



All Semley School policies apply to year R to 6 inclusively or Semley School Staff	
Name of Policy	Collective Worship Policy
Policy agreed (date)	September 2024
Agreed by the Governing Body	23/09/2024
Policy published	23/09/2024
Latest revision	September 2024
Next review (date)	September 2027

This guidance is based on the SDBE Model Policy and takes into account current requirements for collective worship in the SIAMS schedule from September 2018. It should be read in conjunction with the Guidance for collective worship here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>

The place of collective worship in a church school

Collective worship is central to the life of a church school. It is part of the outworking of the school's Christian vision and is a time for the whole school community to gather, pause and reflect on their own spirituality, values and place in the world.

Offering this in the context of authentic Christian worship is not 'religious indoctrination' but a simple chance for children of all faiths and none to develop spirituality and gain perspective in an otherwise crowded day

Nigel Genders Chief Education Officer for the Church of England

Legal Requirement

*It is a legal requirement that all maintained schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Schools and Academies conduct a daily act of collective worship. In church schools and academies it needs to be **distinctively Christian** in character, reflecting Anglican traditions and practice. God is honoured and worshipped.*

*The term 'collective' assumes that the whole school community is gathered, expresses its shared Christian values and the contribution of everyone is celebrated. It is an inclusive time for all members of the school community, regardless of faith background or none. It offers **opportunity** but is also **invitational** without compulsion. Whilst some church schools use the term **assembly**, this can be misleading in that this word simply means 'gathering' and it can be applied to any situation where the school meets together for different purposes.*

Collective worship:

- *Should be conducted in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school and Instrument of Government and be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.*
- *Unless the right of withdrawal has been exercised all pupils must take part each day in an act of collective worship (DfE circular 1/94 para. 51) and the Governing Body should ensure that all pupils **each day** engage in a distinctively Christian act of worship.*
- *Arrangements for collective worship in foundation schools of a religious character (i.e. church schools) are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consultation with the headteacher (DfE Circular 1/94 para 52&53).*

Collective worship and religious education (RE)

Although what has been experienced in collective worship may be on occasion referred to in RE lessons, these two areas of life in a church school are distinct. Collective worship is NOT curriculum time for religious education. RE is an academic subject where children learn about different beliefs and faiths of different believers, whereas collective worship offers opportunity for worship and allows children to engage with their own spirituality and see Christian faith in action.

Prayer spaces or reflection areas may be an extension of collective worship where children can be still, reflect on their own spirituality, express their thoughts or questions, sometimes in a prayer of their own. RE displays/working walls are different from this and reflect children's academic learning in the subject.



Policy for Collective Worship in Semley CE VA Primary School

Introduction

This policy is an agreed statement of the values and aims of collective worship at Semley CE VA Primary School. Collective worship is valued as a central aspect of the life of our church school, through which children grow spiritually, emotionally, morally and culturally.

Legal status of collective worship

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. 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. Collective worship in our school is distinctly Christian and reflects Anglican traditions.

The Governing Body of this school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for collective 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 collective worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

School Vision:

*Rooted and Growing in Love:
A culture of kindness in which all can flourish.
(Ephesians 3 & 4)*

At Semley CE VA Primary School we seek to offer an inspiring environment. Grounded by our vision of God's nurturing love, our children are encouraged to be confident in their own worth and to respond by respecting and caring for others, choosing to be the person who makes a difference while enjoying their learning and achieving their full potential.



Policy Statement

In Semley CE VA Primary School collective worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring our 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.

Collective worship in our Church school aims to 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.

For many 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. We recognise that our school is not a church, rather it is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds of families, visitors and staff may vary and therefore collective worship is planned to take account of the differing circumstances of those present.

We aim for collective worship to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and based upon Christian teaching and values. It aims to give opportunities for all present to grow spiritually, whatever their personal philosophy, or whether or not they come from a faith background.

Through collective worship children will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. This will include being invited to participate in prayer, reading and reflection from 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. Children will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in Christian values such as 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 world faiths calendar. All present will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.¹

¹ "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)

Guiding Principles

Collective worship has a pivotal place in the life of Semley CE VA Primary School. It aims to:

- Be the 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 the Bible.
- Provide an experience that will offer opportunities for those present to grow spiritually as well as to observe and respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians, or to find their own spiritual path. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of different faiths and none to be present and to engage with integrity. It aims to give children and young people the opportunity to develop their own philosophy and moral compass.
- Support those present 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 all present to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer and reflection, It helps children and young people to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Christian Church's year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Facilitate a deeper understanding of the Christian story narrative, from creation to the present day
- To appreciate that people, cultures and beliefs differ and to demonstrate respect, tolerance and generosity towards them
- To develop young children's sense of self-worth and to provide opportunities to celebrate achievements.
- To develop a caring attitude to others and a sense of community and loyalty.
- To provide opportunities for children to plan, lead, contribute to, monitor and evaluate collective worship.
- To invite clergy of the parish, other lay members of the parish and other Christian leaders in the community [as are acceptable to the parish church] to lead collective worship and build the parish-school link.
- Give opportunities to explore a variety of ways of praying, giving those present the chance to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all present 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 collective worship.

- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure children 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.

The right of withdrawal

We recognise that in our school there are children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious worldview. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that we aim to be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community we serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of our Church school, this is 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. By withdrawing from collective worship, it does not mean that children will be exempt from the Christian ethos of our setting, as this underpins our teaching, learning and relationships.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship. If a parent wishes to make a request for their child to be withdrawn from collective worship, we ask that they meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. **See Appendix One**

Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

This policy has been prepared by the Head Teacher with support from the Parish Priest (also a Governor for the school).

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 (SMSC) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
- 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 in the school prospectus and / or on the school website.

How collective worship is organised

Leadership

- Generally, the collective Worship will be led by the Headteacher. However, sometimes this will be the local Rector or another member of staff. We are also lucky enough to have an Open the Book team who lead worship once a week. We also invite other visitors in to lead Collective Worship as appropriate.
- The School also takes advice from the Salisbury Diocesan Advisor (Steve Cowdery).

Planning

- Collective worship is planned out by the Headteacher in conjunction with the local Rector (Reverend Kate McFarlane).
- Collective Worship takes into account specific religious festivals across the year but also will include events of note in the community, country and world. It also reflects the Visions and Values held by Semley CE VA Primary School.
- The Christian Values of the school are identified by the pattern of our Collective worship. For example the Symbols of the class who join us for worship. The Worship celebrates the togetherness of the school community. These symbols are also used during class worship.
- There are explicit links between the Bible Stories that we discuss and the Vision and Values of the school.
- Collective worship varies in what materials are used – these could be a play, a website, artefacts, art work, visitors and many others as appropriate.
- Reverend Kate McFarlane offers opportunities to explore their faith, the collective Worship at school is very inclusive.
- Spiritual growth is offered through participation in the collective Worship, there are opportunities for reflection and prayer.

Organisation

- Collective worship is slightly different each day but is generally at the end of the day – 15:00 – 15:15.
- This is the usual pattern of the week:
 - Monday – Worship through singing (whole school)
 - Tuesday – Whole school collective worship lead by the Headteacher
 - Wednesday – class worship, a time to reflect and discuss any relevant topics
 - Thursday – Open the Book
 - Friday – celebration of the Vision and Values.
- Collective worship generally takes place in the school hall as this is a large space to gather in. Each class has a bird that they bring to worship which represents the whole school coming together. These are placed on our Vision Tree.
- The focal point is a lectern in most collective worships.

- At the start a candle is lit and a call (*Jesus light of the world*) and response (*Shine on us today*) is given.
- At the end the children are sent out after a prayer, often the Lord's Prayer which they are invited to join in with.
- The children enter and leave the hall to music and usually sing a hymn relevant to the season.
- The children are seated on the floor except for Year 6 who sit on benches. The teachers sit on chairs around the children. Staff mainly attend Collective Worship unless there are particular circumstances.
- The local church, St Leonards is used regularly, it is a very short walkable distance from the school and is central to the Collective Worship within Semley CE VA Primary School.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Governing Body – to ensure that the Christian ethos of the school is being upheld by the Headteacher and staff
- The Headteacher – to plan effective Collective Worship that matches with the Vision and Values of Semley CE VA Primary School.
- Clergy and church partners – to support the staff in delivering high quality collective Worship and to take an active interest in the school
- Teaching and Support Staff – to uphold the Vision and Values of the school and encourage the children to also do this by leading from example.
- Children – to participate in Collective Worship and also give feedback on what they have enjoyed or not enjoyed.
- Parents and Carers – to participate in Collective Worship when invited and uphold the vision and Values of the school
- Visitors – to support our structure on Collective Worship and demonstrate that they support the School's Vision and Values

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.

All school staff, Governors, pupils and parents/carers were involved in the development of the School Vision.

Monitoring and evaluation

Collective worship should be monitored to evaluate the impact of it:

- Children give feedback through their class assemblies to ensure engagement – comments are recorded in a class book
- Collective Worship is monitored by PSA visits, local clergy, Governors



Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all Staff and Governors, Parents and Carers and, as appropriate, to all children. This policy is available on our school website.

Review of this policy

There will be a review every three years of this policy. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the collective worship leader, together with a senior leaders and governors. This will include discussions with children and other members of staff, observation of teaching and monitoring of children's work. Evaluation of teaching plans will form part of any review. The outcomes will influence the school development plan.

Appendix One – In the event that a parent wishes that their child is withdrawn from collective worship

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the collective worship then they need to have a meeting with the Head Teacher in the first instance to discuss their reasoning.

During this meeting, it may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of collective 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 collective 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 headteacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

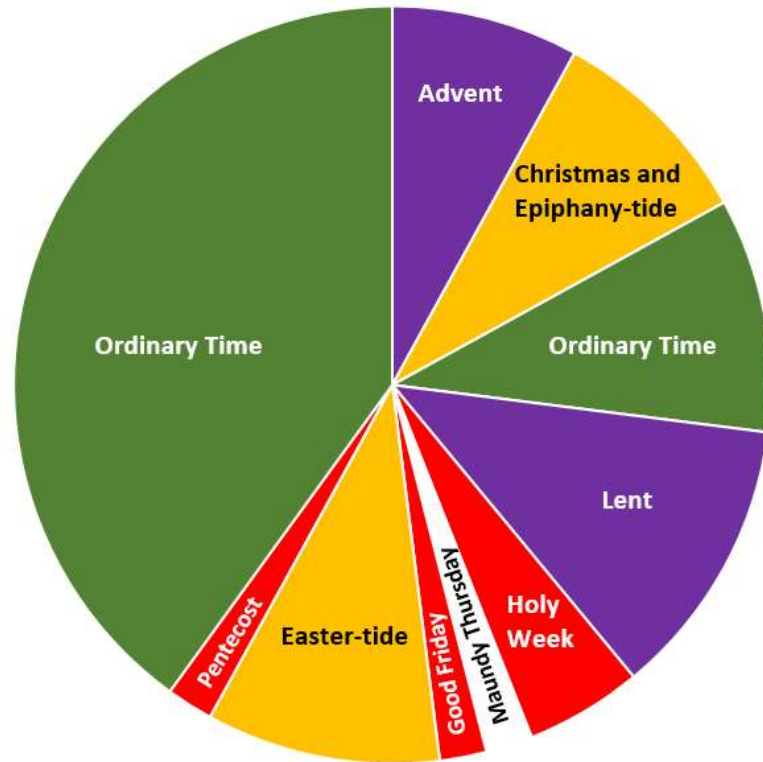
- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

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.)

APPENDIX Two - Liturgical Colours and seasons of the Christian year

Liturgical colours and seasons



Season	Liturgical Colour	Description
Advent	Purple	The period covering the four Sundays before the 25th December: Period of preparation for Christmas.
Christmas-tide	White or Gold	25 th December to 2 nd February
Gap Between	Green	Gap of Green until Tuesday before Ash Wednesday
Lent	Purple	The 40 days of preparation for Easter
Maundy Thursday	White or Gold	The Last Supper
Good Friday	Red	The Crucifixion
Easter-tide	White or Gold	Easter Day until Pentecost
Pentecost	Red	50 Days after Easter (lasts a week)
The Rest of the Year	Green	From Pentecost to Advent

Meaning of the colours	Purple	Penitence, preparation
	White or Gold	Joy, purity, innocence, Saints who are not martyrs
	Red	Fire & Blood, therefore Holy Spirit and Martyrdom
	Green	Everything else

In some places	Blue	The Blessed Virgin Mary
	Pink	Mothering Sunday (4 th in Lent) and 3 rd in Advent

There are different versions of the colours used.
Please consult your parish for the colours used locally.