

A St. Michael's CE (VA) Junior School Policy



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Reviewed by Staff:	Summer 2019
Ratified by Full Governors:	Summer 2019
To be reviewed:	Summer 2022

By God's love, we all flourish together.

Policy: Collective Worship

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Vision:

At St Michael's, by God's love and through our Christian values of Love, Faith, Respect and Courage, we celebrate uniqueness and nurture curiosity, enabling each child to flourish on their own rich learning journey.

At St Michael's CE (VA) Junior School, we aim to provide the best possible education for each child within the context of a caring Christian community. Our school values underpin all aspects of school life, including behaviour and relationships within our school. Our school values are:

Aims and Objectives:

As a church school, Collective Worship forms an integral part of school life. It provides children with the opportunity to reflect on their own lives and the lives of others, explore the Christian faith in greater depth and develop a well-rounded understanding of the world in which we live. This Collective Worship Policy follows guidelines given to church schools in the Diocese of Chelmsford in the 'Breathing Space' document.

Collective Worship is at the heart of St Michael's C of E (VA) Junior School. It happens on a daily basis in many different forms and contributes significantly to the ethos and values adopted by the school.

The aims and purpose of collective worship are:

- to provide an opportunity for the children to worship God;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes;
- to teach children how to worship.

The Breathing Space document compiled by the Diocese of Chelmsford suggest that acts of collective worship should encourage children to explore, encounter and experience:

Explore

- Human stories which raise questions about meaning and purpose in life
- Spiritual and moral issues
- The part played by religion in everyday life
- Ideas about God and the way people of faith relate to God
- The Bible and its teachings and other religious texts
- Christian values

Encounter

- Christianity as a contemporary, diverse and world-wide tradition
- Christianity in action
- People of faith
- Worship and prayer as part of the natural rhythm of the day
- The annual cycle of feasts and festivals of the Christian year
- The Bible as a source of inspiration

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Experience

- Gathering together and building community: sharing achievements, disappointments, joys and sorrows
- What it means to be part of a community
- A sense of awe wonder, mystery and silence
- A community where faith is taken seriously
- Worship that is enjoyable, creative and imaginative

Collective worship

At St. Michael's CE VA Junior School, we understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly. We expect everyone to take an active part in the assembly.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our assemblies on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church.

While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Liaising with our incumbent, our worship is planned on a termly basis. The vicar is given the collective worship rota and adds the Biblical themes to each week. We also add our Rights Respecting themes to each week, for the worship that is led by the children.

Organisation of collective worship

We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school. This forms part of each morning assembly, which is a whole-school assembly. The children understand that the act of worship is invitational.

Assemblies are led by the Headteacher, other members of staff, the children and local clergy and, occasionally, members of the local community. We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. The children know that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. Children are quiet and thoughtful and are encouraged to listen carefully to the teachings and participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and candles or other objects that act as a focal point for the attention of the children. This always includes our Worship Box where the children bring the school together in Worship with the Trinity represented by the Bible, the cross and a lit candle. A coloured cloth representing the relevant season of the Church year is laid over the altar. The children sing or recite The Lord's Prayer daily by heart.

Our assemblies encourage the children to ask questions, challenge ideas and reflect on their own spiritual development. Assemblies play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised. All acts of worship include a prayer and a time for quiet reflection.

We invite parents to an Achievers' assembly on a weekly basis and we encourage them to attend, as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support and celebrate the achievements of our children.

We visit St. Michael's Church four times a year for our Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Leavers' services. These are led by the children, written by our Worship Committee alongside our incumbent and always well attended by parents and members of our school community.

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We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

Right of withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

Evaluation, review and revision

This policy was written in May 2015 and updated in May 2019. It will be reviewed in three years time or before, if it is felt appropriate. It was drawn up in consultation with, and reflects the consensus of opinion of the Headteacher, members of the teaching staff and members of the governing body.

It is the role of a named school governor with responsibility for religious education and collective worship to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. The governor concerned liaises with the Headteacher before reporting to the governors on religious education and collective worship.