Kirtlington
C.E. School

Collective Worship Policy

Reviewed and approved by: FGB

Policy Reviewed: December 2025

Future Review: December 2026

Kirtlington Church of England Primary School
Collective Worship Policy 2025

Introduction

By law, Collective Worship must:

- be provided for every child every day;
- reflect the school's Trust Deed and diocesan guidelines.

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship. In the first instance, parents who may wish to exercise this right should make an appointment to speak with the headteacher.

Our vision that 'We love our neighbour just as Jesus Christ loves us' (Luke 10:25) is based on the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan which teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves, to understand what this means and how it helps us to live our lives today. This includes the school as a safe place where children, adults and the wider community are valued and embrace the differences within one another. A place where children become successful, resilient learners and who, through an emphasis on well-being and spirituality, reach their full potential guided by the example of the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan. A place where children become courageous advocates in society using kindness and forgiveness to do the right thing with understanding, tolerance and love.

Our core values are:

- **Love** which includes love of learning and of people and links with kindness, teamwork, how we treat each other, and relate to one another, including forgiveness and reconciliation.
- **Respect** which incudes treating people fairly, with dignity and equality, ensuring our relationships with all people are respectful. It includes learning to assess honestly as well as learning to say sorry, to be forgiven and to learn from mistakes.
- **Perseverance** which includes resilience, determination, self-belief and learning to cope with difficult situations and grow through them. It connects with supporting good mental health as we learn through our mistakes.
- **Hope** includes aspiration and aiming high, as well as trying to be the best person we can be. It includes hope for our future, hope for others and hope for the world, believing that we can make a change.
- **Service** includes becoming good citizens who care about others and will do things without reward because it is the right thing to do. It includes thinking about others rather than always about ourselves and helps mental health both for those helping and those being helped.

We are an inclusive school, guided by our Christian values and committed to offering the best possible education for our children in partnership with parents, the Church and the local community. We celebrate religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and encourage dialogue and understanding. Collective worship is central to the life of our school, offering an opportunity to reflect on values and issues in the context of our Christian vision and ethos. It is an expression of our vision and shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school. We aim for our collective worship to be invitational, inclusive and inspirational and warmly invite all members of our school community to join.

Underlying Principles

Our worship has 3 underlying principles:

1. It is inclusive and contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils
2. It is invitational and respects the dignity of all participants
3. It is inspiring and combines a range of experiences

It is inclusive

Our understanding of Christianity is that it is an inclusive faith which mirrors the attitude of Christ in the Gospels. Thus, we welcome children and staff of all faiths and worldviews to our worship. Through their Christian character our acts of collective worship will:

- recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, lifestyles, faiths and worldviews which exist in our school and local community;
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for everyone to attend;
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils;
- foster active roles of pupils, parents and members of the local community, in preparation, participation and leadership.

It is invitational

Acts of collective worship will:

- nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in everyone through working for social justice and
- encouraging pupils to consider the needs of others through charitable service and courageous advocacy;
- nurture reflection, stillness, meditation and prayer;
- provide pupils with (age appropriate) opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of their lives through music, images and words;
- provide a sense of occasion that is separate from the rest of the school day;
- foster an appreciation of the natural world and our shared responsibilities for maintaining it;
- develop clear partnerships between worship in the school and the wider community.

It is inspiring

Our acts of collective worship provide wider opportunities to:

- promote wide ownership of our Christian vision;
- assist learners to have increased awareness and to reflect upon fundamental issues about life;
- enhance, complement and extend curricular work;
- develop learners' understanding of the Christian faith and Church (Anglican) practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical content;
- encounter and explore Jesus' teachings and the trinitarian nature of Christian faith;
- identify opportunities for Christian celebration which can be associated with other school events;
- include appropriate references to and elements of other faiths and worldviews;
- support the community to respond to celebrations and challenges;
- support the community to seek ways of working together for the good of all;

- include opportunities to celebrate the academic, social, personal and wider achievements of pupils, staff, families and the community.

The purpose of our collective worship

The purpose of collective worship provides pupils and staff the opportunity to:

- celebrate -
    - Christian seasons and festivals;
    - school values associated with our vision;
    - pupils' and adults' achievements;
- experience prayer, stillness, worship and reflection;
- grow in understanding of and participation in prayer;
- create a reflective approach to life including the exploration of deep questions;
- develop as a community centred on our clear and distinctive Christian vision;
- experience a variety of styles of worship;
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship;
- feel safe and affirmed;
- worship God on their own terms;
- promote participants' thinking beyond the time given to worship itself.

Worship in our school reflects aspects of the curriculum and in particular will:

- nurture spiritual growth;
- enable participants to consider moral questions in a Christian context;
- enhance social understanding and encourage responses to issues through courageous advocacy;
- give participants a chance to reflect on the place and importance of faith in the lives of people today;
- encourage participants to explore beliefs drawn from their own cultural heritage;
- reflect the teachings of Jesus and a trinitarian theology.

Pupils, staff and parents of all faiths and worldviews, are welcome to worship which is an expression of our distinctive Christian vision. Our school is a community that celebrates religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and encourages dialogue and understanding. We believe that we can all learn from each other and that collective worship is an educational entitlement for all. In worship, we create the opportunity to explore the place of faith in people's lives, and in the communities where we live. This worship occurs at various times of day and with a mixture of grouping of pupils. Through regular acts of worship our school has the opportunity of offering thanksgiving and praise to God through a range of liturgical patterns.

Collective worship will:

- be acceptable to the whole community, staff and children
- include a variety of elements at different times
- involve the students
- have a dedicated focus which signifies what is being reflected upon.
- provide a dedicated opportunity for students to reflect/respond to the input

Acts of worship often include ritual aspects of enabling worship:

- stories and readings
- songs, hymns and music
- dance and drama
- prayer, meditations
- creative silence
- sacred/secular readings
- artifacts and natural materials
- children's contributions

The pattern of our collective worship

Collective worship takes place in a variety of groupings, in the school hall, in classrooms and on occasions outside. On occasions worship takes place in the church. We follow the seasons of the Church year and within these significant festivals and other special days are observed. These may include Harvest, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Pentecost; other days such as Epiphany and Candlemas may also be celebrated. Other important days in the calendar such as Remembrance and the Leavers' Service also feature in collective worship. At Kirtlington CE Primary School, there are four whole school acts of worship each week and one class act of worship. Our end of week whole school act of worship is a celebration of all that has gone before in the week. Acts of worship are prepared and planned according to our shared values and using themes that will arouse interest and enable participation of all those present.

Leading collective worship

Worship has a variety of leaders from both within school and from St Mary the Virgin Church. Pupils are given opportunities to lead worship throughout the year. Visitors are welcome to contribute to collective worship from time to time.

Planning acts of collective worship

Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience. Leaders, including the children, plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme and the needs of the pupils. The themes of worship are chosen to both express and explore our vision and the way in which this vision is experienced in school through the associated values. Throughout their time at our school children will encounter a wide variety of activities such as dance and drama alongside more traditional elements of worship such as prayer and song.

Prayer is a vital part of our worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to God reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Pupils who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

Our worship is regularly reviewed through discussions with participants, observation and reflection. and our evaluations are fed into the planning for future worship.

Right to Withdrawal from RE and Collective Worship

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE, including Collective Worship, by a parent or guardian in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE and can do so without giving any explanation.

When a request to withdraw a pupil is received, the request will be granted without delay. School may offer to speak with the parent to try to understand the basis for the withdrawal but only after the request has been granted. School will make it clear that the parent's right to withdraw their child has been granted and that parents are not required to give reasons for their request.