



**BLUE COAT C E (AIDED) INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS' FEDERATION**

**Collective Worship Policy**

Date agreed by Governors:

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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

*“I will bless you with a future, filled with hope, a future of success, not of suffering.”  
Jeremiah 29:11*

### 1. Mission Statement and Introduction

This Policy is carried out within the context and spirit of the school’s Mission Statement. It supports and reinforces the aims of Blue Coat C of E (Aided) Infant and Junior Schools’ Federation valuing all children equally.

The ethos of the school is distinctively Christian, encompassing all that we stand for, is reflected in and expressed through Collective Worship; it derives from the Christian tradition and seeks to activate our beliefs and values which are set out, clearly, in the School Prospectus.

Collective Worship, within a Christian context, plays an important part in the life of our school. It is an oasis in the school day when children meet together with members of staff in a calm and peaceful atmosphere, where all present are given the opportunity to reflect and participate. It is regarded as ‘quality’ time and represents something special or separate from ordinary school routine.

### 2. Definitions

**Collective Worship:** is a gathering of a ‘collection’ of people of diverse, religious, agnostic and non-religious backgrounds and does not pre-suppose any particular religious commitment.

**Worship:** can be defined as paying homage to (revering) that which is of worth (“Worth-ship.”) Religious Worship is the acknowledgement of ‘worth’ which is attributable to a supreme being. Worth can also be registered in other people and in values and attitudes.

**School Assembly:** is a gathering of the school community; it is often used to celebrate and focus on the life and values of the community itself.

**Corporate Worship:** is a gathering of a body (‘corpus’) of believers and presupposes a particular religious commitment.

**NB:** We note that Collective Worship and School Assembly are not one and the same thing. They are, in essence, different from each other, but in practice they often overlap.

Our Collective Worship is in accordance with the Trust Deed. This requires worship to be consistent with the principles and practices of the Anglican Church and will, therefore, be wholly Christian in character.

### 3. Rationale

Collective Worship:-

- Use and promote the clearly identified core Christian values of the school.
- Be based on Biblical text or themes.
- Be central in importance to the life of our school community, which is part of a wider community that embraces the whole world.

- gives children the opportunity to enter into experiences which lie at the heart of religion. These experiences help them to learn about religious worship and provide a framework for later understanding.
- fosters a reverential attitude to God, the Divine, the transcendent.
- Use the seasons and festivals of the Christian year.
- encourages pupils to consider fundamental questions about the purpose of being and about moral and ethical stances, through the study of our school values.
- provides an opportunity, for those who can use it, to participate in religious worship.
- allows us to learn and celebrate values we hold to be important.
- brings children together, enabling them to experience the security of belonging to a community with an identity of its own.
- is the source of much interesting and thought provoking knowledge.
- offers pleasurable expression through literature, art, music and drama.
- makes an important, though not exclusive, contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### 4. Aims and Principles

The following principles guide our approach to Collective Worship at Blue Coat Infant and Junior Schools' Federation. Collective Worship should have a sense of occasion.

1. provide experiences within which pupils' spiritual development may flourish.
2. be a means of expressing the ethos and values of the school.
3. be educational and should contribute to the Religious Education of all pupils.
4. be shaped to the needs of the school, (time, place, content, style etc.)
5. provide a varied pattern of worship to broaden pupils' experience of its different forms.
6. recognise that the school includes children from different religious and non-religious backgrounds.
7. Celebrate the God given gifts and talents of individuals and the whole school community
8. Consider the beliefs and values of others, especially those within the school community
9. • Raise aspirations of individuals and the school community

During Collective Worship, some will be worshipping and some will be experiencing something approaching worship; others will be finding out what it is like to worship by being with those who are worshipping, as a result of which, participation to prayer will always be invitational.

#### 5. Objectives

The objectives of Collective Worship are to:-

- affirm the Christian faith and the Christian status of Jesus as Son of God in accordance with the foundation of Blue Coat Infant and Junior Schools' Federation.
- Plan and link themes which focus on a particular idea/concept, i.e. the liturgical year; School Values, festivals and celebrations, within Christian and other faith traditions.
- Using a wide range of resources to introduce pupils to the practice of religious worship through music, art, story, poetry, movement and prayer so that they are able to respond in their own way, if they wish to.
- create a warm, caring and respectful atmosphere in assemblies, conducive to worship; including the manner of entry and exit.
- enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- encourage, in children, a thoughtful and reflective attitude.
- help pupils experience a sense of awe, wonder, reverence and inner stillness.
- enable pupils to use silence for reflection and contemplation.

- raise pupil’s curiosity about the ultimate mysteries of life.
- enable pupils to learn about and consider in depth Christian teaching, Christian festivals and Biblical material.
- Involve pupils and members of the wider community to participate in collective worship.
- help pupils appreciate that Christians and other people may see themselves as ‘stewards’ of God’s world.
- enable pupils to reflect upon their own beliefs in relation to those of others.
- help children distinguish between right and wrong.
- affirm pupils’ personal worth and responsibility.
- celebrate individual and collective achievements.
- develop a sense of community within the school.
- celebrate religious festivals and special occasions with specified worship.

**6. Management of Collective Worship**

The School will endeavour to fulfil the legal requirements of 1988 Education Reform Act in conjunction with School’s trust deed, by holding ‘an act of collective worship every day’.

At interview all applicants are informed that the school holds daily acts of collective worship that promote the Christian ethos and values of the school.

The normal expectation will be that teaching staff, including student teachers, will participate in collective worship. The school welcomes offers from any member of staff who feels confident to lead worship.

During collective worship, whether in the hall, classroom or outside, we will apply the following ‘central attributes’ of worship:

<b>Gathering</b>	Making special and significant this part of the day through appropriate symbol and ceremony
<b>Engaging</b>	Using the best available techniques to stimulate interest in the content
<b>Responding</b>	Ensuring there is time and opportunity for individual, group reflection and thought, so those attending can respond in a variety of ways and in addition
<b>Sending</b>	Summarising the worship in a meaningful short message used to create an opportunity for those attending to implement the ideas covered and to conclude the worship

**The Governing Body** is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that the Foundation of the school is honoured and that the worship policy is firmly based upon the intentions set down in the Trust Deed.
2. Ensuring that the Collective Worship Policy is put into practice and monitored by the appropriate Governor.
3. Engaging an appropriate inspector to carry out the SIAMS Inspection of a church school alongside the OFSTED Inspection.

**The School Development Plan** cycle regularly reviews Collective Worship and gives an indication of the intentions and arrangements for review concerning the following:

- Themes and approaches.
- Development of resources.
- Staff training and support.

- Pupil participation and response.

**The Collective Worship Co-ordinators** have responsibility for managing the worship on a day to day basis, ensuring that all legal requirements are complied with. The co-ordinators also keep in touch with national developments in school worship and acts in an advisory capacity, supporting colleagues.

### **Role of Collective Worship Leaders**

- To write the school's policy for Collective Worship in consultation with the foundation governors.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of and use the policy document.
- To review the policy on a regular basis.
- To plan an overall balanced programme of worship for the year.
- To draw up assembly rotas.
- To involve colleagues, pupils and visitors in worship.
- To advise on planning, ideas and resources.
- To be responsible for ordering resources and materials.
- To oversee the budget for Collective Worship.
- To ensure that Collective Worship maintains a high profile in the School Development Plan.
- To monitor and evaluate, with others, Collective Worship in all its forms.
- To maintain a Collective Worship display board
- To arrange INSET for staff.
- To keep up to date with recent publications, attend Diocesan courses and disseminate information and feedback to staff.
- To liaise with the incumbent, governing body and Diocesan officers on matters relating to Collective Worship.

**Monitoring and evaluating** Collective Worship is an on-going process carried out on a weekly and termly basis.

## **7. Organisation**

The school has a central prayer station. Children are encouraged to write short prayers and prayers are shared and read out in worship

During the collective worship there will be a time for response and reflection, to ponder on a question, statement or thought. This may also be reflected in a prayer, offered spontaneously by a pupil or adult, read out or recited.

Each class has a 'reflective area' to engage and promote individual pupils and adults, as well as designated special spaces around the school.

### **Infant School**

- Daily acts of Collective Worship, except on Wednesdays, take place in the school hall from 9.05am – 9.20am.
- The themes are planned by the Head of School over a term and reflect the core values.

- The structure of assemblies includes call to worship, reflective music, the lighting of candles for birthday and prayer requests, a story or talk based on a biblical text or theme, a worship song, a closing prayer and extinguishing of the candles.
- The Wednesday act of worship takes place in the classroom or year group area.
- Singing worship takes place on a Friday.
- Classroom Worship may be combined with Personal and Social Education.

**Monday:** Whole School worship led by a member of the Executive Leadership Team. Story/talk based on The Core Christian Values.

**Tuesday:** Clergy led

**Wednesday Class (classroom/Year group area):** Staff led on Core Values or linked to current topic

**Thursday:** Whole School worship led by Executive Head Celebrating achievement.

**Friday:** Hymn practice

### Junior School

- Acts of Collective Worship, take place in the school hall from 9.00am to 9.25am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- On Tuesdays, Acts of Collective Worship take place in classrooms from 9.00am to 9.20am.
- The themes are planned by the Executive Head and Worship subject leaders and reflect the readings of the Church of England's lectionary during the year.
- The structure of assemblies includes reflective music, the call to worship the lighting of candles for birthday and prayer requests, a story or talk based on a biblical text or theme, a worship song, a closing prayer, followed by the dismissal and extinguishing of the candles.
- The Lord's Prayer is used regularly.
- Whole school Acts of Worship on Thursdays led by a member of the clergy from one of the local churches. On the rare occasion where they are unable to visit, a pre-recorded video may be provided for the children to watch as part of Worship within the class.
- Classroom Worship may be combined with Personal and Social Health Education.

**Monday:** Whole School worship led by a member of the Executive Leadership Team. Story/talk based on weekly theme.

**Tuesday Class (classroom):** Teacher talk/discussion on weekly theme

**Wednesday:** Whole School singing assembly.

**Thursday:** Clergy assembly

**Friday:** Whole School Celebration assembly led by Executive Head

### 8. Parental Engagement

Parents are actively encouraged to participate in a number of collective acts of worship, church services and celebration worships.

- Parents are encouraged to attend the celebration assembly, particularly if their child is taking part. Parents are invited to attend by either text or written invitation.
- Staff attend assembly worship.
- The school worships in church on the following occasions: Harvest, Christmas, Easter, and the End of Summer Term.
- All children and staff are invited to attend Blue Coat Sunday.
- A communion service is held for Year 6 in the Junior School in the Summer Term – parents/carers are invited to attend.



## 9. Elements of Worship

*“There are times when worship will be quiet, contemplative and serene and others when laughter, music and dance will be the appropriate form of expression.”*

**Atmosphere** is all-important in creating the right foundation for Collective Worship. Quiet, orderly behaviour and respectful attitudes on entering, leaving and throughout the worship is expected. Staff enhance the atmosphere by their presence and participation. A covered table with flowers /a cross /a bible and a candle help to set the scene.

**Music** is played at the beginning and end of worship.

**Call to Worship** consists of The Peace, the School Welcome and our School Vision statement, which may be led by Year 6 Worship leaders, where appropriate.

**Stories and talks** are carefully chosen to fulfil the objectives of Collective Worship. Stories of a religious or secular nature may be used whilst personal anecdote from pupils, teachers and visitors is effective in expressing that which is important in our own lives. Particular emphasis is given to helping children to understand themselves better, to develop empathy and to face up to moral issues.

**Songs** are chosen from a wide variety of traditional and modern hymns and choruses. One or two are used at each assembly, some are learned by heart and actions are incorporated, whilst others are displayed on the overhead projector. Hymns and songs create the opportunity for children to express thoughts and feelings that are difficult to put into words; and they provide a real source of pleasure.

**Prayer and reflection** are the most personal part of an act of worship. Collective Worship in school provides opportunities for children to be taken to the threshold of prayer, and to cross it if they wish, in a way that respects the integrity of all present. Participation in prayer can never be imposed but we stress the need for stillness, reflection and respect for others. Silence, written prayers, impromptu prayers, The Lord’s Prayer, children’s prayers and the school prayer may be used. Candles are lit and provide a focus for pupils’ thoughts. Reflection and thinking time are given some direction by the leader in order to concentrate pupils’ response.

**Dismissal** a range of prayers will be used at the end of assembly, linked to the current value.

**Scripture** sentences may be quoted from the Bible and, where appropriate, from sacred books and writings of other world faiths. Longer passages may be used as readings.

**Presentation** sets the tone within the act of worship. In keeping with the reverent atmosphere, use is also made of visual aids, artefacts, drama, demonstration and video.

## 10. Content

**Planning** for Collective Worship is the responsibility of the Head of School. Plans and schedules are ratified by the Governing Body. Suggestions and requests from staff are welcomed, whilst input and guidance from the incumbent on the selection of themes is valued. The Music Coordinator collaborates in the selection of songs/hymns,

**Themes.** They may:-

1. have a specific religious base such as ‘the early Christian Church’ or ‘miracles of Jesus.’
2. reflect a theme common to all religions such as ‘creation.’



3. be concerned with common values held by religious and non-religious people alike such as 'caring and sharing.'

Themes are closely related to the school community and are often illustrated by stories of human endeavour. The final planned programme is based on a 3-year cycle.

**Links with R.E. and the Curriculum** are incorporated wherever possible. Common themes link R.E. and Collective Worship. The apt choice of story can link worship with current topic work e.g. 'Caring' = 'Florence Nightingale' = 'Victorians'. Assemblies can be followed up in the classroom by further discussion and emphasis throughout the day. There is often an overlap between Collective Worship and Personal and Social Health Education.

**N.B.** No worship programme can ever be entirely pre-planned. There will always be the spontaneous moment or occasion when it is important, spiritually, to focus on the immediate, so that pupils become aware of how the spiritual dimension transcends all our experience.

## 11. Resources

**These include:**

- Staff, pupils, visiting speakers.
- Candle and stand.
- Selection of religious artefacts.
- Selection of assembly song books
- Recorded music – a range of classical, folk, ethnic
- Access to computer and projector.
- Currently, we have access to staff / children to play piano, drums and guitar.

## 12. Records and Assessment

- Assessment is mainly through feedback and discussion from the Worship Leaders, who feedback positives and points for improvement. This includes their views on classroom Worship as well as whole school Acts of Worship.
- More formal assessment of Collective Worship is carried out by the Head of School and RE Leaders. The monitoring focuses on:
  - 1) Checking that practice matches aims and objectives.
  - 2) Observation of childrens' attentiveness and level of interest.
  - 3) Classroom feedback from pupils.
  - 4) Comments from parents, visitors and governors.
  - 5) The extent of the influence of themes upon pupils' attitude and behaviour throughout the school day.
  - 6) Self-evaluation/comment by the teacher.
  - 7) Staff meetings are used for discussion and the update of information as and when necessary.
  - 8) Lichfield Diocese monitors worship regularly.

## 13. Legal status of collective worship

All maintained schools in England must provide a daily act of collective worship.

In a Church of England School, worship must be in line with the trust deed of the school and will reflect the traditions of the Church of England, i.e. the Anglican tradition.

#### **14. Equal Opportunities**

All pupils have equal opportunity to take part in Collective Worship and to benefit from the experience. The school prospectus and website informs parents of their right to withdraw pupils from Collective Worship. Such pupils are fully supervised in another part of the school.

#### **15. Rights to Withdraw**

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the daily act of collective worship. Our school complies with this wish and ensures a duty of care for pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship.

Our school will respect parental request and will try to discuss the request to see if an accommodation can be reached and to ensure worship remains inclusive and invitational and open to all members of the school community

This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

#### **16. Other Faiths**

Due to the rich cultural diversity of the children who attend our school, we aim to include role models from a variety of cultural and faith backgrounds within Collective Worship. A variety of multicultural materials are available throughout the school. Stories are shared and festivals celebrated in accordance with the major faiths represented within the school. Tolerance and understanding of other religions is upheld.

#### **17. Review**

The Governing Body will review this policy, formally, three years from the date of its adoption. Informal Review may be necessary in the interim and should take place as and when required.