THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

Model Policy for Collective Worship in Church Schools

Guidance from the Diocese of Worcester's Board of Education

January 2021

Section 1

Policy Guidance

Below are some notes and considerations when adapting the model policy to fit your school context or when creating your own from scratch.

School Statement on Collective Worship

Your introduction should clearly indicate how Collective Worship is **driven by the school's vision and is an expression of this**. The introduction may refer to the Biblical or theological basis of this. You should include your vision statement in the worship policy. SIAMS refers to worship as the 'heartbeat' of the school – this is a powerful way to understand worship and your school statement should reflect this fact.

Worship in school is known as 'collective' worship as opposed to 'corporate' worship. In collective worship the community gathers (or 'collects') and worship takes place; there is no expectation or compulsion placed on participants. What is provided is *opportunity* during which the participants, through a variety of experiences, can do the things identified in the policy. These should be adjusted according to local circumstance. In particular, schools might like to add a specific point concerning adherents of other faiths or none.

Aims and Guiding Principles

At its core, Collective Worship should enable all children and adults to enter into an experience with God. SIAMs refers to the 3 I's in relation to Collective Worship, these being Invitational, Inclusive and Inspiring. As part of your policy it is important to demonstrate how worship in your own setting meets these three objectives. The bullet points listed are not an exhaustive list and may be amended in accordance to your own context.

Pattern for Collective Worship

You should include what your regular patter of worship is, including who will lead, time of day and if it is class/key stage or whole school. You should also include where the worship will take place, particularly if there is a regular visit to the local church.

It is also a good practice to include how your worship maintains its integrity of Anglican Worship.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Planning and evaluation are an important part of improving the experience of collective worship for all in attendance. In this section detail how you will go about planning and monitoring Collective Worship including when it will take place and who will be part of it, The monitoring of worship needs to include a variety of approaches so that the impact of the experience(s) can be effectively ascertained. There is some supporting material on our website and included in this pack.

Planning worship has two main dimensions:

- Worship needs to be planned through the year to take account of the pattern this will include identification of themes (values), Bible stories and readings, songs and prayers;
- Individual acts of worship also need to have a 'plan'. In Church this is commonly referred to as the 'liturgy'; careful attention to the liturgies used in school will ensure that an appropriate range of experiences is offered throughout the year.

The policy should include reference to any schemes that you may use in school such as Roots and Fruits but only needs to make brief mention of planning – the detailed aspects of planning are an operational matter for the school. All planning should begin with the school vision and seek to make worship ad expression of this.

Roles and Responsibilities

Give details about how different groups of people are involved with the development of Collective Worship within the school. If are using a pupil worship team, ensure that their roles are clearly defined. In many schools the Head Teacher may does not take on the role of Collective Worship leader, if this is the case ensure that you clarify the different roles that each person plays. Remember that even if the Head Teacher is not the Collective Worship lead, it is the Head Teacher who has the legal responsibility for ensure that Collective Worship takes place.

Right to Withdraw

The legal aspects are important and form part of the context of school life. The right of withdrawal can be a point of contention – hence the suggestion that this bee seen as the beginning of a dialogue with concerned parents. Schools should appreciate that where there have been a number of requests for withdrawal, this might indicate a need to amend the worship policy and practice.

Section 2
General Considerations

General points on Collective Worship

Worship should always:

• be well planned, benefitting from long term plans which have drawn on the expertise of staff, clergy and the local Christian community.

• be thoughtfully delivered in an age appropriate manner. All pupils should feel included and involved, regardless of ability, religion or culture.

• have as its central focus the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

• be both an educational and an inspirational experience.

• underpin the Christian values of the school.

• offer opportunities for spiritual development and growth through experiences of stillness, worship and reflection.

• be participatory – inviting pupils to join in with prayer, thought, reflection and silence.

Worship will at various times in the school year give opportunity to:

• sing appropriate, songs that express worship or articulate school values and aims.

• welcome visiting speakers or participants who are well suited to the delivery of good quality school worship.

• reflect elements of an Anglican style of worship in line with the tradition in the parish.

• involve creative participation by pupils, giving them the opportunity to use their gifts to plan and lead through readings, drama, dance etc.

• experience diverse liturgical traditions which reflect the world-wide church and diversity within the UK.

• celebrate special occasions and seasons in the Church's year and the life of the nation/community.

• mark events of national and international significance

• join with parents, governors and staff who are not usually able to be present.

• It may also, at certain times, reflect the diversity of beliefs within the school, valuing the practices and traditions of others who are a part of the school community, as well as other important times of celebration for wider religious communities

Welcoming Visitors

The inclusion of external visitors to lead acts of worship should be welcomed and when handled effectively serves to enhance the experience for the school community. As part of Christian hospitality, it should be practice to welcome and thank all invited visitors who participate as part of the worship. This may be done by a pupil or by a member of staff.

Regular visitors may include the incumbent of the local church or a lay reader or another person connected with the church such as children and family's worker. It is important that these regular visitors have access to the termly planning for Collective Worship so that they can ensure that the provision that they provide is in-line with school expectations.

Less frequent visitors may include, people form local government or people from charities or organisations within the community. These one-off assemblies may have a specific message that they wish to convey, and this may or may not constitute an act of worship. Sometimes schools can be so inundated with organisations wanting to share about specific projects that schools may need to be selective about who they say yes to.

Where an organisation's message does not constitute an act of worship, the school leader will need to plan an act of worship to place the organisations message into a Christian worship, prayer and reflection context. This should not simply be tagged onto the end or done in a way that makes the visiting speaker feel that they have not 'done it right'. Ideally this should be discussed with the visitor prior to them arriving.

Above all schools should satisfy themselves that the visitor is aware of the context that they are coming to speak in and aware of what is and is not considered appropriate for your context. It should be stressed that the purpose of the visit is for the school community to learn from the richness of other perspectives, and not an opportunity for proselytising or evangelising of any sort. All visitors should be fully briefed beforehand about the school and the group of children that will be addressed.

Visitors should be briefed on:
- expected time, length
- the involvement of children
- appropriate age-pitch
- the involvement of staff
- issues of inclusion
- the space available
- any relevant pupil information e.g. religious or cultural diversity, which might require a change of wording or approach
- normal routines (including who's responsible for any behaviour management during the time)
- any relevant topical information in the school
- where this visit fits into recent pattern of worship themes
- the school's styles regarding acts of worship
- audio-visual equipment available

The school should be briefed by the visitor on:
- content of the presentation
- audio-visual requirements

- requests for particular prayers / song (or other input from school staff)
- in the case of charities, agreement on the nature of participation that is requested (expectations) or not acceptable.

Collective Worship as part of a Section 48 Inspection Guidance based on the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools SIAMS Framework 2023

Alongside a school Ofsted inspection, schools of a religious character are charged, under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005, to undergo a denominational inspection. For Church of England Schools this is called the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools, or SIAMS.

An important aspect of a SIAMS inspection is the evaluation of the impact of collective worship in the school. The principal objective of the SIAMS inspection is to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school. The 2023 SIAMS framework is closely linked to the Church of England Vision for Education, Autumn 2016). The inspector will grade the school on 7 Inspection Questions. Question 3 is directly related to collective worship and explores:

How is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?

As with a Section 5 Ofsted inspection, SIAMS is concerned with verifying or challenging the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. The SIAMS framework document and model self-evaluation document include useful questions and grade descriptors to help the school self-evaluate the impact of their collective worship on the school community.

The inspector will be looking for evidence of the ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.

In developing collective worship that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring the school community needs to evaluate the extent to which worship:

- How do the theologically rooted Christian vision and the Anglican/Methodist foundation of the school shape worship and spirituality in the school?
- How do partnerships with the DBE and/or MAST, and partnerships with parish/local church/es enhance this?
- In what ways is the worship life of the school inclusive, invitational, and inspirational?
- In the context of the school as a Church school, what do pupils and adults understand to be the meaning of spirituality? How does this enhance and enrich collective worship and individuals' spiritual development?
- How does the trust contribute to and enhance the school's worship and spiritual life?

In the SIAMS report a paragraph is devoted to Collective Worship. This contains a succinct evaluation. The inspection will also report to the National Society and Diocese whether the school is complying with its statutory obligations as regards Collective Worship. To support schools with this the National Church have produced guidance on Collective Worship in a similar vein to the Religious Education Statement of Entitlement.

A school will be regarded as ineffective as a church school if the school's leaders have failed to ensure that collective worship reflects the school's distinctive foundation or funding agreement.

Section 3

Structure and Liturgy

This is an example of simple structure which could be used for Collective Worship which incorporates a liturgy as well as notes on what would go into each section of the worship. It is intended that this structure will support schools in planning worship that ensures 'the theologically rooted Christian vision and the Anglican/Methodist foundation of the school shape worship and spirituality in the school'. *SIAMs Evaluation Framework 2023.*

Liturgy can sometimes appear very archaic; however, in its simplest form liturgy is a structure and pattern for worship. It helps to define where we are going and what we are doing. In the church we use it to help worship flow in a logical order, so that everyone can follow along and know where we are going. Liturgy sometimes has special words that are said which are written in a 'call' and 'response' style with words in bold being the response. However, these sometimes these words could also all be said together. Within the church there are set words that can be used at different stages of the act of worship; however, you could also write your own words which are special and important to your school.

Welcome

You may wish to any notices that you wish to give to children from the actual act of worship so that it doesn't form a distraction. You may decide that key notices will be given by teaching in the classroom. We should try to discourage the start of worship being used to address school behaviour or other protocols so that the time we gather to worship collectively is reserved for this purpose.

Gathering

The gathering is an important part of the time of worship. The act of worship needs a deliberate opening. As we gather, it is important that those gathered know that we have begun our time together and that we have entered the presence of God. Therefore, this is a special time for all of us. This time should include special words as an introduction. It may also include an opening prayer and/or the presentation of a focal point.

Ideas for gathering

- Light a candle
- Place a cross/bible on the worship table
- Make the sign of the cross
- Opening prayer

Ideas for Gathering Liturgical words (words in bold are the children's response)

- Christ the light of the world is here
  Lord Jesus shine on us
  (Could be said whist lighting the candle)

- In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
  Amen

- The Lord be with you
  and also with you.

- The Lord is with us
  Let us praise his name together

- Grace, mercy and peace be with you
  and also with you

- We have come together in the name of Jesus to sing praise; to listen to God's word and to pray, so that we might share God's love with the world.
  We are welcome

Engaging/Learning

During this section we engage in our bible reading and theme for the act of worship. A song may be sung to open this section up. A full bible story is not always necessary, and the reading could be just a verse or a short passage. The important part is that scripture is read and engaged with at this time. If a bible story is read, you may wish to use props or children to act the story. A video of the story could be used, many good video versions of bible stories can be found on YouTube or {HYPERLINK "http://www.max7.org"}.

The Collective Worship Leader should share a message or thought about what this story or verse might mean and how we can apply it to our daily lives. This could be linked to a stimulus from the news or something in history or another aspect of the school's choosing. Again, a video may be used as a stimulus or even a song. What is important is that the scripture is put into a context that children would understand. This section may be interactive, and you may wish children to respond to questions. Bob Hartman's books on telling the bible have some great ways to make this section interactive by getting children to join in on certain words or do actions when you say certain things.

Ideas of liturgy to introduce scripture (these are not necessary but can be useful, words in bold are the children's response)

- Your word is a lamp to our feet,
  and a light to our path

- Show us your paths, O Lord,
  and teach us your ways.

- For the gift of his holy word,
  thanks be to God.

- Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.
  You have the words of eternal life

- This is the word of the Lord.
  Thanks be to God.
  (Used after the reading)

Reflection/Responding

The reflection and responding section can be seen as one section or it can be split into being two separate distinct sections. As part of reflection, it is important to give the children chance to think about what they have heard. In this time, you may give them some probing questions for example: 'When have you ever felt afraid?' 'What did you do?' or 'Can you remember a time when someone hurt you?' 'How did it feel?' Etc… through these questions you want children to put themselves in the story that you have just told so that they can more readily apply it to their own lives and context. During their reflection you could ask them to quietly say a prayer (if they want to) to ask God to help them the next time they feel afraid etc.

During the response a prayer(s) is/are said. You could ask the children to lead these prayers. You might even invite any child to say a prayer from where they are seated, this is often known as a 'open time of prayer'. If having an 'open time of prayer' it is a good idea for the leader to say a prayer at the end, to round it off so that everyone knows the time has ended. In the church this is known as a 'collect' as it 'collects' everyone's prayers together. You might even use the Lord's Prayer or a special school prayer that you have.

Sending Out

The sending out from Collective Worship should be as purposeful as the gathering. This is the moment when children and adults are encouraged to take what they have learned and go and live it out in the school and wider community. It may involve a final challenging question to keep the them in the children's minds such, "this week see how many times you can show your value of … by …..". Or "Remember that whenever you are afraid God is always with you." It is important for children to understand that although our time of collective worship, gathered in the hall/classroom, is now over, our worship continues through everything that we do.

Ideas for sending out

- Extinguish the candle lit in the gathering
- Remove other visual prompts used in the gathering
- Children could sing a song as they leave

Ideas of liturgical words for sending out (words in bold are the children's response)

- Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
  In the name of Christ. Amen.

- We go into the world to walk in God's light, to rejoice in God's love and to reflect God's glory.
  Amen

- May God grant to the world justice, truth and peace...
  and make our school a place of love.
  Amen.

- Go in the peace of Christ.
  Thanks be to God.

- In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy, help us, heavenly Father, to trust your love, to serve your purpose, and to praise your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
  Amen

Section 4

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation proformas

Collective Worship – Weekly Structure				THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIOCESE OF WORCESTER	

School's Vision:					
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Termly or weekly Theme					
Focus for the Day					
Biblical reference					
Worship led by					
Venue					
Evaluated/ monitored by…					

Collective Worship - Daily Planning Sheet

Date: Leader(s):   Venue:

School's Vision:

Theme & Biblical basis of worship:	
Gathering (or school's wording for this)	
Engaging (or school's wording for this)	
Responding (or school's wording for this)	
Sending Out (or school's wording for this)	
Plans for monitoring & evaluating worship	

Collective Worship Evaluation Form

Observer	Date
Venue	Time
Collective Worship Leader & Group	
Topic/Theme	

Comment on the extent to which the worship was inclusive, inspiring and invitational.

How was it inclusive?
Were there opportunities for the whole school community to engage with Worship today?
(E.g. Staff, SEN, EAL, other faiths)

How was it Inspiring?
Describe the variety of creative experiences used to enable the children to encounter God.
Liturgy/ Music/Biblical story passage/Drama/Deep, wondering questions
Prayer time/Stillness and reflection

How was it invitational?
What opportunities were the pupils given to take part in the act of Worship today?
(planned or unplanned

Comment on the elements of Anglican Liturgy and their impact

Gathering/Welcome *(How did you know worship was about to begin? How were people gathered – music/candle/focal point/liturgy.)*	Impact
Engaging/Learning *(Was there a bible story? What was it? What was the key message that was delivered?)*	**Impact**
Reflection/Response *(Was there a time of reflection? How was this done – prayer/music/quiet time. Where the children invited to make a response? How was this done – leader questioning/children participation/links to real life scenario?)* .	**Impact**
Sending out *(Was there a clear ending to the worship? How was this done – liturgy/prayer? How did children leave the venue – silence/singing?)*	**Impact**

Evaluation/Next Steps

Collective Worship Pupil Evaluation Form

Name/Year Group			
Who led worship?		**Date:**	
Where did worship take place?		**What was the theme?**	

What happened to make you feel welcome?	
Was there a bible story? If so which one?	
What was the message about?	
Did you have a time of reflection? What were you asked to reflect on?	
Where there any special words used to end Worship?	
How did worship help you to think about the way you behave?	
The best part was?	
It would have been even better if…?	

Collective Worship Pupil Evaluation Form

Name/Year Group			
Who led worship?		Date:	
Where did worship take place?		What was the theme?	

There were words of welcome. ☺ 😐 ☹	There was a bible reading. ☺ 😐 ☹
We said prayers. ☺ 😐 ☹	There was a time of reflection. ☺ 😐 ☹
The message helped me think about my behaviour ☺ 😐 ☹	There were special words to end the worship. ☺ 😐 ☹
I enjoyed today's worship. ☺ 😐 ☹	

Monitoring worship using the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) Evaluation Statements

Termly Self-evaluation and evidence gathering for Governors and SLT

Consider the extent to which collective worship is distinctively Christian and central to the life of the school community
Consider how well collective worship enables the participants to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ and of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Consider how well collective worship sets the distinctive values of the school in their Christian context.
Consider how well the school community, learners and adults, values and engages with collective worship
Consider the extent to which collective worship is relevant to, and makes a difference to the lives of all members of the school community
Consider how well collective worship develops personal spirituality within the school community through a range of experiences
Consider how effectively the school community is involved in the planning, leadership and evaluation of collective worship
Consider the extent to which opportunities for prayer contribute to the spiritual development of members of the school community

Example of a Collective Worship Questionnaire for Staff

In your opinion, what is the difference, if any, between collective worship and an assembly?	
What do you believe to be the purpose of Collective Worship?	
What do you think is the most important part of collective worship for children and what do they learn from it?	
What is meant by 'Children's Spirituality'? How would you define it?	

How effectively do you think Collective Worship develops children's spirituality?	
In what ways do you think Collective Worship contributes to or hinders the Christian Distinctiveness of the school?	
Do you feel Collective worship is a good use of school time? Why?	

An example of pupil conferencing questions for Collective Worship

What, if anything, do you find helpful about worship?	
Do you think worship is important in our school?	
What do you think collective worship is all about?	
What do we do when we are worshipping?	
What is it that makes it 'worship' and not just, for example, singing?	
What do you like most about worship?	
Can you finish this sentence? Collective Worship is a time for......	
How do you feel about collective worship? How does it help you? Does it encourage you in any way?	
Do you know any special prayers or hymns/songs?	
In what ways does worship time in our school help you to understand more about Christian values?	
Does what you hear in collective worship change you in anyway?	
Do you ever say prayers yourself outside of school?	
What would the whole school miss if there was no Collective Worship? What would you miss?	

Ideas for informal feedback

Children could be given the following slips after a Collective Worship session or they could be made readily available at a central location for children to collect and complete as they wish. These can then be collated centrally and used as evidence for self-evaluation and SIAMs.

Name:

Add a comment...

One important thing I learned today:

Further thoughts

The purpose of evaluation is to improve practice and to ensure that Collective Worship is invitational, inspiration and inclusive. Here are some thoughts other than a daily record that could be effective.

- Invite another adult (Incumbent, governor, learning support, parent) to talk to pupils of all ages about how Collective Worship feels for them. Record the outcome of these conversations and review them with staff who lead Collective Worship, Leadership Team, the incumbent or governors.
- Set aside 15 minutes of a staff meeting once a term to review how staff feel about Collective Worship. Record the outcome of these discussions and review them with staff who lead Collective Worship, Leadership Team, the incumbent or governors.
- Add a question on the parent and or the pupil questionnaires about perceptions of Collective Worship.
- Invite the incumbent or diocesan officer to observe a Collective Worship and spend quality time afterwards to discuss the various aspects of the worship.
- Invite a diocesan officer to review the overall planning of worship.
- Video a Collective Worship and watch and reflect on it yourself. You could place the camera on the floor pointing upwards, so it captures a child's eye view.