

Collective Worship Policy 2021

By	Review period	Method
Full Governing board	Annual	Meeting

Ownership: RE Leaders and Head of School

Revision History

Review	Changes	Next review date
June 2018	Organisational changes	July 2019
February 2019 & November 2019	Organisational Changes	May 2020
July 2020	Organisational changes and review	July 2021
July 2021	General review no changes	July 2022



Introduction & Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all students. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all students, or separate acts of worship in school groups. We believe that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said by either the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement; Catholic worship is where all members of the community participate in thought and word and deed for the greater good of our Catholic community, in all uses of the meaning of the word "Catholic". We also acknowledge that collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

Collective worship is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. It is concerned with the revelation of God's presence so that praise, honor and thanksgiving may be given to Him. We aim to strengthen this Eucharistic community, which is called together to give witness to Jesus Christ. Collective worship is the community's response to God, which invites us to enter into a loving relationship with Him, made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Aims of Collective Worship

Collective worship enables all members of the community to:

- Worship God and contemplate His mysteries.
- Consider and celebrate our Christian values.
- Develop a sense of enquiry and to encourage a search for human meaning.
- Unite our worshipping Eucharistic community.
- Develop an awareness of the presence of God in others and in oneself.
- Consider spiritual and moral issues.
- Develop a sense of belonging and a sense of community.
- To foster and nurture relationships.
- Grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding.
- Develop the experience and skills of prayer.
- Reflect upon our own individual faith journeys.
- Extend our Christian understanding of scripture and applying to events in our British and international society.

Principles

Collective worship aims to be memorable and enjoyable. It is designed to actively engage students. It is resourced and well planned with the promotion of Christian values being at the heart of worship. It is also flexible, able to respond to special occasions and unforeseen events e.g. a time of disaster or of celebration. It should be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants. It should be clear in its liturgical focus and varied in its delivery. It should relate to the age, ability and cultural background of students.

We promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. Christian values are embedded in our school and in our worship and we teach and encourage students to respect one another and to respect and tolerate difference, especially those of a different faith or no faith. It is indeed our most fundamental responsibility to keep our students safe and prepare them for life in modern multi-cultural Britain and globally.

We recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for children and so should be addressed as a safeguarding concern. We also recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect our students and this must be taken into account in our approach to collective worship.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the policy is to reflect on how worship is an integral part of College life, central to the Catholic Tradition and aligns with the school motto 'Laus Deo Semper' – Praise God Always.

We are dedicated and proud to provide exceptional, inclusive and inspirational education to students of all faiths, and none, in a Catholic setting. We pride ourselves on providing an aspirational and supportive environment, which enables all of our students to thrive in school and in life.

Every student leaves us with the education and experiences to enable them to thrive academically and empower them to enrich their own lives, and those around them. Education at St Joseph's takes place in a fully inclusive environment where students learn to value diversity. Students are supported by their peers and inspired by committed staff. Our strong, proactive partnerships help us continually improve our school and sustain excellence.

The policy supports this vision as a community and ensures that all within it develop their personal relationship with God. The College provides many opportunities, both formal and informal, for private prayer and collective worship.

In this College, responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the governing body after consultation with the Principal.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our College

We endorse the belief that collective worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in Church.
- Those for whom College may be their first and only experience of Church.
- Those from other Christian traditions, or none.
- Those from other faith backgrounds who are part of our wider community, whether they are British or of other nationality.

Organisation

All students are informed about the opportunities that are available to them, to learn about and from collective worship in all lessons particularly RE, tutor time and assemblies. They are also encouraged to consider how they can take an active role in collective worship.

Currently daily prayers are offered at the beginning of every lesson and in tutor groups led by students in accordance with the prayer theme. On a weekly basis the staff briefing opens with a prayer and reflection led by different members of staff. There is a weekly year group assembly with the College prayer theme and

mass is celebrated regularly. Staff meetings and also all examinations begin with a prayer or reflection.

At the beginning of each month there is a prayer group for students, staff and Trustees. During the year there are special liturgies, services and masses. Students and staff are also involved in outreach projects for example with CAFOD and SVP. St. Joseph's continue to work for social and community cohesion through work with local and international agencies.

Spiritual growth is encouraged for both staff and students through retreat days at St. Cassian's retreat centre and CPD. The College Chaplaincy team leads one assembly per term, e.g. Refugee Week and CAFOD.

St Joseph's PSHE programme is another avenue where the collective worship within the College is nurtured and explored. Scheduled citizenship lessons cover respectful and beneficial relationships where the Gospel values are permeated and central to our teachings.

Chaplaincy Opportunities

Students and staff are invited:

- To participate in various campaigns and be involved in Justice and Peace issues.
- To take roles in delivering College Assemblies with prayer.
- To avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.
- To plan, prepare and participate in a whole year group mass at least once a year where staff are also invited.
- To participate in prayer group.
- To serve our outreach centres in our local, national and global community through fundraising and generosity.
- Student production of a prayer booklet for daily worship at the start of each day.
- To be a member of our chaplaincy team and advise and participate on collective opportunities.
- To write articles in our College newsletter and prepare power points for our plasma screens, enabling them to reflect on their spiritual experiences.
- To become a member of our College's youth CAFOD team and SVP group.
- To attend a retreat to St Cassian's Centre, Kintbury
- To participate in events that are run by our Diocese – (e.g. Diocesan Secondary Schools Mass/Pilgrimage).
- Staff and Trustees are invited to participate in a monthly prayer group and lead weekly staff reflection at our College.

Right of withdrawal

The College expects all students to attend collective worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the pupil during that time. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1998 Education Reform Act.

However, the College welcomes all members of the college in collective worship regardless of faith, *“for where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I with them” Matt 18:20*. Therefore all actions in the College day reflect that God is present in all that we do.

Resources

Chaplaincy and collective worship budgets are well funded and supported by Leadership Group

Prayer themes and liturgies can be found on the College Website and Moodle. A prayer booklet (prayers are written by students) for daily prayer is given to each tutor at the beginning of each academic year and a prayer sheet is given to teachers for the start of every lesson. Training and a guide to working in a Catholic school is delivered to all new members of staff.

From time to time we may work collaboratively with the parishes in our deanery on specific liturgical projects involving the wider Catholic community.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

It is the role of a named College Trustee with responsibility for Religious Education and collective worship to regularly review this policy and to assess its implementation and effectiveness.

The policy is monitored by the Head of Religious Education and the Principal. It is evaluated and reviewed on a yearly cycle. Trustees review reports on the prayer life of the college on a regular basis. This forms part of the Head of School's report to Trustees .

The following will be monitored as regards collective worship:

- Is it educational, relevant and meaningful?
- Does everyone feel comfortable and included?
- Does it reflect the multi-faith nature of our community and the world?
- Are the resources used appropriate and of good quality?
- Are tutors supported in delivering collective worship in the classroom?
- How will students be involved in the planning, preparation and delivery of acts of worship?
- How will the school ensure that there is balance and variety in the styles of collective worship?

- Will INSET time be used to share skills for the meaningful delivery of collective worship?
- If collective worship is carried out within assembly time, how will the 'business' and 'worship' elements of the assembly be made distinct?
- Will visitors help to deliver collective worship?
- Are Trustees actively welcomed to attend collective worship?
- How are 'withdrawn' students catered for during collective worship?
- Are both staff and students asked to complete an evaluation of the college's provision of collective worship?
- How are these findings recorded and how will they be used to further develop the quality of collective worship in the college?

Communication

This policy will be communicated to:

- All members of the College community
- Parish priests
- New members of staff and will form part of their induction
- New parents, to promote positive attitudes towards collective worship