

St Peter's



Church of England  
Primary School



## St Peter's Church of England Primary School Policy for Collective Worship

### Our Vision

In our school our vision shapes all we do.

We are a welcoming, inclusive family with a strong Christian ethos. We continually aim to be an excellent school where people care more than others think is wise, risk more than others think is safe, dream more than others think is practical and expect more than others think is possible.

Our Vision has three main drivers:

- **Excellence in all we do:** To maintain and deepen our outstanding school status by ensuring excellent outcomes for all pupil groups.
- **Excellence in who we are:** As a church school to continually challenge ourselves to value, respect and support each other to become wise, generous and hopeful individuals, community members and world-wide citizens.
- **Excellence in our service with others:** As a Teaching School and English Hub to serve other schools, leaders and teachers by supporting them to enhance pupil outcomes, enrich lives and create hopeful schools and futures for all. As children and adults to ensure that we make a positive difference to the world we live in (e.g. through our Legacy Learning programme)

St Peter's Church of England Primary school has served the community of Portishead for over 200 years and we are committed to our partnership with Portishead Church of England, and in particular, St Peter's Parish Church. We seek to enrich the lives of all in our community. We continue to honour the following commitment:

*Recognising its historic foundation, St Peter's will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.*

*St Peter's aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice, welcoming all regardless of their faith or belief. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils*

(For full details of our Vision please see our Vision document. Governors made a decision to deliberately include the underlined in 2014 to emphasize our welcome of all)

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 develop community and our understanding of living well together.

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## **Policy Statement**

At St Peter's, worship is central to the life of the school and is one of the main platforms for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned, inclusive 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 both explicitly and implicitly.

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 experience, beliefs and values of each of our families is very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and children. This means that Collective worship is different from a corporate act of worship in a church where for Christians, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

At St Peter's collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and aims to lead people to a threshold where they can encounter worship, and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship children 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, and an experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity through sign and symbols. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Children 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 Faith calendars. Children will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

## **Legal Requirements**

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all children, 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.

The Local Governing Body have 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. At St Peter's we have an Ethos committee which meets three times per year who help us with this. This committee is made up of Foundation governors, local clergy, Religious Education Curriculum leaders and members of the senior leadership team.



## **The right of withdrawal**

At St Peter's there are 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 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.)*

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## **Guiding Principles**

Collective worship at St Peter's aims to:

- Be inclusive. Be invitational. Be inspiring.
- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support children and adults in their spiritual growth.
- Be a central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and Christian faith.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the Christian belief in the presence, love and peace of God. 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 children in developing their understanding of the Christian concept of the Trinitarian nature of God.
- 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 the Biblical narrative, 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.
- 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. Children 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 help children understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teaching of Jesus.

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

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

- Children's personal development and wellbeing
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education and Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education



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- 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 and in newsletters.

### **How Collective worship is organised**

We hold a daily act of collective worship. As stated by the Bath and Wells Diocese, it is 'the entitlement of all children and should happen daily'. The normal pattern for this is:

Monday: Collective worship led by the Headteacher (HT) or Deputy Headteacher (DHT) (Pier Hall)

Tuesday: Clergy worship led by local clergy from the Anglican and Methodist churches (Pier Hall)

Wednesday: Class or year group worship around a Christian Value (Each year group has the opportunity to reflect on three different values through the year.)

Open the Book also join FS and KS1, at times, throughout the year.

Thursday: Singing worship (Pier Hall)

Friday: Celebration worship led by phase leaders

Children gather for collective worship as 2 large groups. Years 1, 2 and 3 and years 4, 5 and 6.

Children in the Foundation Stage follow their own timetable for acts of collective worship. They gradually join in other KS/whole school events during the year. By the end of the Foundation year they are familiar with the whole school pattern and are able to participate in whole school events. Most collective worship normally takes place in the halls but we believe it is also important to worship in classrooms. We always go to St Peter's Church for Christian festivals and End of Year services. Foundation Stage classes have their own Harvest, Christingle and Easter services with clergy involvement.

Each year we have church services and other whole school occasions where parents can join us to celebrate. These include

- Harvest
- Christmas
- Easter
- St Peter's Day – Worship on the field
- Leavers' Service

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## **Planning and preparation**

Collective worship is planned on a termly basis and usually follows a theme for several weeks at a time. We have termly meetings with local clergy to support this. Clear note is taken of the Christian Year and the curriculum map. Note is also taken of previous evaluations from children, staff and clergy so that the quality of worship continues to rise.

Careful thought is given to the creation of an appropriate atmosphere by using music, and sometimes candles or other objects, to focus the attention of the children. Visuals presented via the digital projector mean that everyone can see them. In class worship children have access to Class worship cloths and candles.

Acts of collective worship follow a recognisable format with some patterns that are familiar e.g. the greeting at the beginning. The worship should last for between 15 and 20 minutes and involve listening to stories, Bible Readings and other relevant passages, use of movement, mime, drama, artefacts and audio-visual material.

In almost all acts of collective worship there will be songs which, wherever possible will relate to the theme of the worship. We are careful in our choice of words and try to choose songs that are inclusive and speak of God's love for all.

There is usually a quiet time for reflection or a prayer. We regularly use our school prayer and the Lord's Prayer. Prayers may also be taken from Common Worship, other collections of prayers, teachers' own resources or children's own work. They may also be extemporary. Short poems or quotations may also be used. Children will be encouraged to join in and to say "Amen" if they feel that they wish to.

Children's involvement and leadership are key to engagement. All children should feel able to contribute and lead class collective worship. Older children should be involved in planning whole school worship events e.g. Year 6 planning Remembrance Event

We also want collective worship to be age appropriate and find that by having KS worship and class worship we are more able to extend the thinking of our older children in addressing challenging issues e.g. world disasters and also explore values in greater depth.

Children are expected to walk in and out of the hall quietly. Music or songs are played and the children encouraged either to listen quietly or sometimes to participate in them while they are waiting for the act of worship to begin.

Collective worship is normally conducted by the Headteacher or other members of staff, but is led by local clergy or other representatives of local Christian denominations once a week. All those responsible for arranging an act of worship will be given a copy of the Worship Plan, and will receive due notice of the times they are required to lead. The Worship Plan is prepared and distributed by the Collective Worship Subject Leader and at St Peter's this is the Headteacher. (See appendix 1 for a sample worship plan).

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Because we want to be inclusive and recognise the value of other faith traditions there will be some occasions where stories and traditions from other faiths may be used. In this circumstance we will celebrate our common beliefs and values.

We believe that collective worship should also be a time when we as a community are able to reflect on the achievements and learning of the children. This provides an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. It also plays an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued, and all achievements are recognised.

### **Resources and Professional Learning**

Resources for collective worship are available outside the SLT office and online e.g. [www.fischy.com](http://www.fischy.com).

Our resources include books, candles, pebbles and other artefacts. All new members of teaching staff, at St Peter's, attend training on Church School Ethos at the Diocese. We also regularly include collective worship as part of our Professional Learning Programme.

The school always sets a budget for collective worship and this enables resources to be updated on an annual basis. Staff are also encouraged to attend diocesan training events to support the development of collective worship.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the duty of the Headteacher and the Governors and, in the case of St Peter's, the Foundation Governors play a key role in this. Evaluations of series of acts of worship are carried out on a regular basis by clergy, staff and members of the school council.

### **Conclusion**

Collective worship is central to and enriches the life of the school community at St Peter's. It is a time where teachers and children may express joy and thankfulness, share concerns and experiences and affirm the beliefs and values of the school community.

### **Disseminating the policy**

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

**Approved by:** The Ethos Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 and LGB on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Last reviewed on:** September 2021 by Catrin Battista and the Ethos Committee.

Previously – September 2020.

**Next review due by:** September 2022