ren from acts of collective worship.

The Role of the RE Lead:

The co-ordinator will be responsible for:-

- Formulating a written policy;
- Ensuring there is a development plan for collective worship;
- Ensuring that collective worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils;
- Ensuring that collective worship takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the Catholic teachings;
- Organising themes for worship in consultation with staff
- Assisting the governors in carrying out their legal responsibilities with regard to collective worship.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to:

- All members of the school community;
- Parish priests or members of pastoral areas as appropriate;
- New members of staff and will form part of their induction;
- New parents, to promote positive attitudes towards collective worship

Policy review date July 2023