



# ST GILBERT'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Collective Worship Policy

St Gilbert's Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Controlled school. The daily act of collective worship is an integral and important part of school life...it is at the heart of all that is done in our school and encourages our pupils to Encounter, Reflect and Transform.

It is a time where we come together to share our love of God, learn together and celebrate our achievements together. The worship of the school is based on promoting the Christian values which permeate the ethos of the school but also recognising the festivals within other religions. The contributions of staff, pupils, church clergy and other visitors are valued highly. It is attended by all pupils and staff, and any visitors in school are very welcome to join in. (Please see annexe 1). We recognise that Collective Worship is an important opportunity to contribute to the Spiritual, Moral, Emotional, Social and Cultural development of our pupils.

Collective Worship is integral to our Christian identity and sense of belonging to the world. It is about:

- a. paying reverence to God and nurturing a sense of awe, wonder and mystery at the creative power of God and His creation.
- b. evoking an appropriate spiritual response.

The basic elements of worship may include

- a sense of mystery, awe and wonder
- celebration
- a quiet time of reflection
- discovery of personal reactions, joy, thankfulness, sorrow, fear, anger
- a search for the purpose and meaning of life
- humility – recognising the strengths and weaknesses in ourselves and others

### **Aims and Objectives**

- To give children the experience and opportunity to participate in Christian worship.
- To bring children to the 'threshold of individual worship'.
- To affirm a sense of community with God.
- To promote our common Christian ethos and shared values.
- To reinforce positive attitudes.
- To achieve a sense of occasion.
- To contribute to the R.E. of all children.
- To allow reflection and response to the fundamental questions of life and those things that are of eternal concern and value to human beings, to experience a variety of forms of prayer and meditation.
- To contribute to the spiritual, social, emotional, moral and cultural development of each child.
- To foster and enable a concern for the needs of others and a recognition of the vulnerability of self and of others
- To celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals.
- To promote community cohesion
- To give expression to, and reaffirm and practice the values of the school community
- To support the social and emotional aspects of pupils' learning (SEAL)

### **Legal Requirements**

#### **Legal Status of Collective Worship**

All acts of worship are in accordance with the school's Trust Deed and AOA. The school regularly visits All Saints and other churches in the local area to take part in specific Church Calendar services.

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires that 'all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each day take part in an act of Collective Worship'. Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship either partially or wholly. We would hope this would only happen after discussion with the Head Teacher. Any parents wishing to do so should contact the Head Teacher.

**Teachers also have the right to withdraw from leading and taking part in worship.**

The weekly Collective Worship timetable is usually organised as follows:

	<b>Main feature of worship</b>	<b>Collective Worship usually led by:</b>
<b>Monday</b>	Overview of week + introduction of theme	The Head teacher/Clergy
<b>Tuesday</b>	Praise & Worship KS2 Class Worship KS1 & EYFS	Teachers
<b>Wednesday</b>	Praise & Worship KS2 Class Worship KS1 & EYFS	Teachers
<b>Thursday</b>	Sing and Pray	DHT and Revd. Gavin Cooper
<b>Friday *</b>	Celebration Worship: Reflecting on the weeks' events, achievements, birthdays, extra-curricular activities and club performances which is underpinned by our Christian Values.	Head teacher or Deputy Head

The Collective Worship should last approximately 15-20 minutes.

### **Planning, Content and Detail**

The RE leader is responsible for organising the themes for the term's Collective Worship. The themes chosen are also broad enough for staff to be able to approach the theme from their personal perspective and also link to British Values and SEAL. Through whole staff discussion this involves a much broader approach and encompasses other faiths. We also incorporate flexibility as on occasions it is recognised that worship leaders may feel that they need to respond to local or national events. Worship takes place through a variety of media such as Bible teaching, stories, songs, poetry, drama etc. Class led worship is often used as an opportunity to share experiences and achievements with the whole-school community and with parents and friends.

Our worship begins with the children entering the hall accompanied by a piece of music. The music could come from a variety of cultures. Sometimes music is chosen and played by children on their own instruments. The candle on the altar table is lit either by an adult or child (under supervision). The children are involved in the worship throughout and this finishes with a prayer. The candles are then blown out before any messages are given. This allows for us to make a clear distinction between worship and assembly. The children then lead out as the music is played.

### **Communal and Personal Reflection**

Collective Worship always includes a time of prayer and/or reflection. A range of prayers are used including the Lord's Prayer, prayers written by the children and others. At the beginning of all worship a time of reflection and quiet is encouraged by the lighting of the candle/candles. A cross is also displayed. We give children the opportunity to develop spiritually in the gathering together for Daily Worship to praise the awe and wonder of God and the beauty of the world God has created; to pray together, to learn about the teachings of both the Old and New Testament with particular emphasis on the teachings of Jesus.

At the beginning of the lunch hour, grace (written by the pupils) is said by either an adult or child in each class. Staff also say a prayer with their class at the end of the school day.

### **Other Faiths**

Although our worship reflects our Christian beliefs and values, we are committed to respecting each other's faith stance and culture, showing knowledge and understanding regardless of pupils' beliefs. The class-led acts of worship may portray other cultures and beliefs as they reflect the R.E. studied as part of the curriculum requirements.

### **Life Application**

Children are given opportunity to consider what is important in our lives, about beliefs and values, and application of their beliefs to practical situations in their lives. They are taught to understand and respect the beliefs of other cultures and religions.

### **Visits and visitors**

As part of the curriculum, St Gilbert's CE School ensures that appropriate visits are made available for the children in order for them to have first-hand experiences and gain a greater understanding of various places of worship. Visitors to the school are welcomed and enabled to share their experiences and knowledge. All Saints Church is a frequently used resource, with the school attending and contributing towards annual Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas, Easter and Leavers' Services but all churches are visited as part of learning and as part of Churches Together.

The R.E. Leader and link governor liaise to discuss various aspects of R.E. and this ensures an effective line of communication between the coordinator and the governing body.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Staff and Governors are committed to ensuring that opportunities for worship are relevant to all pupils and pay due regard to their ages, abilities and interests. We aim to recognise the equality of each child in God's sight, whatever the child's gender, race, physical or mental ability. Pupils currently take part in Collective Worship and often lead worship; however each parent has the right to withdraw their child for religious reasons.

### **Special Education Needs**

Staff and Governors attempt to ensure that materials and subject matter used in Collective Worship are appropriate for the range of abilities of all pupils in school.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Strategies staff currently use for assessing the outcomes of Collective Worship include:

- observation of children's reactions and participation during worship.
- feedback from children in class - written or verbal.
- parents' comments.
- observation by Foundation Governors
- observations of the quality of worship by the Head teacher or Deputy Headteacher.

### **Church / School Prayer meetings**

Parents are actively supportive of the Worship in school and each month we host a communal prayer breakfast for parents, Governors and any other people who are interested in the spiritual well-being of the school. The Head and Deputy Head contribute to general issues for prayer which helps the team to pray into specific areas of need relating to the pupils, staff, parents and governors.

### **Resources**

Resources for worship are kept in the whole school resources. The R.E. Leader is also provided with a budget each year to develop these resources.

## Annexe 1

### Statement for Collective Worship

We are required by law to hold a daily act of Collective Worship. This policy defines the purpose and organisation of daily collective acts of worship. It is meant to ensure that worship is at the heart of daily life in St. Gilbert's CE Primary School.

### Aims and Objectives

1) To ensure the school meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act which laid down the legal requirements for collective worship in schools.

- That an act of Collective Worship must be held daily for all pupils.
- It can be held any time in the school day.
- It can be in whatever grouping the school wishes i.e. teaching groups used at other times, but not specific religious groups.
- It must take place on school premises (Any other act of worship held off the premises is in addition to the statutory act of Collective Worship).
- That as a controlled school our Collective Worship conforms to the requirements of the trust deed.
- The majority of acts each term are "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian theme."
- Regard must be taken of the pupil's ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds.

2) To ensure Collective Worship is approached in a planned and professional way so that it can be a meaningful and worthwhile aspect of school life.

### What is meant by Collective Worship?

Collective Worship is best understood by contrasting it with corporate worship.

Collective Worship is a legal requirement (except for teachers and children whose parents exercise their right to withdrawal) It is open to both staff and pupils – Christians and members of other faiths, agnostics, atheists who are not collectively committed to a particular creed, liturgy or form of faith.

(Corporate worship is both voluntary and practiced by members of a particular worshipping community and distinctive of a specific religious community.) Collective Worship is part of the educational provision of the school and should be the **heartbeat of all aspects of school life**.

It provides a space in time:

- To allow reflection, to be still - explore, encounter and experience their relationship with God.
- To provide a rhythm and constancy in their school life
- To encourage the sense of oneness /community (school, church, village, local and national community)
- To teach pupils how to be members of large gatherings and perform and respond to music, silence, dance, drama and prayer.

The themes should:

- Suit the ages and aptitudes of the pupils
- Refresh – life giving/ energetic/thought provoking
- Ensure continuity and provide coherence
- Satisfy the legal requirements.

Visitors who are invited to lead an act of worship should be approved by the SMT and well briefed on the theme and organisation, including:

- The age of children
- The numbers participating
- The setting for worship
- Other expected elements of the service.

Care should be taken to provide an atmosphere which is conducive to worship.

Ideas from staff included:

Lighting – one focal candle, but on occasions a row of lights (occasionally scented ones)

Sounds – music for entering the hall. Children given opportunity to play us in or out.

Altar – to remain in focal position at the front of the hall all day

Content – notices/ results given out at appropriate times, after the candle has been blown out and therefore the signal for the end of Worship has been given.

Layout – varied

A range of presentations should be considered according to the assembly group.

These may include celebrations, dance, music, pupil's work, drama, story telling and being "bold" in celebrating faith as well as challenging children to engage their ideas and question in worship.