



SAINT JOHN'S

# Collective Worship Policy

Designated Member of Staff	Head Teacher
Date of Issue	Autumn 2022
Frequency of Review	Every two years

Issue Number	Issue Date	Summary of Changes
1	October 2022	Policy reviewed by Vision & Values committee
2	May 2024	Policy reviewed by Vision & Values committee
3	January 2026	Policy reviewed and approved at FGB 5

## **Introduction and background**

Saint John's Church of England Primary School recognises that our daily collective worship has a very positive impact on the community of our school. This policy is written to underpin our school ethos which ensures that we all flourish at Saint John's.

## **Legal Framework**

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 at Saint John's is distinctly Christian and reflects Anglican traditions. Saint John's CE Primary School complies with the requirements set out in the 1988 Education Reform Act regarding collective worship. Collective worship should aim to provide the opportunity to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes. This daily act of collective worship can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings.

The governing body 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.

## **School Statement on Collective Worship**

At Saint John's, worship is central to the life of school and is a key platform for exploring the school's vision. Our vision is that Saint John's Church of England Primary School is a place where everyone flourishes and grows: 'like a tree, flourishing in God's unfailing love' from Psalm 52:8. From diverse beginnings and building on our Christian values, we grow together to reach up and reach out.

Our tree logo is drawn with one line, showing that fundamentally we flourish and grow together, helping each other as we develop and prepare for our next steps, reaching up and out towards others. Our school is rooted in Christian values. We learn about these values both formally and informally and we provide ways for our children and adults to cultivate those values. We want to learn about these values, reflect on these values and live these values within our school, within our homes and within our community.

Our aims (Curriculum, Caring, Challenge, Community, Citizenship) are the branches of our tree. These five aims provide clarity, as we focus on our children's needs and provide them with opportunities to develop and grow individually and independently – like the leaves on a tree which are all different and unique. 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 Saint John's, the purpose of collective worship will be to lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

*"Worship in (CofE) schools promotes theological and Religious Literacy and liberates participants to an imagining of a different order of justice, mercy and hope."*

CEEEO Vision statement "Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good" Autumn 2016

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) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

### **Aims and Guiding Principles**

Collective worship time in school is distinct from other classroom activities, retaining a sense of occasion and togetherness. Friends from St. Luke's Church and Highbury Congregational Church have provided a banner to hang in the school hall and serve as a reminder of our links with the church. The school also has a collection of specific artefacts, values mosaic, crosses, nativity scenes etc which provide a focus at appropriate times, in addition to the large screen and ICT hardware which is used daily to present appropriate pictures and words.

Our collective worship is **invitational**:

All pupils and staff are invited to join in for worship, to be a part of the time together. This is an invitation rather than a directive and therefore praying, singing, reflecting are not ordered from the front, but instead are provided for those who choose to participate.

Our collective worship is **inspirational**:

Our time together seeks to engage and enthrall pupils, as well as to excite and to challenge; this requires those leading the worship to plan carefully, present well and provide different styles and strategies to involve both children and adults.

Our collective worship is **inclusive**:

Our intention is to ensure that all of the community are welcome and all feel that they can access worship. At Saint John's, no parent refuses their child's attendance at daily worship currently; staff are also part of the act of worship. We feel this inclusivity is achieved because Saint John's balances overt Christian teaching with other themes which connect with other faiths or none. Our experience is that parents like children to talk about faith and spiritual things.

Collective worship at Saint John's 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
- Provide opportunities to experience different services, including those at the cathedral

- 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 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
- Mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths
- Give children the opportunity to consider familiar ideas and explore new ones. They experience a wide diversity of worship practice, which encourages a variety of responses.

## **Organisation**

### **Leadership**

- The Worship Committee lead collective worship each day, starting the time together, leading the music and sometimes the prayers, and finishing the time together
- The Headteacher leads alongside the Worship Committee for almost all of the times of worship
- Revd Patrick Wheaton, the local incumbent at St Luke's Church, leads collective worship every Wednesday with the support of the church youth leader
- The Deputy Headteacher leads collective worship fortnightly on a Tuesday, with a focus on the current Christian value or the theme that has been chosen, usually using a book or story as a basis
- Revd Jason Boyd, the minister at Highbury Church, a local congregational church, leads collective worship fortnightly on a Tuesday, telling a Bible story through drama and story-telling activities
- The class teacher and pupils lead collective worship for the class each Thursday, usually using the isingpop resources to review the Christian value or theme for the term
- Our Friday collective worship is led by the Worship Committee and the Headteacher, alongside each class teacher who stands up to present certificates for praise and celebration of learning attitudes and achievements and of those living the Christian value during the week leading up to Friday
- Revd Patrick Wheaton and the Headteacher lead additional services in the church during the year
- Revd Patrick Wheaton supports leaders of collective worship to develop their understanding of Christian theology, the teachings of the Bible and develop a deeper understanding of Anglican traditions and liturgy, including meeting regularly with the Headteacher to plan and review collective worship at Saint John's

### **Planning**

- The Headteacher and Worship Committee plan collective worship before the start of each term, with the pupils agreeing which Christian value should be the focus, depending on the current needs of the school community
- The Headteacher meets regularly with the Worship Committee to discuss, plan and review each time of worship, giving the pupils a voice and encouraging leadership skills
- Opportunities are given to staff to lead collective worship as appropriate
- Worship is planned to reflect the Church year, with key occasions remembered and used for learning and reflection, including a change of material colour to reflect the Church year
- The Christian values of Saint John's are identified, expressed and celebrated through collective worship through the start and end statements read by the pupils, through the reference to learning,

reflecting and living during each time of worship and by the Bible stories and other teaching provided during each day

- Explicit links are made between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school: this is the key focus for Revd Patrick Wheaton and for classroom worship on a Thursday, through isingpop
- Throughout the year, our times of worship will provide different experiences for the pupils, ensuring that they are exposed to a wide range of ideas and practices for their consideration
- Provide opportunities for children and adults to explore faith in today's world

#### **Some key elements of worship used:**

- Songs
- Music
- Prayer
- Reflection and contemplation
- Individual and group activity
- Bible Readings and stories
- Special clothing, artefacts, websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, film clips
- Discussion, speech and silence

#### **Organisation**

- Collective worship takes place in the hall each day (except Thursday) with all year groups; all teachers attend and a few teaching assistants where this is possible
- Collective worship takes place after lunch each day for fifteen minutes (and slightly longer on a Friday for our Praise and Celebration collective worship)
- In the hall, a worship table is set up at the front with a Bible, a cross and a candle placed on the coloured cloth
- Music is played as the pupils and staff walk into the hall; there is a range of Christian and secular instrumental music to help create a sense of calm and focus as the community arrives
- The pupils sit in their year group in a line from front to back; this means that there is a mixing of year groups with pupils sitting next to pupils from a different year group
- During classroom worship, teachers and pupils will use their classroom in different ways depending on the focus and needs of the pupils or activity. There is an expectation that the worship will include a song and a prayer, alongside the learning and reflecting element
- Outside, we are developing our front garden as a spiritual garden with considerations for the use of mirrors and seating areas, as well as murals and Bible verses.
- In the Reception playground, there is a quiet space with lights where pupils can enter for a time of peace or calm
- At specific times throughout the school year, Celebrations of Worship are held in the local Parish Church, St. Luke's (Parish of St. Luke & St. John). Parents, Governors and friends share in these services which are held during Harvest, Easter, Christmas and the end of the school year.

#### **Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Headteacher monitors collective worship on an ongoing basis, encouraging pupils to voice their views through the Worship Committee and through School Council who seek the views of all pupils during the year.

Revd Patrick Wheaton meets with the headteacher to evaluate collective worship each term during the Vision and Values Governor meeting.

In addition, evaluation occurs informally through staff discussion; feedback is sought from parents and visitors.

Our monitoring and evaluation of worship has led to collective worship becoming more focused on Bible teaching, alongside Christian values, as well as ensuring that there are other opportunities for reflection and contemplation by pupils.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body oversees the collective worship policy, reviewing it within the policy review system in place. In addition, the Chair of the Vision and Values Committee meets regularly with the Headteacher to discuss worship at Saint John's and the Vision and Values Committee has a regular item in the meeting to discuss collective worship.

The Headteacher and other leaders within the school meet to make arrangements for leading collective worship, usually before the start of each term, so that plans for the daily acts of worship are in place and the allocation of different days is agreed.

Teaching and support staff are given opportunities to reflect and review the collective worship at Saint John's, with informal discussions and feedback made possible. In addition, staff are offered the chance to lead collective worship, alongside support and guidance.

Pupils provide feedback through the Worship Committee and the School Council and are able to participate in different ways.

Parents and carers provide feedback through informal discussions, such as "Tea with Mrs B", and during conversations with the wider staff, as well as through surveys.

Visitors are welcome to participate and engage in collective worship if they are visiting the school during this time. There are also opportunities for visitors to speak to the pupils and staff during a collective worship, where this has been planned with the headteacher.

### **Staff Development and Training**

The headteacher attends training through the Gloucester Diocese, as well as using other training forums such as National College. Our local RE Hubs also provide the opportunity to consider ideas and strategies for improving and developing collective worship. We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. Support and guidance are provided for visitors and the clergy who lead collective worship.

### **The Right of Withdrawal from 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.

At Saint John's, there are a number of 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 is 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.

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 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.

### **Development and Sharing of the Policy**

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website. The policy was written and developed by the headteacher and the Vision Committee using guidance from the Gloucester Diocese, further Church of England resources and information from headteachers of other schools. The SIAMS framework has also ensured a number of prompts have been responded to and there is a sense of collective worship is a part of the whole offering of Saint John's as a Church of England primary school. We ensure that information about collective worship is included in the meetings with prospective families and on the school website.

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

***This policy is to be read in conjunction with guidance from the Diocese of Gloucester:  
<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/schools/collective-worship>***