



Collective worship Policy

'Caring, learning and achieving together as part of God's family'

Rationale

Collective worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit

Aims

It is the policy of the school to help children grow in their Faith and is based on the teaching and traditions of the Catholic Church. We aim to encourage all children in our care to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer. Catholic schools are worshipping communities. Collective Worship should provide opportunities for all children and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully

Collective worship

Collective worship in our schools is practised in various ways:

- whole school acts of worship (assemblies)
- Class or key stage acts of worship (Liturgies)
- classroom prayers throughout the school day
- Mass

Leading Worship

Any member of staff in school may be asked to take part in or to plan and lead collective worship. Children are taught and encouraged to plan and lead collective worship appropriate to their age. The Governors and

the Head teacher are responsible for ensuring collective worship is happening daily with appropriate support from colleagues and the Parish Priest (Governor).

Planning and Content of Worship

Collective worship is planned following the structure of the liturgical seasons of the Church's year, the RE programme, feast days and other significant dates e.g. Remembrance, Christian Unity. A variety of prayer styles are used appropriate to the age, stage of development and the occasion. Parents and parishioners are invited to participate in some celebrations

Prayer

Helping children to pray is fostering their relationship with God. We support children on their journey in faith. Children are given experience of personal and communal prayer by being encouraged to speak in their own way to God and by being introduced gradually to formal words for prayer at the appropriate level. We celebrate our relationship with God throughout the school day therefore prayer cannot be confined to acts of collective worship. Throughout the RE programme and time with the class teacher, prayer builds upon the children's natural spontaneous expressions of joy, wonder, awe, concern, thanks, sorrow, sadness, anger, fear and disappointment evoked through their growing awareness of themselves, others and the world around them. We are aware of children's need for expression through speech, song, movement, art, writing and silence. We are aware of the importance of giving the children a focus for prayer in each classroom and whenever acts of worship are held.

Each class begins and ends each day with prayer. We also pray before lunch. Each class has their own prayers and they are displayed in the prayer area.

Prayer Tables

Prayer tables are clearly visible and accessible within areas of our schools and there is one in each classroom. Liturgical colours are used for any cloth or drape, ie purple during Advent and Lent, white during the Easter season and green for Ordinary Time. Prayer tables often include something which reflects the topic e.g. baptismal candle, advent wreath, palm cross during Lent and / or other appropriate objects e.g. a cross, crucifix or statue. They also contain a class candle (electric) and a Bible or religious storybook, open at a relevant page.

Staff Prayer

Staff pray together at meetings and briefings. Governors pray together before their meetings. We start meetings with parents with prayer and sometimes a Liturgy, thus offering the whole enterprise into the hands of God. It is an expectation that staff participate in all acts of collective worship to ensure that they are fully part of the school worship community and can actively support students in their prayer and faith journeys.

Legal Requirements

All children take part in a daily act of worship. We have a strong tradition of being fully inclusive. Collective worship and assembly are distinct activities at Margaret Roper they usually form part of the same gathering. The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. Responsibility for Collective Worship lies with the Governors and The Headship Team. All parents/carers have a right to withdraw their child from collective worship. It should be noted that it is difficult to manage withdrawal from collective worship in totality in our schools as collective worship can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all children, or separate acts of worship in school groups or individuals. It should also be noted that prayer will not be confined to acts of collective worship. Our preference for dealing with withdrawal is to encourage presence, without participation, during collective

worship. Whilst we respect parental wishes, we would also encourage discussions of any individual concerns regarding collective worship to avoid any student feeling excluded.

Please also see

<https://rcaoseducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Diocesan-Policy-on-Religious-Education-and-Collective-Worship.pdf>

Policy Date – Autumn 2021

Review Date – Autumn 2023