Collective Worship Policy

1. How is the policy a reflection of our theologically rooted Christian vision?

The structure and planning of collective worship at St Mary's are intentionally shaped by our theologically rooted vision to *live, love and learn together in the light of the life of Christ*. Each act of worship is carefully designed to provide opportunities to encounter biblical teaching, reflect on the example of Jesus, and respond through prayer, song, and action. As we hold fast to the words of Scripture, *"For once you were in darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light." (Ephesians 5:8-11, 13-14)*, our worship enables pupils and staff to live out our 'heart' values, deepen their understanding of what it means to flourish as children of the light, and to grow in love for God, for one another, and for the wider world.

2. Introduction

In Church of England schools, collective worship is seen as more than a daily 'awe and wonder' moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and will be offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.

We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives…Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this.[1]

[1] The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good.* (The Church of England Education Office 2016) page 10

Collective worship is a sacred and significant time of each school day, where we gather together as a whole school family. Collective worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school and reaffirms our Christian vision and associated values of ***faith, hope and charity.***

3. Aims of Collective Worship

- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.

- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.

- To reflect the parish tradition of worship, while giving experience over time for pupils to experience the breadth of Anglicanism.
- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship and festivals. ***(Where appropriate, and in liaison with your incumbent, this may include the Eucharist)***
- Explore the school's Christian vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues.
- Enable pupils the opportunity to make a positive contribution to worship through involvement with aspects of the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship.

4. Legal requirements

Collective worship:

- Should be conducted in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school and Instrument of Government and be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- Unless the right of withdrawal has been exercised all pupils must take part each day in an act of collective worship (DfE circular 1/94 para. 51) and the Governing Body should ensure that all pupils **each day** engage in a distinctively Christian act of worship.
- Arrangements for collective worship in foundation schools of a religious character (i.e. church schools) are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consultation with the headteacher (DfE Circular 1/94 para 52&53).

5. Planning of worship

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, the incumbent of our linked church/es and external visitors in consultation with the collective worship leader and governors.

The daily Christian act of worship is central to our Christian ethos. It makes an important contribution to the spiritual flourishing of the whole school community. We are committed to providing a daily act of Christian worship which is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifies the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship can take place at any point in the school day and within a variety of groupings, such as whole school, key stage or class. At St Mary's, worship follows a clear and systematic pattern, supported by both long-term and short-term planning, ensuring continuity and cohesion across the year. Each class pauses for prayer three times a day, embedding moments of reflection and thankfulness into the rhythm of daily life. In addition, pupils participate in daily morning collective worship, which includes a weekly hymn assembly, Headteacher assembly, Deputy Headteacher assembly, class-led assembly, and regular Mass. These different forms of worship provide a rich variety of opportunities for the whole school community to gather, celebrate, and grow together in faith. We draw upon a range of resources, including the LDBS Collective Worship Planning, to ensure our worship is meaningful, inclusive, and theologically rooted.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles, and our planning incorporates a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship. These include: ***(eg: music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT).***

When planning acts of worship, we follow the Church of England guidance to ensure that worship is:

- Inclusive – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.
- Invitational – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship will provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray if they wish to do so.
- Inspiring – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions.

6. Pattern of Worship

Our pattern of worship is as follows

Monday	***Tuesday***	***Wednesday***	***Thursday***	***Friday***
08:50-09:10	08:50-09:10	09:00-09:30	08:50-09:10	08:50-09:10
Worship in Song SENCO	***Head Teacher Assembly***	***Mass***	***Deputy Head Assembly***	***Class-lead Assembly***
Morning Prayer in each class	***Morning Prayer in each class***	***Morning Prayer in each class***	***Morning Prayer in each class***	***Morning Prayer in each class***
Lunch time Prayer in each class	***Lunch time Prayer in each class***	***Lunch time Prayer in each class***	***Lunch time Prayer in each class***	***Lunch time Prayer in each class***
End of Day Prayer in each class	***End of Day Prayer in each class***	***End of Day Prayer in each class***	***End of Day Prayer in each class***	***End of Day Prayer in each class***

Our worship consists of 4 parts:

- Gather – we welcome the community, for example, (*with music, liturgy and/or the lighting of a candle)*
- Engage – we share, for example, (*a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message)*
- Respond – pupils, for example, (*discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing)*
- Send – we share, for example, (*the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with a final prayer, music, liturgy and/or the blowing out of our special candle)*

7. Collective worship leader

The leader for collective worship is responsible for long term planning of worship, leading acts of worship and supporting staff and pupils who are planning and leading aspects of worship. The

leader also monitors the quality of worship and evaluates its impact across the school community.

8. Visitors leading worship

Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies **(see website).** This should include discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of senior leaders to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship in school, will be trained and properly briefed about the school, its context and our school's vision. Please refer to LDBS guidance for visitors leading worship.

9. CPD and training

Parents, pupils and adults in school are entitled to be led in Christian worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a church school context. Therefore, all those leading worship, including clergy, should have access to regular diocesan led training.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact they have on pupils and adults within the school community.

This involves monitoring by school leaders, the collective worship leader and governors and takes place both informally and formally. Everyone who leads worship is asked to evaluate, reflecting on how they can improve and develop their practice. We welcome the views of all those who participate in our worship, including pupils, parents, and visitors. These views are gathered through pupil voice discussions and surveys, class reflection journals, parent surveys, visitor feedback forms, and informal conversations at school events. This feedback plays an essential part in developing the spiritual growth of our school community.

Foundation governors and the worship leader observe and evaluate worship once every ***half term*** and report back to the whole governing body.

The impact of collective worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).

11. Parents and Carers

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents/carers is essential to help pupils flourish. Worship is regarded as special time in our school day where we gather as a school

family. Reflecting our ethos as a Church of England school, collective worship is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none to be present with integrity.

We respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship, However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we hope that all pupils will participate in collective worship, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child will discuss this with the headteacher before making their decision. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw pupils from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.

12. Evaluation / Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the collective worship leader in consultation with the Headteacher and ratified every ***three years*** by the Governing Body.