

***The Partnership of Bildeston Primary and
Whatfield CEVC Primary Schools***

**Whatfield Collective
Worship Policy**



Author: **Head Teacher**

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Related Policies:

INTRODUCTION

As a Church of England (controlled) Primary School, Whatfield School's worship policy not only follows the minimum statutory requirements of the 1996 Education Reform Act¹ common to all schools, but is also in line with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.

We hold a daily act of collective worship which demonstrates Christian beliefs and practices, and marks the cycle of the Church's year and other worldly events. As a church school, we know that God is at the centre of Christian beliefs. Collective worship is therefore an important part of the life at our school. Children are helped to understand the meaning of Christian worship and we hope that all will be able to share in it to understand how Christian values can be used by Christians, other religious groups and those with no faith to guide them through life.

Opportunities will also be taken to use prayer and encourage reflection in the curriculum as well as saying grace before lunch.

AIMS

Our school worship contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils, as appropriate to their ages and aptitudes. For example:

- It helps pupils' spiritual development by teaching them about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and giving them the opportunity to worship him together. It also gives children chance to feel and experience being part of an awe-inspiring event and gives moments of reflection.
- It helps pupils' moral development by taking time to be aware of different life values, while developing a common ethos and shared values based on Christian standards.
- It promotes pupils' social development by helping them to feel part of a community, and will reinforce positive attitudes. Our worship will encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered.
- It helps pupils' cultural development by drawing on the Christian heritage – both through the Bible and other key writings, and through religious festivals and practices.

ORGANISATION (When, Where, For whom, and How)

School worship

- Takes place daily
- Is for all pupils
- May take place with different school groups
- Takes place either on the school premises or the local church

CONTENT OF WORSHIP

We organise our school worship under the weekly themes, which are explored from different angles appropriate to the group. The weekly themes are linked to the Church year, readings and Christian values. As a Church of England School, the content of our worship is organized to cover all the major Christian Festivals (i.e. including Christmas, Easter and Pentecost) Draw on frequent Bible teaching, particularly as stories. Be delivered in a variety of ways, often linked to our PSHE curriculum (these will usually include music and songs, story and discussion, and a time for prayer and reflection) or current affairs.

Children are involved in leading worship where possible. This includes setting out the space and working with the Rector to deliver a weekly session. Children are asked if they would like to lead with their own prayers.

Everyone is invited to pray and is not an expectation for all to take part. Children and staff are reminded when we pray we don't have to join in, instead they may sit quietly giving them chance to reflect and pause.

SPECIAL SERVICES AND CHURCH LINKS

The School values both its special links with the Rector and parish of Whatfield and its church (where special services are often held), and also its contacts with ministers of other Christian traditions.

The Rector leads worship once a week when available. Other speakers from local/national/international organizations are welcomed to widen children's horizons and understanding.

INCLUSION AND THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

We expect all children to attend Collective Worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the worship. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Teachers also have the right to withdraw, on grounds of conscience, but we hope they will feel able to support and participate in the Christian ethos and activities of the school and to participate in this important part of it. The headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from Collective Worship.

Appendix

Guidelines for inviting visitors involved in collective worship

- Visitors who contribute to RE and Collective Worship should be welcomed and respected: we welcome the range of views and styles of presentation which visitors bring to assembly and collective worship times.
- We value the link with the wider community which this opportunity affords.
- Make sure the visitor is suitable. Speaking to children is not a skill shared by all. If possible:
 1. meet them beforehand
 2. ask others about them
 3. watch them in action
- Speak to the visitor personally and discuss what they plan to do in as much detail as possible. The school should clearly guide and assist visitors to make an appropriate contribution to the agreed syllabus for RE or the values of the school.
- No visitor should be left alone with a group of children. Interviews, question and answer sessions, sharing experiences or talks introduced by a teacher are all appropriate. In RE lessons, it is not sufficient for a teacher to take a purely observational role. If a visitor forgets the code of conduct and says anything inappropriate, the teacher should politely interrupt to challenge him or her. This should then be discussed when evaluating the visit.
- Brief the visitor beforehand on:
 1. The date, time and length of input
 2. the number of pupils and their age range
 3. the faith/cultural mix of pupils and staff
- Discuss with the visitor:
 1. What they need, e.g. music, table, projector, interactive whiteboard
 2. How they would like to be introduced
 3. What expenses they require
- Send email of the date, time and focus of their visit. Enclose any school guidance for visitors working in religious education (see final section of this policy). If needed, enclose a map of the school with directions and information about car parking facilities. Make sure you give a contact number in case of emergencies, including a home number to contact us the evening before.
- Make sure the visitor is booked into the school diary and mentioned in staff notices.
- Follow up the visit with a letter of thanks, possibly from pupils. Give positive feedback where warranted.

Guidelines for visitors involved in collective worship

Our schools value visitors from different faith communities to make a contribution to learning. The personal testimony, insights and experience enrich the experience of RE and collective worship for our children. Our school recognises the importance of establishing links with local communities and sharing religious and secular perspectives on important issues. This can help the children learn what is of value to different people.

As a visitor you have the right:

- To be fully briefed about the curriculum context of the visit in terms of schemes of work, ages and backgrounds of pupils and anticipated learning outcomes
- To be made aware of the attitudes to be developed in RE, namely self-awareness, respect for all, open mindedness and appreciation and wonder
- To have resources made available
- To receive any agreed fees and expenses

In return it is helpful if you:

- Make it clear who you are, what you represent, and what your organisation's aims are
- Are willing to share your experiences, beliefs and insights, but avoid criticising those of others or imposing your views in any way
- Aim to use methods that encourage children to think and respond imaginatively
- Communicate at a level that is appropriate for the age group

The following points need to be taken into account so there is no misunderstanding:

- No visitor has the right of access or presentation other than that right given by permission of the headteacher or appointed delegate.
- Visitors to the school are reminded that they are guests of the school and are expected to behave in a way that enhances a positive educational environment.
- We expect visitors taking part to adopt a reasonable dress code in line with educational expectations and the ethos of the school.
- We insist that:
 - a. Visitors adhere to the school policy on collective worship
 - b. No form of evangelism takes place
 - c. There is no form of exclusive ritual
 - d. An outline of the talk/presentation be made available to the headteacher in advance should it be required
- We expect visitors to work within the time constraints and timetables laid down by school policies