

UNITED SCHOOLS FEDERATION

St. Michael's C. of E. Nursery & Primary School St. Catherine's C. of E. VA Primary School
St. Mary's C. of E. VA Primary School Marldon C. of E. VA Primary School
Ipplepen Primary School and Stokeinteignhead School



Collective Worship Policy

'I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full.'- *John 10:10*

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

We believe that every child is uniquely created by God and is special to Him.

Our school is a safe and happy place, based on Christian principles, where we all care for each other, grow together and follow our dreams.

We do this by treating each day as an opportunity to learn more about ourselves, each other and the world we live in.

Collective Worship in our schools should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

Policy Statement

Across the United Schools Federation, worship is central to daily life 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.

The worship of God in Church is about honouring God and His love, 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.

Across the United School Federation collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and create an environment where the whole school community can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils are offered a space to understand and reflect on the Christian story. They are invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy and experience the beauty of inspiration through music and the arts. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world are given in Collective Worship as a whole school, class groups and individuals. By celebrating the seasonal festivals of the Christian calendar, celebrating their own and others achievements and personal exploration of their spiritual natures, children are led to understand their responsibilities towards themselves, others and the world as created by God.

Legal Requirements

Reviewed 10th October 2019, next review October 2021

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. Worship within our Church of England, Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Schools (St. Michael's, St. Catherine's, St. Mary's and Marldon) should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

Within our Community Schools (Ipplepen, Stokeinteignhead), collective worship will be of a wholly, or mainly, of a broadly Christian character. The way in which this 'Christian character' is defined can be decided by each individual school, with regard to the pupils' family background, ages and aptitudes. No act of worship should be distinctive of any particular (Christian) denomination e.g. it should not have a strong Church of England content, or Catholic content - it should be 'ecumenical'.

The Governing Body of the United Schools Federation have the responsibility for ensuring that Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Schools 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 all school communities in consultation with the executive headteacher.

The right of withdrawal

Across the federation, there are significant numbers of children whose families 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.

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.

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. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part.
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas.
- 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. (*This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.*)

Collective worship in our Church of England Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Schools aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth.
- 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.

Collective worship within our Community Schools aims to:

- provide our children with regular opportunities for stillness and reflection
- promote children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- celebrate the values and worth of the school community and all who belong in it, including the sharing of the gifts and talents of our children.
- help children develop and understanding both of the nature and language of worship
- help children develop respect and sensitivity to the beliefs and values of others
- support the broader curriculum through the use of art, music, dance, story, drama and other visual and oral means of communication
- provide opportunities for pupils to celebrate their own achievements and those of others.
- Ensure all pupils feel valued whatever their faith or personal beliefs.
- reflect the beliefs and backgrounds of individual pupils and encourage a voluntary response from pupils
- acknowledge and respect the responses of individual pupils and provide opportunities for them to express their feelings such as delight at life, wonder, joy, rejoicing and sorrow
- encourage pupils to consider their own place in the community, help understand the importance of British Values and how they shape us in terms of being responsible citizens.

Date of last review:

Headteacher signed:

Date:

Chair of Governors signed:

Date: