

# ACORN MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

## Thorncombe St Mary's CofE Primary Academy

# Collective Worship Policy

| Document control table  |   |   |                 |
|---|---|---|-----------------|
| <b>Document Title:</b>  | <b>Collective Worship Policy (Church schools) – policy template</b> |   |                 |
| <b>Author (Job title):</b>  | Clerk (from Diocese of Exeter template)                             |   |                 |
| <b>Staff responsibility: (name or post)</b>                                 | <b>CEO &amp; Head of School</b>                                     |   |                 |
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| <b>This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policies:</b> | Equality Policy<br>PSHE Policy<br>SMSC Policy                       |   |                 |

**At Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy, we believe the purpose of education is to nurture and enable every child to thrive and to achieve their full potential. Our Christian vision encapsulates this and shapes all that we do:**

## **Living, Learning and Growing Together**

*Through living, learning and growing together, we nurture each individual's uniqueness and potential so that they may enjoy life in all its fullness (John 10:10).*

Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). 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**

In Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy, worship is central to the life of the school 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.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God 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.

At Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy, collective worship aims to be **inspirational, invitational and inclusive** and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*<sup>1</sup>) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

<sup>2</sup> "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God". William Temple (1881-1894)

## Church of England Guidance

The collective worship policy at Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy draws on guidance from the Church of England<sup>3</sup>. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

## Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools and academies 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. In other words, the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, "that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", is not relevant. Worship in Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship (see Appendix 1 below, 'the right of withdrawal').

The governing body has the responsibility for ensuring that the school 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 the school community in consultation with the Headteacher.

## Guiding Principles

Collective worship in Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpicked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- 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.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>

- 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 known 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.

## Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

This policy was developed through support from the Dioceses of Exeter & Salisbury, in conversation with the senior leadership of Acorn Multi Academy Trust and using guidance from Devon SACRE.

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHCE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included on the school website.

## How Collective worship is organised

This section deals with the practicalities of how collective worship works at Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy.

**At Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy we arrange Acts of Collective Worship/assemblies in the following ways;**

| Day       | Time      | Grouping      | Place     | Leadership         | Theme / pupil's role                      |
|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|--------------------|---|
| Monday    | 8.45-9.00 | Whole school  | Hall      | School Ambassadors | <i>Pupil voice and sharing key themes</i> |
| Tuesday   | 8.45-9.00 | Whole school  | Hall      | Head of School     | <i>Value of the term</i>                  |
| Wednesday | 8.45-9.00 | Class worship | Classroom | Class teachers     | Applying the value of the term            |
| Thursday  | 8.45-9.00 | Whole school  | Hall      | Music Lead         | <i>Praising through song</i>              |

|               |           |              |      |                |                                 |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Friday</b> | 8.45-9.00 | Whole school | Hall | Head of School | <i>Celebration<br/>Together</i> |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|------|----------------|---------------------------------|

## Leadership & Planning

The Head of School holds overall responsibility for the planning and provision of collective worship at the school. This includes the strategic direction of the values teachings during the course of the year and the opportunities for reflection that are offered.

The calendar for Collective Worship draws on the Church year and the school's Christian values. Collective Worship will be treated like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing and evaluation. All those leading collective worship are asked to plan their act of worship in as much detail as they would any other learning activity. Staff are given appropriate training and mentoring to equip them in their roles as worship leaders.

All pupils attend an act of Collective Worship each day. These are organised on a rota and include whole school, class worship and singing worship.

A record is kept of Collective Worship. The Christian Distinctiveness Lead is responsible for keeping this record.

The Head of School and Local Governing Body and governors in the MAT Ethos Group are responsible for monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship. Children, teachers, and governors are all involved in the evaluation of Collective Worship.

- Throughout each week, a mix of the Head of School, class teachers, the Music Lead, Open the Book and children lead daily worship. Members of the clergy or local church and individual visitors also lead worship at dedicated times through the year.
- Support and mentoring is provided to those leading worship so that key collective worship aspects are included, such as the opening and closing of a worship, the lighting of the candle and songs.
- The Christian Distinctiveness Lead and Head of School are responsible for the planning of collective worship. A mix of shared parables, real life examples and reflection time is planned into each worship.
- All members of the school community, especially children, are equipped to plan and lead acts of worship.
- Worship reflects the cycle of the Church year and key dates are planned into Collective Worship to celebrate as a school community.
- The 6 Christian values of the school underpin Collective Worship. Each half term, a core value is identified, expressed and celebrated through Collective Worship. Children explore parables linked to this core value and consider how this applies to their own lives.
- Explicit links are made between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school.
- A pattern for worship is used which reflects Anglican tradition: gather, engage, respond and send.
- The range and variety of materials used, including: websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g. a picture or candle is planned into the collective worship calendar.

- Opportunities are provided for children and adults to explore faith in today's world and to explore Christianity as a multicultural world faith.
- The Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God is explored.
- Spiritual growth through prayer, stillness and reflection is nurtured.

## Organisation

Collective worship is organised to take account of the different groupings for worship. Resources, songs and parables are shared with collective worship leaders to ensure consistency in key aspects of worship. All collective worships follow: gather, engage, respond and send.

Throughout the calendar year, different settings and places for worship are planned into collective worship. All collective worship spaces have a candle to light, words to read at the open and close of the worship and a means to play songs through to offer time to reflect. The liturgical colours of the seasons of the Church Year are included on the collective worship calendar. Christian signs and symbols (such as candles, music and a focal point) are present in all collective worship locations. Ritual and liturgical responses form part of every collective worship. Children are seated in a way that allows for them all to see the collective worship leader. They are encouraged to share the peace with one another and be part of the school community during each worship.

Thorncombe St Mary's has a spiritual sensory garden where the children visit during the RE and PSHCE learning and is an additional place to hold outdoor worship. It also offers a peaceful place for children to access during break and lunch times. The school has strong links with St Mary's Church, Thorncombe.

Collective worship happens every day. This takes place from 8.45-9.00am.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- The entire school community, including staff, parents, visitors and pupils has a responsibility to uphold the principles and actions of this policy.
- The Local Governing Body, supported by the Trust's Ethos Group will review the Collective Worship Policy every two years or as required and monitor the SIAMS self-assessment and actions plans.
- The Executive Head, Head of School and other members of the senior leadership team are responsible for modelling the ethos of the school and ensuring that the practices of this policy are carried out.
- Clergy and church partners are responsible for taking an active part in this policy and the continued development of the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- Teaching and support staff take responsibility for upholding the values of the school and ensuring that the practicalities in the policy are carried out, particularly encouraging reflection times and deeper discussion of the reflection questions. Staff attend collective worship.
- Pupils will be encouraged to be respectful of the times of quiet and calm throughout collective worship times.
- Information is regularly shared with parents and carers about what is being explored within collective worship and to share the core value for each half term, including what this means.

## Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.



## Monitoring and evaluation

Working through the LGB and MAT Ethos Group, governors are responsible for the monitoring of collective worship. Each term, a sample of collective worship sessions will be observed and pupil interviews will be carried out to ensure the quality of the sessions.

The School Ethos Council takes an active role in evaluating collective worship which leads to its further strengthening and developing over time.

Pupil voices are gathered throughout the year to evaluate the impact of collective worship.

## Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.

## Other Useful Documents: (can be found on the diocesan website<sup>4</sup>)

- Guidance for visitors leading Collective Worship, including a code of conduct
- Example Visitors Leaflet about Collective Worship
- Collective Worship Planning Proformas
- Evaluation and Monitoring – Ideas and Systems
- Suggested Resources for Collective Worship
- Spirituality – What is it?

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<sup>4</sup> <https://exeter.anglican.org/schools/christian-ethos-siams/collective-worship/>

# Appendix 1

## The right of withdrawal

In Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy, there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who 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 Head of School 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 of School 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 that their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)*