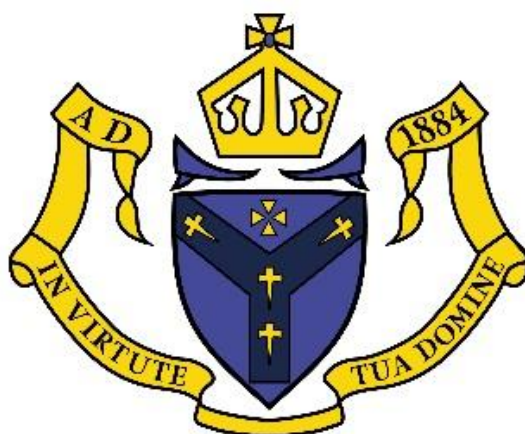


Creative, courageous and aspirational in the strength of God.
Sissinghurst Church of England VA Primary



The Governors and Staff of Sissinghurst (VA) Church of England Primary School believe the policies and procedures we write help us to continuously improve the school and develop our pupils to become life-long learners and valuable citizens of the future.

Our School Vision

We are a strong 'family', passionate about providing creative and aspirational learning opportunities. We are courageous advocates for the planet, learning to speak out for others' locally, nationally and globally. Rooted in the strength of God, we respect, cherish and nurture the unique abilities of each member of our community.

We are dedicated to providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. Our Christian values of:

Kindness Forgiveness Courage Service

Policy Title:	Collective Worship
Date:	January 2024
Review Date:	January 2027
Reviewed by:	Sarah Holman / Kelly Woods
Approved by:	L & D Committee Rev Pete

Introduction

Collective worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of Kindness, Forgiveness Courage and Service and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community.

Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship therefore will be:

- **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 and sing 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.

What is Collective Worship?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term ‘Collective Worship’.

“... Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to ‘collective worship’ rather than ‘corporate worship’. (DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)

Corporate worship assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness).

Collective worship, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values.

Collective Worship should be:

“Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes.” (DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)

Therefore, collective worship in Church of England schools must be inclusive and invitational of all, to ensure all can be present with integrity.

The legal requirements of collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools.

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England
- The Governing Body should ensure that **all** pupils **each day** engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church
- Arrangements for collective worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher (DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53)
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)
- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on ‘each school day take part in an act of collective worship’

- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, then the school must comply. (*Education Reform Act 1988. s9 (3)*)

The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from collective worship.

Parental Withdrawal

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, so would welcome the opportunity to discuss this decision with them. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw children from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.

Aims of collective worship

Collective Worship offers pupils, staff and the wider school community the opportunity to grow spiritually. As part of our commitment to the spiritual flourishing of all members of our community, there are opportunities to:

- Gather together to share sacred moments of joy, challenge, grief and love.
- Explore the school's distinctive Christian vision and values in action
- Reflect on the nature of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still, pray and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Explore Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate significant and special times in the Christian calendar

We aim to ensure that collective worship:

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection. ^[1]_[SEP]
- b) Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist. ^[1]_[SEP]
- c) Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- d) Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship. ^[1]_[SEP]

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship through invitational and inclusive language:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance

- Observing the cycle of the Church’s Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Saints Days amongst ordinary days
- Saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord’s Prayer and the blessings in common use
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection
- Using Psalms with simple responses – Taizé style

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship
- Using Collects as a focus for worship
- Celebrating Eucharist

Implementation

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors including the ‘Open The Book’ team in consultation with the collective worship leader. This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class. Parents are invited to attend every Friday for family celebration. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using the Canterbury Diocesan Collective Worship Planning which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and this enables continuity.

Visitors to our school who lead worship are asked to read and comply with our visitor safeguarding agreement and the content of any worship discussed or shared with a member of the senior leadership team in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. School staff are present during all collective worship to ensure there is adequate supervision for pupils.

We meet daily at 10am (unless stated otherwise) using the following pattern for worship:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Whole school collective worship led by SLT or pupil leaders such as leading lights, head students, house captains.	2.30pm Whole school singing worship led by Music leader	Whole school values-based collective worship led by class teachers on a rota	9am fortnightly Whole school led by Reverend Pete and or the Open the Book Team from Trinity Church Sissinghurst or Class based worship or Class -led assembly for children and parents	9am Whole school family celebration worship – all families invited to attend every week.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities including: music, silence, symbolism, drama and use of IT.

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- *Gather* – we welcome the community, for example, (with music, liturgy and 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 liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle)

Expectations of pupils

Pupils are expected to enter collective worship quietly, there is usually music playing as they enter the hall. Children are usually seated in their class groups or at times may sit with buddies in mixed aged groups.

Pupils are invited to evaluate and reflect on the impact of acts of worship they have joined with. Their voice is integral to improving the structure, content and in shaping future plans for worship.

Pupils regularly join in or help lead worship. They work with the collective worship leader during a lunchtime club called 'Leading Lights' to develop their own understanding of worship and to design a worship to support the spiritual development of their peers. Year 6 children apply to be worship leaders and are appointed at the start of September. The worship leaders lead our Leading Lights club and are involved in leading every collective worship.

Developing Worship

The collective worship leader attends regular professional development with Canterbury Diocese and all staff leading worship access a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging. The impact of collective worship is evaluated regularly by gathering pupil and adult voice.

Self-assessment and Inspection

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop.

We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils which are reviewed and considered on a regular basis. The outcomes of feedback plays an integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school. Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in consultation with the Diocese of Canterbury (SIAMS).