**Worcester Diocesan Board of Education: Guidance notes for**

**Model Collective Worship Policies in Church Schools**

1. **Policy Guidance**
   1. Below are some notes and considerations when adapting the model policy to fit your school context or when creating your own from scratch.
   2. **School Statement on Collective Worship**

1.2.1 Your introduction should clearly indicate how Collective Worship is **driven by the school’s vision and is an expression of this**. The introduction may refer to the biblical or theological basis of this. You should include your vision statement in the worship policy. SIAMS refers to worship as the ‘heartbeat’ of the school – this is a powerful way to understand worship and your school statement should reflect this fact.

1.2.2 Worship in school is known as ‘collective’ worship as opposed to ‘corporate’ worship. In Collective Worship the community gathers (or ‘collects’) and worship takes place; there is no expectation or compulsion placed on participants. What is provided is *opportunity* during which the participants, through a variety of experiences, can do the things identified in the policy. These should be adjusted according to local circumstance. In particular, schools might like to add a specific point concerning adherents of other faiths or none.

1.3 **Aims and Guiding Principles**

1.3.1 At its core, Collective Worship should enable all children and adults to enter into an experience with God. SIAMS refers to the three I’s in relation to Collective Worship, these being **Invitational**, **Inclusive** and **Inspiring**. As part of your policy it is important to demonstrate how worship in your own setting meets these three objectives. The bullet points listed are not an exhaustive list and may be amended in accordance to your own context.

1.4 **Pattern for Collective Worship**

1.4.1 You should include a note of your regular pattern of worship, including who will lead, the time of day and if it is for a specific class / Key Stage or for the whole school. You should also include where the worship will take place, particularly if there is a regular visit to the local church.

1.4.2 It is also a good practice to include how your worship maintains its integrity of Anglican Worship.

1.5 **Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation**

1.5.1 Planning and evaluation are an important part of improving the experience of Collective Worship for all in attendance. In this section detail how you will go about planning and monitoring Collective Worship including when it will take place and who will be part of it. The monitoring of worship needs to include a variety of approaches so that the impact of the experience(s) can be effectively ascertained. There is some supporting material on our [website](https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/schools/religious-education-and-collective-worship/) and included in this pack.

1.5.2 Planning worship has two main dimensions:

* Worship needs to be planned through the year to take account of the pattern. This will include identification of themes (values), Bible stories and readings, songs and prayers.
* Individual acts of worship also need to have a ‘plan’. In Church this is commonly referred to as the ‘liturgy’; careful attention to the liturgies used in school will ensure that an appropriate range of experiences is offered throughout the year.

1.5.3 The policy should include reference to any schemes that you may use in school such as *Roots and Fruits*, but only needs to make brief mention of planning – the detailed aspects of planning are an operational matter for the school. All planning should begin with the school vision and seek to make worship ad expression of this.

1.6 **Roles and Responsibilities**

1.6.1 Give details about how different groups of people are involved with the development of Collective Worship within the school. If you are using a pupil worship team, ensure that their roles are clearly defined. In many schools the Headteacher does not take on the role of Collective Worship leader; if this is the case ensure that you clarify the different roles that each person plays. Remember that even if the Headteacher is not the Collective Worship lead, it is the Headteacher who has the legal responsibility to ensure that Collective Worship takes place.

1.7 **Right to Withdraw**

1.7.1 The legal aspects are important and form part of the context of school life. The right of withdrawal can be a point of contention – hence the suggestion that this be seen as the beginning of a dialogue with concerned parents. Schools should appreciate that where there have been a number of requests for withdrawal, this might indicate a need to amend the worship policy and practice.

1. **General considerations**

2.1 **Worship should always:**

* be well planned, benefitting from long term plans which have drawn on the expertise of staff, clergy and the local Christian community
* be thoughtfully delivered in an age-appropriate manner - all pupils should feel included and involved, regardless of ability, religion or culture
* have as its central focus the teachings of Jesus and the Bible
* be both an educational and an inspirational experience
* underpin the Christian values of the school
* offer opportunities for spiritual development and growth through experiences of stillness, worship and reflection
* be participatory – inviting pupils to join in with prayer, thought, reflection and silence.

2.2 **Worship will, at various times in the school year, give opportunity to:**

* sing appropriate songs that express worship or articulate school values and aims
* welcome visiting speakers or participants who are well suited to the delivery of good quality school worship
* reflect elements of an Anglican style of worship in-line with the tradition in the parish
* involve creative participation by pupils, giving them the opportunity to use their gifts to plan and lead through readings, drama, dance etc.
* experience diverse liturgical traditions which reflect the world-wide church and diversity within the UK
* celebrate special occasions and seasons in the Church’s year and the life of the nation / community
* mark events of national and international significance
* join with parents, governors and staff who are not usually able to be present.

2.2.1 It may also, at certain times, reflect the diversity of beliefs within the school, valuing the practices and traditions of others who are a part of the school community, as well as other important times of celebration for wider religious communities.

2.3 **Welcoming Visitors**

2.3.1 The inclusion of external visitors to lead acts of worship should be welcomed and when handled effectively serves to enhance the experience for the school community. As part of Christian hospitality, it should be practice to welcome and thank all invited visitors who participate as part of the worship. This may be done by a pupil or by a member of staff.

2.3.2 Regular visitors may include the incumbent of the local church, a Lay Reader, or another person connected with the church such as a children and family’s worker. It is important that these regular visitors have access to the termly planning for Collective Worship so that they can ensure that the provision that they provide is in-line with school expectations.

2.3.3 Less frequent visitors may include people from local government, or people from charities or organisations within the community. These one-off assemblies may have a specific message that they wish to convey, and this may or may not constitute an act of worship. Sometimes schools can be so inundated with organisations wanting to share about specific projects that schools may need to be selective about who they say ‘yes’ to.

2.3.4 Where an organisation’s message does not constitute an act of worship, the school leader will need to plan an act of worship to place the organisation’s message into a context of Christian worship, prayer and reflection. This should not simply be tagged onto the end or done in a way that makes the visiting speaker feel that they have not ‘done it right’. Ideally this should be discussed with the visitor prior to them arriving. Above all schools should satisfy themselves that the visitor is aware of the context that they are coming to speak in and aware of what is and is not considered appropriate for your context. It should be stressed that the purpose of the visit is for the school community to learn from the richness of other perspectives, and not an opportunity for proselytising or evangelising of any sort. All visitors should be fully briefed beforehand about the school and the group of children that will be addressed.

2.3.5 **Visitors should be briefed on:**

* expected time and length
* the involvement of children
* appropriate age-pitch
* the involvement of staff
* issues of inclusion
* the space available
* any relevant pupil information e.g. religious or cultural diversity, which might require a change of wording or approach
* normal routines (including who’s responsible for any behaviour management during the time)
* any relevant topical information in the school
* where this visit fits into recent pattern of worship themes
* the school’s styles regarding acts of worship
* audio-visual equipment available.

2.3.6 **The school should be briefed by the visitor on:**

* content of the presentation
* audio-visual requirements
* requests for particular prayers / song (or other input from school staff)
* in the case of charities, agreement on the nature of participation that is requested (expectations) or not acceptable.

2.4 **Collective Worship as part of a Section 48 Inspection Guidance based on the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools SIAMS Framework 2018**

2.4.1 Alongside a school Ofsted inspection, schools of a religious character are charged, under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005, to undergo a denominational inspection. For Church of England Schools this is called the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools, or SIAMS.

2.4.2 An important aspect of a SIAMS inspection is the evaluation of the impact of Collective Worship in the school. The principal objective of the SIAMS inspection is to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school. The 2018 [SIAMS framework](https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f2144e1c592d/content/pages/documents/1592382152.pdf) is closely linked to the [Church of England’s *Vision for Education*](https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f2144e1c592d/content/pages/documents/1594051766.pdf) (Autumn 2016). The inspector will grade the school on the question:

*How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by*

*leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?*

This will be explored through seven strands, one of which is Collective Worship.

2.4.3 As with a Section 5 Ofsted inspection, SIAMS is concerned with verifying or challenging the school’s own evaluation of its effectiveness. The SIAMS framework document and model self-evaluation document include useful questions and grade descriptors to help the school self-evaluate the impact of their Collective Worship on the school community.

2.4.4 The inspector will be looking for evidence of the ways in which Collective Worship is an expression of the school’s Christian vision. In developing Collective Worship that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring the school community needs to evaluate the extent to which worship:

* offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
* enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican / Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist
* helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today’s world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God and its language
* enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of Collective Worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training
* encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for Collective Worship.

2.4.5 In the SIAMS report a paragraph is devoted to Collective Worship. This contains a succinct evaluation. The inspection will also report to the National Society and Diocese whether the school is complying with its statutory obligations as regards Collective Worship. A school will be regarded as ineffective as a church school if the school’s leaders have failed to ensure that Collective Worship reflects the school’s distinctive foundation or funding agreement.

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| 1. **Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation proformas**   3.1 | | | | | |
| **Collective Worship – Weekly Structure** | | | | | |
| **School’s Vision:** | | | | | |
|  | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
| Termly or weekly theme |  |  |  |  |  |
| Focus for the day |  |  |  |  |  |
| Biblical reference |  |  |  |  |  |
| Worship led by… |  |  |  |  |  |
| Venue |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evaluated / monitored by… |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Collective Worship - Daily Planning Sheet** | |
| Date: Leader: Venue:  School’s Vision: | |
| Theme & Biblical basis of worship: | |
| Gathering  (or school’s wording for this) |  |
| Engaging  (or school’s wording for this) |  |
| Responding  (or school’s wording for this) |  |
| Sending out  (or school’s wording for this) |  |
| Plans for monitoring & evaluating worship |  |

3.2 **Collective Worship Evaluation Form**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Observer: | Date: | |
| Venue: | Time: | |
| Collective Worship Leader & Group: | | |
| Topic / Theme: | | |
| Comment on the extent to which the worship was inclusive, inspiring and invitational. | | |
| **How was it inclusive?**  Were there opportunities for the whole school community to engage with worship today?  (e.g. Staff, SEN, EAL, other faiths) | | |
| **How was it inspiring?**  Describe the variety of creative experiences used to enable the children to encounter God.  *Liturgy / Music / Biblical story passage / Drama / Deep, wondering questions / Prayer time / Stillness and reflection* | | |
| **How was it invitational?**  What opportunities were the pupils given to take part in the act of worship today?  (planned or unplanned) | | |
|  | | |
| Comment on the elements of Anglican Liturgy and their impact. | | |
| **Gathering / Welcome**  *(How did you know worship was about to begin? How were people gathered – music / candle / focal point / liturgy).* | | **Impact** |
| **Engaging / Learning**  *(Was there a bible story? What was it? What was the key message that was delivered?)* | | **Impact** |
| **Reflection / Response**  *(Was there a time of reflection? How was this done – prayer / music / quiet time. Were the children invited to make a response? How was this done – leader questioning / children participation / links to real life scenario?)* | | **Impact** |
| **Sending out**  *(Was there a clear ending to the worship? How was this done – liturgy / prayer? How did children leave the venue – silence / singing?)* | | **Impact** |
| **Evaluation / Next Steps** | | |

3.3 **Collective Worship Pupil Evaluation Form**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name / Year Group |  | | |
| Who led worship? |  | Date |  |
| Where did worship take place? |  | What was the theme? |  |
| What happened to make you feel welcome? |  | | |
| Was there a bible story? If so which one? |  | | |
| What was the message about? |  | | |
| Did you have a time of reflection? What were you asked to reflect on? |  | | |
| Where there any special words used to end worship? |  | | |
| How did worship help you to think about the way you behave? |  | | |
| The best part was? |  | | |
| It would have been even better if…? |  | | |

3.4 **Collective Worship Pupil Evaluation Form**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name / Year Group |  | | |
| Who led worship? |  | Date |  |
| Where did worship take place? |  | What was the theme? |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| There were words of welcome.  ☺ 😐 ☹ | There was a bible reading.  ☺ 😐 ☹ |
| We said prayers.  ☺ 😐 ☹ | There was a time of reflection.  ☺ 😐 ☹ |
| The message helped me think about my behaviour  ☺ 😐 ☹ | There were special words to end the worship.  ☺ 😐 ☹ |
| I enjoyed today’s worship.  ☺ 😐 ☹ | |

3.5 **Monitoring worship using the SIAMS Evaluation Statements**

Termly self-evaluation and evidence gathering for Governors and SLT.

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| *Consider the extent to which Collective Worship is distinctively Christian and central to the life of the school community.* |
| *Consider how well Collective Worship enables the participants to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ and of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.* |
| *Consider how well Collective Worship sets the distinctive values of the school in their Christian context.* |
| *Consider how well the school community, learners and adults, value and engage with Collective Worship.* |
| *Consider the extent to which Collective Worship is relevant to, and makes a difference to the lives of all members of the school community.* |
| *Consider how well Collective Worship develops personal spirituality within the school community through a range of experiences.* |
| *Consider how effectively the school community is involved in the planning, leadership and evaluation of Collective Worship.* |
| *Consider the extent to which opportunities for prayer contribute to the spiritual development of members of the school community.* |

3.6 **Example of a Collective Worship Questionnaire for Staff**

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| In your opinion, what is the difference, if any, between Collective Worship and an assembly? |  |
| What do you believe to be the purpose of Collective Worship? |  |
| What do you think is the most important part of Collective Worship for children and what do they learn from it? |  |
| What is meant by ‘Children’s Spirituality’? How would you define it? |  |

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| --- | --- |
| How effectively do you think Collective Worship develops children's spirituality? |  |
| In what ways do you think Collective Worship contributes to or hinders the Christian Distinctiveness of the school? |  |
| Do you feel Collective Worship is a good use of school time? Why? |  |

3.7 **An example of pupil conferencing questions**

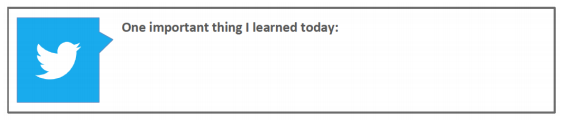
**for Collective Worship**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What, if anything, do you find helpful about worship? |  |
| Do you think worship is important in our school? |  |
| What do you think Collective Worship is all about? |  |
| What do we do when we are worshipping? |  |
| What is it that makes it ‘worship’ and not just, for example, singing? |  |
| What do you like most about worship? |  |
| Can you finish this sentence? Collective Worship is a time for...... |  |
| How do you feel about Collective Worship?  How does it help you?  Does it encourage you in any way? |  |
| Do you know any special prayers or hymns / songs? |  |
| In what ways does worship time in our school help you to understand more about Christian values? |  |
| Does what you hear in Collective Worship change you in anyway? |  |
| Do you ever say prayers yourself outside of school? |  |
| What would the whole school miss if there was no Collective Worship?  What would you miss? |  |

3.8 **Ideas for informal feedback**

3.8.1 Children could be given the following slips after a Collective Worship session, or they could be made readily available at a central location for children to collect and complete as they wish. These can then be collated centrally and used as evidence for self-evaluation and SIAMS.

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3.9 **Further thoughts**

3.9.1 The purpose of evaluation is to improve practice and to ensure that Collective Worship is invitational, inspirational and inclusive. Here are some thoughts other than a daily record that could be effective:

* Invite another adult (incumbent, governor, learning support, parent) to talk to pupils of all ages about how Collective Worship feels for them. Record the outcome of these conversations and review them with staff who lead Collective Worship, the Leadership Team, the incumbent or governors.
* Set aside 15 minutes of a staff meeting once a term to review how staff feel about Collective Worship. Record the outcome of these discussions and review them with staff who lead Collective Worship, the Leadership Team, the incumbent or governors.
* Add a question on the parent and or the pupil questionnaires about perceptions of Collective Worship.
* Invite the incumbent or diocesan officer to observe a Collective Worship and spend quality time afterwards to discuss the various aspects of the worship.
* Invite a diocesan officer to review the overall planning of worship.
* Video a Collective Worship and watch and reflect on it yourself. You could place the camera on the floor pointing upwards, so it captures a child’s eye view.

1. **Further support**

4.1 For further support and guidance on Collective Worship policy please contact Rev. Duncan Hutchison, Diocesan Education Adviser on [dhutchison@cofe-worcester.org.uk](mailto:dhutchison@cofe-worcester.org.uk) or 07960 977847.