

# St Mary's CE High School

## Worship Policy

***Date: Spring 2017***

***Date of Next Review: Spring 2022***

**Chair of Governors  
Head Teacher**

## St Mary's CE High School

### Worship Policy

St Mary's CE High School is a church school and as such is distinctive from other local secondary schools. The Christian ethos of the school is a special characteristic that is valued and of which the school is very proud. The opportunities to take part in Collective Worship are carefully planned and play a central role in the life of the school. All Acts of Worship are expected to provide a significant contribution to the spiritual development of students and other members of the school community. Collective worship is also seen as an opportunity to bring the community together, to share time, reflection opportunities and information in a manner that supports inclusivity promotion of fundamental British values and the community ethos of the school.

### Aims

Collective worship should:

- Provide opportunities to worship God and promote the spiritual dimension in the life of students
- Promote an understanding of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (the Trinity)
- Promote the Christian ethos of the school and set the schools Christian values in their Christian context
- Allow students to express their faith should they wish to do so
- Allow students to explore moral and spiritual dimensions of life and its impact upon themselves
- Allow students to experience Christian forms of worship and different ways to express faith and praise
- Develop a sense of community and sharing of a common ethos within a common religious framework
- Create a period of reflection that gives students the opportunity to contextualise their learning experience in a Christian setting
- Contribute to acts of worship and participate in collective worship
- Reflect on society
- Reflect on and explore fundamental British values
- Explore values to which the school and church subscribe
- Express interest in and show concern for others
- Nurture spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Provide opportunities to sense and experience awe and wonder

Worship at St Mary's CE High School is inclusive and reflects the Christian ethos of the school. Whilst students and classroom-based staff are expected to attend Collective Worship, individual opportunities for reflection and private worship are encouraged as appropriate.

### Key Definitions:

**Collective Worship** is a time when the whole school or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all students an

opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**An Act of Worship** is a time when small groups/tutor groups/ classes or individuals consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. This maybe a follow up from a previous act of **Collective Worship**, stimuli/resources for which are to be provided by worship leads and clergy.

**A Leader of Collective Worship** will coordinate, prepare and deliver an act of Collective Worship. They will consider the theme carefully and include a Christian perspective and/or bible verse where appropriate. A Leader will coordinate student involvement in the presentation of the worship and produce stimuli/resources to be made available to all staff/tutors. These could be in the form of prayers/thoughts for the day/words/images and any additional materials to complement their presentation to be used as daily Acts of Worship within the classroom.

Collective Worship takes place (daily 8.25 - 8.55 am):

- In weekly Collective Worship (all year groups in various groupings)
- In fortnightly Year Group Collective Worship
- In half-termly Communion services
- In end of term Special Assemblies or one off group events
- In special services such as Founders Day, Remembrance, Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas services

Location of Collective Worship: Whilst the environment in which the Collective Worship takes place can be important it is more essential that the quality and opportunity to worship is provided. The worship experience encourages students to appreciate that worship can take many forms and take place anywhere. In school, Collective Worship can take place in number of different places including:

- The school Main Hall
- The sixth form common room
- St Mary the Virgin Church
- In the courtyard/Amphitheatre
- Dining Hall
- Sports Hall – during examination periods

Nature of Collective Worship:

Collective Worship is planned across the year identifying themes and/or core values for each week linked to Bible passages. The identification of themes will be achieved using appropriate sources of advice and reference such as the Diocese, Clergy and Christian Union / ARK Group. The themes will provide opportunities to recognise and celebrate key events in the Christian year as well as those in other faith calendars, develop an understanding of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, address the needs of the school community and provide opportunities to recognise and express awe, wonder, praise and develop spirituality. The themes will be linked closely to the schools agreed Christian Values\* (appendix 1)

All students are offered quality experiences of stillness and opportunities for prayer and reflection in an atmosphere that is peaceful and open. Students are provided with guidance about participating in Collective Worship and have opportunities to experience formal liturgy and traditional services as well as more informal and less traditional worship. Students are encouraged to respond in ways that are appropriate for them, recognising that no one can be, or will be, compelled to worship. It is expected however, that all members of the community will demonstrate respect for others who wish to worship or participate in their own way.

The school recognises that our students enjoy and appreciate actively participating in Collective and Acts of Worship. Where possible, students are provided with opportunities to participate actively in worship including the coordinating and organisation of a presentation, supporting staff and members of the clergy in school and in church and using a variety of activities such as drama, music and reading as appropriate.

Eucharist/Communion: All students and staff have the opportunity to participate in a Communion service at least once each half term. The celebrant (Local clergy team member) recognise the ecumenical context of the school and welcomes communicant members of non-Anglican denominations to receive communion. If not receiving communion, members of the community are encouraged to receive a blessing. There is however, no compulsion for students or staff to receive communion or a blessing.

Staff of St Mary's CE High School: All members of staff employed at St Mary's CE High School are asked specifically on their application form if they are aware of the Anglican status of the school and if they are able to support the Christian ethos of the school. In interview, support for the Christian ethos of the school is checked. It is clearly explained that for all classroom based staff this will mean contributing to Collective Worship at least once each week and for staff involved in pastoral care of students, especially those in their role as tutors there is an expectation to organise daily Acts of Worship during tutorial periods when there is no formal collective act of worship.

Role of Governors: Members of the Governing Body are welcome, and indeed encouraged, to attend Collective Worship. Where possible, when Governors visit the school, attendance Collective Worship is organised as part of their programme. They will be able to observe/join other daily Acts of Worship in Tutor Groups across the school.

The Governing Body will also review policies linked to Worship and Christian ethos at least every five years and ensure that worship is appropriately resourced.

Parents/carers and other members of the community: Parents/carers are invited to join special services and some special assemblies. Details of these services and invitations to parents/carers can be found on the school website and in letters/newsletter sent to parents/carers.

Although there is a statutory right for parents/carers to withdraw their child(ren) from Collective Worship, it is presumed that parents/carers will support the school's policy for Collective Worship given its Christian foundation and admission policy.

Parents/carers who do choose to request to withdraw their child from Collective Worship, must make the request in writing to the Head Teacher providing the reasons for their request and will be required to provide work to be completed during worship time.

It is usual for the Head Teacher or delegated senior colleague to meet with parents/carers to discuss a request for withdrawal. This is to provide an opportunity for the parent/carer's position to be understood and for the School to promote additional information and/or appropriate adjustments that support parents/carers agreeing to their child's attendance to collective worship in school.



# **St Mary's Church of England High School**

## **Appendix 1**

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE**

Reviewed: Spring 2017



## **St Mary's Church of England High School Collective Worship Procedural Guidance**

### **Context**

Collective Worship has a special importance in the daily life of St Mary's CE High School and serves a number of purposes including to:

- Provide opportunities to worship God and promote the spiritual dimension in the life of students
- Promote an understanding of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (the Trinity)
- Promote the Christian ethos of the school and set the schools Christian values in their Christian context
- Allow students to express their faith should they wish to do so
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- Reflect on society
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- Explore values to which the school and church subscribe
- Express interest in and show concern for others
- Nurture spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Provide opportunities to sense and experience awe and wonder

As such, Collective Worship needs to be conducted, and students encouraged to participate, in such a way as to create a sense of occasion and an opportunity for genuine worship and reflection.

The following provides information to guide all classroom based staff about the conduct of Collective Worship in the Main Hall or other suitable venue.

### **Logistics**

#### **Before Collective Worship**

The Main Hall (or other suitable venue) needs to be ready for Collective Worship by 8.15am

- Site team will ensure that seating is erected and additional chairs and tables are positioned as necessary
- Music will be playing before students enter the venue. The Leader should select/provide an appropriate piece to play. (It can be useful if students can be told what the music is during the introduction)

- IT assistance will be available for the set up for Collective Worship and in the case of the Main Hall, sound will be controlled from the lighting room at the rear of the auditorium
- Live music from a choir or music group/soloist is encouraged for Collective Worship, especially if lyrically relevant to the presentation/address
- Chairs for staff should be located at the front/sides of the hall. Staff should be encouraged to sit during the act of worship
- A Copy of the School Prayer will be available for all Collective Worship

Upon arrival at the hall: Students line up at the appropriate door and wait *very* quietly. Form Tutors need to be at the head of the line.

#### Entry into the hall

- Check students' uniform and personal presentation before allowing entry
- Remind students of the need for silence/respectful behaviour
- Remind students of their seating area and ensure students sit in the allocated place for their group
- Sit with students in the hall
- When entering and sat in the hall classes are to be calm and quiet (Director/Assistant Director will support Tutors to achieve)
- Students should be wearing correct uniform and be well presented. All should be wearing a blazer. Tutors should check student uniform and ask to adjust as required before allowing student to enter the hall
- Students to leave bags/coats in lockers (exception may be sports bags where PE is timetabled straight after act of worship)
- SLT/Director/Assistant Director will indicate to Tutors to lead class into the hall and go to the appropriate side of the hall where students will be seated.
- Tutor supervises class into allocated rows
- Tutor ensures that students are ~~not~~ sitting in groups that support excellent conduct
- Students sit in silence facing front (listening to music/reading the Powerpoint slides)
- Tutors take seats as Collective Worship begins
- Director/Assistant Director sit at/near to the front with SLT lead

It is important that all staff model quiet, calm, reflective and/or worshipful behaviour throughout the Collective Worship. Staff should avoid any confrontation with students that disturbs the atmosphere being created for worship and reflection. If necessary, students who are disturbing others should be taken outside of the worship space to be addressed.

#### **Collective Worship**

The structure of Collective Worship will vary depending on the type of presentation and the nature of the theme. The following could be used to outline the main features/service order of Collective Worship.



The Leader should:

- Greet students and staff
- Give positive message (about entry into the hall/presentation/conduct/attentiveness if all possible or for an activity/event in which the year group have recently taken part)
- Gentle/calm reminder about how things could be *further* improved if necessary (a *positive* message)
- If appropriate, explain key focus of improvement for the week/month/term i.e. uniform, punctuality, litter, as agreed by SLT in advance
- Inform students of the title of the piece of music that was playing as they entered
- Begin or introduce the person leading the Collective Worship
- Presentation
- Finish Collective Worship with a prayer and/or reflection

Leaving the hall

- The music will begin to play once the final words have been said by the Leader
- Dismissal should be in near silence. Students should only be able to resume talking once outside the hall
- Assistant Director supervises dismissal of students from the front of the hall
- ELT members return to the doors they supervised for entry to the hall or remain at front of hall to oversee student dismissal
- Tutor groups use same doors for exit as for entry
- Tutors stand at end of row to supervise students leaving row by row
- Do not allow next row to stand until row in front/behind has cleared the chair area.
- Encourage students to move quickly to first/next lesson
- Staff check quickly that the area in which their own class sat has been left clean and tidy and nothing has been left behind

# Appendix 2

## St Mary's Church of England High School Values

The Christian Values of St Mary's CE High School that underpin our work are:

- **Trust** - firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone and GOD. *Bible verse: "Do not let our hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me." John 14:1*
- **Peace** - a state of mutual harmony between people or groups. *Bible verse: "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" Philippians 4:7*
- **Forgiveness** - stop feeling angry or resentful towards (someone) for an offence, flaw, or mistake. *Bible verse: "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us". Matthew 6:14.*
- **Endurance** - the ability to endure an unpleasant or difficult process or situation without giving way. *Bible verse: "we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope". Romans 5:3-4.*
- **Service** - the action of helping or doing work for someone. *Bible verse: "serve one another humbly in love" Galatians 3:5 / "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." Romans 12:13*
- **Compassion** - concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others. *Bible verse: "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32 / "treat others as you would like to be treated" Matthew 7:12*
- **Reverence** - A feeling of profound awe and respect and often love for GOD. *Bible verse: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14 / "let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe" Hebrews 12:28.*
- **Wisdom** – the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. *Bible verse: "Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise" Proverbs 19:20 / "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." James 1:5*

- **Thankfulness** – feeling or expressing gratitude towards others and GOD. *Bible verse: “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*
- **Friendship** - a relationship of mutual affection between two or more people / a relationship between people who like each other and enjoy each other's company/ being someone who listens and doesn't judge. *Bible verse : “A friend loves at all times” Proverbs 17:17*
- **Justice** – being guided by truth, reason, and fairness in all our actions. *Bible verse: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Matthew 5:38-39*
- **Hope** - a feeling of expectation or that events will turn out for the best. *Bible verse: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11*
- **Humility** - the quality or condition of being humble – having a modest and not proud/arrogant view of oneself. *Bible verse: “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” Ephesians 4:2*
- **Creation** - the act of producing or causing to exist & the original bringing into existence of the universe by GOD. *Bible verse: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ” John 1:1-3.*
- **Fellowship / Koinonia** – Christian fellowship or communion, with GOD and with fellow Christians. *Bible verse: “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11*
- **Love / Agape** – loving GOD and a selfless love for fellow human beings. *Bible verse: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. As I have loved you, you should also love one another” John 13:34*

Other relevant policies and documents:

- All policies reflect the Christian Values of the school
- Acts of Worship Procedural Guidance (for reference only)
- Collective Worship Rota/School Calendar