

# GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Collective Worship Policy January 2024

Review: September 2025



## GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Collective Worship Policy

#### *Rooted in faith, growing in wisdom, branching into the world*

We are a diverse, vibrant learning community where everyone is welcomed, valued and encouraged. Loving relationships, rooted in the teachings of Jesus, allow children and adults to flourish together, creating wise, compassionate, respectful individuals who are ready to confidently take a productive place in an ever changing world.

The Christian ethos of Guston Church of England Primary School is our motivation for all that we seek to do. It is founded on the understanding that all people are uniquely and unconditionally loved and cherished by God and therefore deserving of our utmost respect and that it is God's will that we are enabled to live life to the full. The Christian ethos is rooted in the values of love, forgiveness, friendship and justice as exemplified in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Our ethos is given life through our relationships - the way that we work together and behave with one another and those we seek to support and nurture. It is an ethos which is inclusive and seeks to encourage and inspire everyone to achieve their fullest potential.

#### Christian values

- Each individual is unique and every attempt is made to meet their needs and enable them to fulfil their potential
- Diversity is celebrated
- Every member of the community feels valued including staff, learners and parents/carers
- Community and worship are at the heart of the life of the school
- The development of the 'whole child' is fundamental – recognising physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions
- Respect for each other and a sense of belonging are ideals to which we aspire
- Honesty, openness and transparency
- Inclusion

We share five explicit Christian values with our school community and demonstrate how these values can be displayed in everyday life but are rooted in scripture. These values are:

**Friendship, Endurance, Compassion, Forgiveness and Equality**

#### **How is this policy a reflection of our distinctive Christian vision?**

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of Friendship, Endurance, Compassion, Forgiveness and Equality 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.

## **An Introduction to collective worship in Guston CEP School**

As a Church of England school collective worship is the beating heart of our school life. It brings and gives life to all we do. Collective worship is a sacred and significant time of each school day, where we gather together as a school family.

Collective worship strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values and celebrates the central role that each pupil and adult have to play in our community.

Our acts of collective worship reflect the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and 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.

## **Aims of collective worship**

Collective Worship offers pupils, staff and the wider school community the opportunity 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

In line with the requirements of the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, 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 whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home.
- 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.
- 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.

### **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 in consultation with the collective worship leader. Plans are prepared with the support of the local clergy team to ensure they meet the specific needs of the community, and Diocesan recommendations to ensure that the school maintains its distinctive Christian character, although the context of the school and role, does require careful and sensitive planning. The Canterbury Diocese Collective Worship plan is one of the resources which is used to support the term plans. However, using a range of faith based school planning resources, it ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and enables continuity of Biblical and Christian themes.

We meet:

<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Worship Leader</b>
Mon	10.15am	Hall	Headteacher

Tues	10.15am	Hall	SLT
Weds	10.15am	Hall – singing	SLT
Thurs	10.15am	Hall	Incumbent
Fri	2.30pm	Hall – Open invite to parents & friends	Headteacher/SLT

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship. These include: music, silence, symbolism, drama, 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

In Guston CEP School, there is an expectation that all pupils will be involved within worship on a regular basis. This may be opportunities planned ahead of time or unplanned through questioning, asking for volunteers or simply responding to moments of spontaneity.

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.

Pupil's are supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship on a voluntary basis.

### Developing worship

Parents, pupils and adults in Guston CEP School are entitled to be led in 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.

The leader for collective worship will:

- Ensure that all pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship, therefore meeting statutory requirements.
- Ensure that collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring.
- Attend regular training and network meetings with Canterbury Diocese
- Produce and regularly review the collective worship policy to ensure that it remains reflects current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of collective worship across the school.

- Ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading, planning and joining worship.
- Join those who are leading worship to provide supportive feedback on how worship could be developed.
- Evaluate the impact of collective worship on the whole school community by gathering pupil and adult voice.
- Signpost staff to a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and resources, to help develop their confidence in leading acts of worship.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited to lead collective worship.
- Meet with and encourage pupil leaders of worship to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.

### **Visitors leading worship**

Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies. 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 the collective worship leader and senior leaders to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship in school, will be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and our school's vision. They will be supported and monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation process of worship.

### **Self-assessment and Inspection**

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

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

### **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. (Please see Appendix 2)

Date of validation:

Signed:  
Chair of Governors

Date of review:

Signed:  
Chair of Governors

## Appendix 1

### 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.



## Appendix 2



# GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Withdrawal from Collective Worship and Religious Education

In line with SACRE's recommendation, where a pupil is withdrawn from R.E. and they do not take part in alternative religious education they will be supervised by an appropriate member of staff whilst doing work set by their parents which will seek to further their knowledge and understanding of their parents believes and values. Due to the open plan nature of the school, the school cannot guarantee that a child/children withdrawn from R.E. will not be in ear shot of R.E. teaching.

Activity	Frequency	Withdrawn	Notes/Comments
Collective Worship (celebration assembly)	Daily 15 minutes	Y/N	
Class Prayers	Twice daily	Y/N	
Singing Worship	Weekly – 15 minutes	Y/N	
Religious Education	Weekly – 1 hour/1 hour 15 mins	Y/N	
Class Assemblies – participating	Termly	Y/N	
Class Assemblies – audience	Termly	Y/N	
Faith Week	Annual	Y/N	
Religious performances – participating	Ongoing	Y/N	
Religious performances - audience	Ongoing	Y/N	
Carol Concert – participating	Annual event but with rehearsals	Y/N	
Carol Concert – audience	Annual	Y/N	
Christmas Lunch	Annual	Y/N	
Decorations Day	Annual	Y/N	
'Experience Easter' at the local church	Annual	Y/N	
Easter Assembly – participating	Annual event but with rehearsals	Y/N	
Easter Assembly – audience	Annual	Y/N	
Trips to the church	Ongoing	Y/N	
Christingle Service	Annual	Y/N	
Ascension Service	Annual	Y/N	
Shrove Tuesday	Annual	Y/N	
Ash Wednesday	Annual	Y/N	
Mothers' Day Assembly	Annual	Y/N	
Mothers' Day cards	Annual	Y/N	
Mothers' Day lunch	Annual	Y/N	
Harvest Festival	Annual	Y/N	
Remembrance Day Service	Annual	Y/N	
Cathedral Schools Day	Annual	Y/N	
Charity work linked to a Christian Charity	Ongoing	Y/N	
Celebration of other faiths	Ongoing		
Diwali Day	Annual	Y/N	
Dashain	Annual	Y/N	
Eid	Annual	Y/N	

If situations arise that are not covered on this list, the school will contact the parents to discuss withdrawal.

<b>Names of child/children:</b>	
<b>Name of parent:</b>	
<b>Signature of parent:</b>	
<b>Signature of Headteacher:</b>	

When completed and signed please return to the School Office. Thank you.