

**St. Peter's C of E
Academy
Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust**

**Collective Worship
Policy**

“The Child First and Always.”

Level: 2

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*'Coming together as a community in spirit and truth.'*¹

Creating a time and space where grace may fall!

1) Introduction

In DBAT, worship is central to the life of this school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

However in a DBAT Academy the purpose of collective worship will be to lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

*"Worship in C of E schools promotes theological and Religious Literacy and liberates participants to an imagining of a different order of justice, mercy and hope"*²

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*³) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.⁴

¹ John 3v23

² CEEO Vision statement "Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good" Autumn 2016

³ Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

⁴ "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God".
William Temple (1881-1894)

2) Legal Framework

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at **any time** in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, “that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, is not relevant. Worship in a DBAT Academy should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The local board of St Peter’s Academy have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

3) The Right of Withdrawal

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

In many schools in DBAT there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. **This meeting will establish:**

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

4) Aims

Collective worship **at St Peter's Academy** aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.

- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

5) Organisation, planning and resources

We encourage children's participation in worship and its planning.

Worship takes place daily, with whole school collective worship on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Class worship and Key stage worship takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Children have further fortnightly experience of church worship, when parents and carers are welcome to attend. Each class holds a yearly sharing assembly with parents and carers.

Worship is planned to take account of the church year, using the Bible as a source book of inspiration and learning, and taking account of national and international events. Music, songs, hymns and carols enhance our worship, and we use a variety of approaches, including dance and drama to bring worship alive. Various speakers from other faiths / denominations are invited to participate.

6) Integration in School Life

There is a partnership between the content and conduct of school worship and the ethos of the whole school: *caring for each other, sharing within our community and globally, questioning in a learning community, respecting all and forgiving which leads to hope for all*; as seen in:

- the arrangement, planning, structure and monitoring of Collective worship;
- the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from acts of worship;
- the importance of staff and pupils sharing in the development of a whole-school ethos, and sharing together in worship in order to support the promotion of Christian values;
- the differentiation of whole school worship and small group acts of worship;

- the expectation that pupils will be present in acts of worship, and also the commitment of the school to respect the integrity of the religious communities from which the pupils come.

It is important to introduce collective worship in a way which is inclusive rather than exclusive, with opportunities for prayer and reflection in ways which enable children to join in or remain alongside the worship without feeling left out. If requested, the school will enable a place of prayer for children of other faiths.

7) Visitors

St Peter's C of E Academy welcomes visitors to take part in worship. The school safeguarding policy sets down guidance for visitors in school, and all those working with children (including worship) should have a current **DBS** check.

Visitors leading an act of worship must be given precise instructions concerning age and ability of pupils, purpose of the occasion and appropriate delivery (content and material to be used).

8) Resources

Resources are available and signposted in the Staff Worship File which also holds the timetable and leaders of worship for the term. Worship evaluation sheets are also held in this file.

9) Recording, monitoring and evaluation of Individual Acts of Collective Worship

All acts of worship are planned and recorded, and there is an evaluation of every unit by the Worship Co-ordinator to see how worship was experienced. All acts of worship are recorded in the Worship file in the staff room which includes the topics, stories, music used, the main message and who lead the worship. We monitor and evaluate worship by talking to children. We then involve them in review of the school's provision.

Foundation governors are involved through attendance, participation, monitoring and review of school worship. A worship action plan is part of the school improvement plan, and this plan is monitored by headteacher and governors, and its impact is evaluated at the end of the school year.

Children's own experience, the input of staff and parents, and the links with St Peter's Church make significant contributions to the growth of our community

through collective worship. We also use schemes of worship throughout the year, as laid out in publications such as: Roots and Fruits, Understanding Christianity and Values for Life.

10) Monitoring and Evaluating the Impact of Collective Worship

- The impact of Collective worship is monitored by the Collective Worship Leader, the Collective Worship Governor and children.
- The Collective Worship Leader will ensure that it is happening on a daily basis and is following the school plans.
- Children will be consulted to ensure that collective worship is engaging, age-appropriate and developmental. Plans will be altered according to feedback received.

Suggested Individual Act of Worship Planner

Date:	Whole School/Year/House/ KS/Class	Value / Topic/ Theme
Key Message – you want children/young people to take away		
Gathering		
Engaging		
Responding		
Sending Out		