Diocese of Chelmsford
Vine Schools Trust

Collective Worship Policy

Church of England Primary Schools in the Diocese of Chelmsford

This is a model policy for Vine Schools that has been adapted for St. Leonard's C of E Primary School

Policy Reference:	A020
Approved by Vine Schools Trust on:	Spring 2024
Adopted by this school on:	Spring 2024
Next review:	Spring 2026

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit

JOHN 15:5

Introduction

Our Collective Worship Policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, explores our vision and the associated values we derive from them. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year.

The daily Christian act of collective worship is the heartbeat of our school, central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

At our school, collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive.

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

Legal Requirements and the right of withdrawal

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 our school should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The Vine Trust Board of trustees have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Framework 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 our school, there are 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
- 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. Parents are kindly asked to formalise this request in writing.

Guiding Principles

It is our intention to offer Collective Worship that meets the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Framework.

Collective worship in our school aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief

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- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship.
- Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.
- Share in each other's joys and challenges.
- Explore the big questions and respond to national events.
- Encourage local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for Collective Worship.

Our Collective Worship Pattern and Practice Leadership

- The Headteacher leads Worship at least once a week.
- The local church leads Worship for the whole school.
- The school uses Ising Pop for Worships.
- Phase Worships explore world views and world events.
- The school's Prayer Group leads the arrival and dismissal of Worship each day.
- On Fridays, it is Celebration Worship.

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Planning and Organisation

- Worship is planned with an overarching theme for each half term, as
  year.
- Worship starts each session with the lighting of the candles and this is
  discussed.
- Worship is linked to the school's vision and Christian values.
- Within the Dengie Hub, Leaders work together to plan and resource Worship.
- During Celebration Worship, achievements are celebrated and these rewards are linked to our Christian Values.
- Each worship ends in prayer, stillness and reflection.

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

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Visitor Leaders to Collective Worship

We welcome visitors to lead and participate in our Collective Worship. Visiting Collective Worship Leaders are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies. The welcoming member of staff/headteacher/Collective Worship Lead will discuss with the visitor, prior to the visitor leading Collective Worship, the content, expectations and practices Collective Worship. The purpose is 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.

Pupil Led Worship

Since we believe worship to the activity of the whole school community, we actively promote appropriate pupil leadership as well as full participation.

Pupils are given opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the Headteacher or Class Teacher to design and develop Collective Worship opportunities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Collective Worship practice is reviewed through discussions with pupils, staff and School Improvement Leads. These evaluations feed into the planning and delivery of future worship.

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