



# **Collective Worship Policy**

## **St. Cuthbert's School**

Policy:	Collective Worship
This Policy was approved:	September 2024
Policy updated	July 2025
This policy will be reviewed:	July 2026
Governor committee responsibility:	Headteacher

## **St. Cuthbert's Church of England School**

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do. –

### **Believe, Achieve, Inspire**

'Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

#### **Policy Statement**

In St. Cuthbert's School, worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At St. Cuthbert's, collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths<sup>1</sup>*) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

#### **Church of England Guidance**

Collective worship policy at St. Cuthbert's School draws on guidance from the Church of England<sup>2</sup>. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>

guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

### **Legal Requirements**

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 any time 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 St. Cuthbert's School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The governing body school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation 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 St. Cuthbert's 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.

*(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)*

### Guiding Principles

Collective Worship at St. Cuthbert's 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
- 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 known 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 with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. 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.

### **Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation**

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and / or on the school website.

### **How Collective worship is organised**

#### **Leadership**

- Daily worship is led by a variety of people on a rota. This includes the headteacher, deputy headteacher, Collective Worship Pupil Leadership Team, a whole class, local clergy, individual visitors or teams such as Open the Book
- Collective Worship is planned by the Collective Worship Lead

#### **Planning**

- Worship is planned inline with the liturgical calendar. This is used to reflect the cycle of the church year.
- Planning overview is prepared by the Collective Worship Lead.
- How the Christian values of the school are identified, expressed and celebrated through collective worship
- Explicit links are made between Bible stories and the Christian values and these are shared with the local community.
- A range and variety of materials are used in collective worship, including: websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g. a picture or candle
- Spiritual growth through prayer, stillness and reflection is nurtured in collective worship.

#### **Organisation**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Whole Federation	Whole School	Whole School	Whole Federation	Whole School
Led by EHT linked to CHAMPS value	Led by DHT linked to UNICEF article of the week	Celebration Assembly to include sharing of big book	STC-Visitors from local church	STC-Led by the Pupil Collective Worship Team

Monday: Executive Headteacher to lead this. Sharing of a picture book based around the value of the half term. This will be read to the whole Federation and recorded on TEAMS. The reflection questions to be completed in the VALUE BIG BOOK in class (15 mins max x 1 a week)

Tuesday: Deputy Head to lead UNICEF ARTICLE OF THE WEEK:  
(<https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/teaching-resources/guidance-assemblies-lessons/article-of-the-week/upcoming-packs/>):  
Use the PPT and the 'Primary Activities' page to be completed in the 'UNICEF BIG BOOK' in each class (15 mins max x 1 a week).

Wednesday Celebration Assembly: Community invited with one class each week sharing learning from BIG BOOKS.

Thursday: Whole school at St. Cuthbert's linked to half termly values led by church visitor.

Friday: Whole school at St. Cuthbert's linked to half termly values, and led by The Collective Worship Pupil Leadership Team.

Physical surroundings are important in creating the right atmosphere for school acts of worship. The use of a focal point helps in creating a special place with the focal point being a cross, the bible and 3 candles. The 3 candles represent God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Children sit in a semi-circle during whole school worship.

We take the half-termly theme of our Christian Value and thread this through our theme. These themes tie together traditions of the Christian faith, Bible stories and wider school PSHE/RSE themes.

### **Worship Rhythm (St Cuthbert's)**

#### **Gathering**

Entry in silence to music. Following music for the week, welcome and reminder that this is a special time to be together as a community. Each class to bring their sheep.

#### **Engaging**

Stimulus used for talk or discussion with a clear focus to an aspect of the theme.

#### **Responding**

An opportunity to reflect on how this might influence their day to day lives. Collective singing of a hymn. Prayer with the invitational words: - I am now going to say a prayer. If you would like to make it your prayer, you can join me and say amen at the end.

#### **Sending**

Concluded with 'May the light of God shine from us'. Children can choose to

respond if they wish 'and the peace of God be with us always'. Children to lead out in silence to music encouraging reflection as the children leave the hall.

At St Cuthbert's, we have a prayer book where children, staff, visitors and other members of our community can leave prayers. Members of staff may also include these prayers in our daily acts of Collective Worship. Collective Worship and Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued, and all achievements are recognised.

We also have a school prayer that the children learn off by heart.

### **Special Worship**

There are also special celebrations during the year, where a specified class or whole school leads the collective worship. These are held in St. Cuthbert's Church where possible or school hall and parents are invited.

- Some acts of worship involve the wider community where an outside speaker comes to highlight projects, needs and activities in which we may take part.
- The principles of collective worship are extended through children saying grace at lunchtime.
- Throughout the year, parents and friends of the school from our local community are invited to special celebrations such as Harvest Festival, Christmas Carol Service, and School Leavers Assembly. This is a practical demonstration of the way home and the school, work together to support the achievements of our children.
- We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time

Parents are invited to join staff and pupils for sharing worship to celebrate the work of pupils from across school on a weekly basis.

### **Evaluation of Worship**

SLT will monitor whole school and class acts of worship throughout the year, alongside the governors.

Throughout the year, parents and pupils are asked for their opinions through a questionnaire, in discussion groups and their views are taken into account in future planning of worship.