



'Let your Light Shine' Matthew 5:16  
Dream, Believe, Achieve

## Collective Worship Policy 2022-2025

### Introduction

Collective worship is an essential part of life at our school, worship offers the pupils and others in our school an opportunity to reflect on values and issues in the context of our Christian vision and ethos. It is an expression of our vision and shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school. We warmly invite all members of our school community to join our worship. We aim to meet the Church of England's ambition to make Collective Worship inclusive, invitational and inspiring

(Collective Worship in Church of England School-Guidance Document 2016).

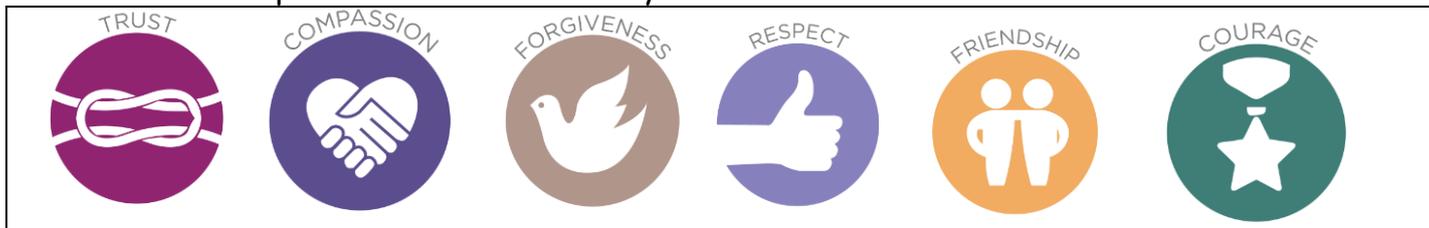
Collective Worship at Dewhurst St Mary provides children and staff with the opportunity to:

- Celebrate -
  - Christian seasons and festivals
  - school values associated with our vision
  - Pupils' and adults' achievements
- experience prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- grow in understanding of and participation in prayer
- create a reflective approach to life including the exploration of deep questions
- develop as a community centred on our clear and distinctive Christian vision
- experience a variety of styles of worship
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship
- feel safe and welcomed
- take part in worship in a way that is appropriate to their own beliefs.

Worship will reflect aspects of the curriculum and in particular will:

- nurture spiritual growth
- enable participants to consider moral questions in a Christian context
- enhance social understanding and encourage responses to issues through courageous advocacy
- give participants a chance to reflect on the place and importance of faith in the lives of people today
- encourage participants to explore beliefs drawn from their own cultural heritage
- reflect the teachings of Jesus, the Bible and a trinitarian theology.

The values we explore and strive to live by are:



Our School Vision: **'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16**

These words of Jesus are at the heart of our school's vision. They inspire and motivate our whole school community. Jesus reminded us in Matthew's gospel that we are lights for the world. As we seek to follow him, we can share his light with others and make a difference

### **The Implementation of Collective Worship**

Collective worship takes place in a variety of groupings, in the school hall, in classrooms and on occasion outside (Worship in the Woods). Our worship may also take place at St Mary the Virgin. We follow the seasons of the Church year and within these significant festivals other special days are observed. These always include Harvest, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Pentecost; other days such as Candlemas are celebrated as appropriate. Other important days in the calendar such as Remembrance and the Leavers' Service also feature in collective worship. Our acts of worship follow the pattern of Welcome, Learning, Reflecting and Responding which has been particularly chosen to be relevant in school settings.

Whenever worship takes place, it is planned to promote participants' thinking beyond the time given to worship itself.

Worship has a variety of leaders from both within school and from the local Church Community. Pupils are given opportunities to lead worship throughout the year (Worship Leaders). Visitors are welcome to contribute to collective worship from time to time and are given guidance from our Collective Worship Lead and this policy. Leaders from faiths within the area help us to increase the pupils' awareness, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these faiths.

### **Acts of Collective Worship**

Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience. Leaders, including the Worship Leaders, plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme and the needs of the pupils. The themes of worship are chosen to both express and explore our vision and the way in which this vision is experienced in school through our school values. Throughout their time at our school children will encounter a wide variety of activities such as roleplay and drama

alongside more traditional elements of worship such as prayer. Music plays a strong part in our worship, allowing the community to come together to share in the joy and magic it brings.

Acts of worship often include

- stories and readings
- songs, hymns and music
- dance and drama
- prayer, meditations
- creative silence
- sacred/secular readings
- artifacts and natural materials
- children's contributions

It is our aim to encourage all who attend to have the opportunity to experience spiritual development. These moments cannot always be planned for, but we aim to open our communities eyes to allow for the possibility.

Prayer is a vital part of our worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to God reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Pupils who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

All members of our school community are welcome to monitor acts of worship they attend and suggest feedback to strengthen our provision. Monitoring forms are used by the Collective Worship Lead, the head teacher, and the School Governors to strengthen future practice.

#### **Collective Worship Covid 19 provision**

Acts of daily worship continue during periods when the school is closed. At these times our planned worship can be accessed through our Dojo platform. These acts of worship are recorded daily and may be accessed at an appropriate time by staff, pupils and families. To the very best of our ability we continue to worship following the same objectives as in school worship sessions. Worship can be a valuable way to support spirituality and mental health in difficult times-sustaining our sense of community.

#### **THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DAILY ACT OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

There must be a daily act of collective worship for all pupils (Education Reform Act 1988). In Voluntary Controlled Schools these reflect the ethos and values of the school.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If you wish to withdraw your child from Collective Worship, please contact the school to arrange to discuss this further with the Headteacher.

Staff have the right to withdraw from worship.

Daily worship may be organised for separate groups of pupils at any time of the school day.

Collective worship must be *wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*, though not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination, i.e: those that are Christian must reflect the broad tradition of Christian belief to an extent and in a way which gives them a Christian character, but is also *appropriate having regard to the family background, ages and aptitudes of the pupils involved*.

The Headteacher must ensure the above is complied with but does not have to take part in it.

The Headteacher may allow those parents who have withdrawn their children to have their own denominational or faith worship. In any case, the school has the responsibility to provide alternative accommodation and supervision for those who have been withdrawn.