

# A Policy for Collective Worship

**Signed by..... Position .....**

**Date of policy: April 2019**

**Next review date: April 2021**

“Every Catholic and religiously sponsored school should have a vibrant worship life, with ample opportunities for student liturgies, time of prayer and reflection and be suffused with religious symbols that nurture the faith identity of students”

*Thomas Groome*

### **Legal Requirements**

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils and students. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils and students, or separate acts of worship in school groups.) We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

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.

In this school, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Head of School and RE Coordinator.

### **The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School**

We endorse the belief that Collective Worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in Church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of Church
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds.
- Those from no faith background It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

### **AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN ALL SCHOOLS:**

We believe that Collective Worship in our school aims to provide an opportunity for all pupils, students and staff:

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- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To enter into relationship with God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs and feelings
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To develop the skills of: Reverence, Contemplation, Reflection, Interpretation, Empathy and Meditation

- To express in a variety of ways the distinctive values that underpin the school's existence, vision, outlook against the background of its Mission Statement
- To provide moments of reflection and prayer
- To enable pupils to come into the fullness of Trinitarian life.
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding.  
To reinforce prayers and practices which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes  
To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ.

### **Catholic Tradition**

At the heart of Catholic life is the practise of starting each day, or, beginning any new piece of work (e.g. the school day) with prayer. Good schools make a point of dedicating their day and work to God, who is at **the heart** of the school.

### **Collective Worship is organised in our school as follows:**

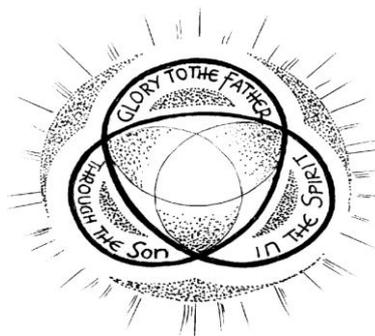
- Mass or Liturgy of the Word in the school's chapel half-termly to celebrate an event in the liturgical calendar
- Candle Time within class groups
- Prayer of thanks for meals
- Prayer and song in many RE lessons

### **CATEGORIES OR DIMENSIONS OF worship:**

- Praise
- Thanksgiving
- Repentance
- Intercessions

### **TYPES OF ACTS OF WORSHIP**

- Class led
- Head of School
- Senior Management
- Visitor led
- Parent led



### **The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship Collective Worship is planned:**

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, adapted 'Come and See' programme, significant dates and the curriculum. A proclamation of the Word will be the focus in most acts of worship
- involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in pupils and students' skills that enable them to prepare, organise and participate in worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

### **The format for Collective Worship for our school will be:**

- **Gather** – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)
- **Listen** – every liturgy will centre around at least one proclamation from the Bible, with the reading of the day being the first source. The Word of God will be proclaimed from a bible or lectionary. ☩
- **Respond** – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (dance, music, drama, silence, art, poetry etc.) We place our needs before God (intercessory prayers)
- **Go Forth** – Giving the pupils and students something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

### **Recording**

Collective Worship is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, learner groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of pupils and students' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and students and whether these are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

### **Eucharist – the Mass**

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated and made accessible to all pupils, students and staff irrespective of their faith development stage. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for pupils and students to participate will be maximised. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to "**The Welcome Table. Planning Masses with Children**" which contains the complete text of the Church's 'Directory for Masses with Children' as a basis for our practice.

We believe that pupils and students are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach.

### **The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)**

During Advent and Lent, a penitential liturgy will be held. The Sacrament of Confession will be made available for pupils, students and staff who have made their First Confession and First Holy Communion.

At Key Stage 1 worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory rites in the Mass and/or The Liturgy of the Word 7

At Key Stage 2 worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites in the mass or The Liturgy of the Word; or the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite.

### **The Leader for Collective Worship**

Gillian Hall RE Coordinator

### **Policy Monitoring and Review**

This policy is monitored by the Leader of Catholic Life and is evaluated and reviewed by the SLT and governors every two years.

Here in St John's, it is through the worshipping nature of our school that we see the Catholic Life of the School is its fullest development.

We subscribe to the same aims as each and every other Catholic school in terms of our aims for collective worship.

Thus, during the week, pupils have the opportunity to participate in whole school assemblies for three days. These assemblies involved the whole school community. The focus of each differs: one is given over to practicing hymns and music, one for celebration of achievement, and one to *explore* and respond to themes including Feast Days and the Church's liturgical calendar.

Assemblies may be led as appropriate by the senior leadership team, by tutors, classes, learning mentors, and we are always delighted to welcome visitors.

All students including those with the most complex needs are expected to take part in worship, and to develop skills of silence and meditation. We acknowledge however that for some young people full participation in acts of worship may be more limited.

Other collective acts of worship may take place within classes in the form of reflection time, prayers and hymns at the end of the day.

We also have the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist led by our Chaplain, Father Bob, in school or as a whole school family in the Convent Chapel. All pupils are encouraged to lead, to create prayers and to serve mass. There is a strong emphasis on multisensory participation including through music and signing, and through the use of ritual and repetition to develop

understanding. At such times pupils' responses appear to transcend their levels of cognitive ability.

**The school day is marked by the morning prayer:**

Dear Father in Heaven

Please bless me today.

Bless all that I do,

My work and my play.

Help me to be kind and do my best

Please bless my family, my friends and all those I love

AMEN

**The end of school prayer:**

Heavenly Father I come to say "Thank you for my work today,

Thank you for my family, and all the friends you give to me.

Guard me in the dark of night and in the morning send your light,

Amen