



Shenfield St Mary's C of E Primary School

POLICY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Updated: Summer 2025

Ratified: June 2025

Review due: Summer 2027

Vision of the School:

Unlock every child's potential as a unique child of God

"May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, that being rooted and grounded in love, you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Ephesians 3: 17-19

Our aim is to ensure that every child's unique strengths are celebrated and strengthened alongside gaining an excellent academic, social, emotional and physical education.

Introduction

Our Collective Worship Policy strengthens and supports the Christian ethos of our school, explores our vision of 'Unlocking Every Child's Potential as a Unique Child of God' and the associated values we derive from them: Respect, Forgiveness, Trust, Responsibility, Thankfulness, Justice and Humility. Our Worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year.

Worship at Shenfield St Mary's is not simply a statutory duty. The daily Christian act of collective Worship is the heartbeat of our school, central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

The aims and purpose of Collective Worship as defined by the Education Reform Act 1988 are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for the children to Worship God.
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues.
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs.
- To encourage participation and response.
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit.
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes.



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Legal Requirements

We seek to comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
- The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of Shenfield St Mary's and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- All acts of Collective Worship in Church must be Christian in character. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for Worship such as the whole school, year groups, classes, or other combinations.
- Acts of Worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
- The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises but you can hold Acts of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. St Mary's Church.)
- Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a Church of England rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the Head of School.

Principles of collective Worship

- Develop a deeper understanding of themselves, their feelings and experiences.
- Appreciate the feelings and needs of others, developing a sense of community in our school and as part of a wider community.
- Become aware of, and celebrate what has meaning, value and purpose for them, for our school and for the wider community.
- To celebrate difference and diversity.
- To celebrate achievements and special occasions.
- To feel a sense of awe and wonder of the world about them and a sense of their place within it.

Each adult and pupil will experience Worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality (see Church of England's Collective Worship Guidance).¹ Collective Worship therefore will be:

- **Inclusive** – Our acts of Worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating Worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf>



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- **Invitational** – In our acts of Worship, there is no compulsion to ‘do anything’. Rather, Worship will provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- **Inspiring** – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in Worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community’s behaviour and actions.

Implementation

In addition to the above, we seek to provide acts of Collective Worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England. Therefore:

We use the Bible as a sourcebook for inspiration and learning and make pupils familiar with the Lord’s Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture. We also introduce them to a variety of well-known prayers – many of which express the central beliefs of Christians throughout the ages.

We use aspects of Anglican liturgy to create a framework for Worship: gather, engage, respond, send). We observe the cycle of the Anglican year including celebrations of the major Christian festivals.

At Shenfield St Mary’s, we aim to provide Worship spaces which are attractive and well prepared with appropriate thought having been given to colour, space, seating, ambience and music.

We foster links with St Mary’s Church, involving the Reverend Darren in leading collective Worship and providing coherence between Worship in church and school and visit regularly and as part of the Christian calendar.

We recognise that different members of our school community spiritually reflect in different ways: music, story, silence, prayer, drama and other approaches are incorporated within a varied collective Worship offer.

Connections with other Christian denominations and faiths

The Anglican Communion sees itself as part of a global church and promotes unity among the world’s Christian Churches. At Shenfield St Mary’s, we work to promote links with other local churches and Christian organisations and welcome their clergy and leaders as contributors to acts of collective Worship. We recognise that while some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, many Worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting in which the integrity of those present is not compromised, where everyone finds something positive for themselves and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.



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Rights and Responsibilities

As established by the 1944 Act and reinforced through this policy, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, having chosen to send their children to Shenfield St Mary's, it is hoped that no one will exercise this right. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act.

Our Collective Worship Pattern and Practice

Organisation

The daily act of collective Worship usually takes place in conjunction with, but separate from, an assembly. The Guardian Angels for that week open the Worship with a greeting and response:

<p>GREETING</p> <hr/> <p>Leader: As we take out the Bible, we think about God the Father. Response: Father, we are here. We are here for you.</p> <p>Leader: As we take out the cross, we think about God's Son Jesus. Response: Jesus, we are here. We are here for you.</p> <p>Leader: As we take out the candle and light it, we think about God the Holy Spirit. Response: Spirt, we are here. We are here for you.</p>	  
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Worships conclude with an invitational reflection and prayer. On a Monday two Guardian Angels (from a rota of the classes) share their own reflections with the whole school. These are then written up on a leaf and placed on our reflection tree/prayer tree.

At the end of Worship, the Guardian Angels say: 'Let us to go out into the world as messengers.' Pupil response: 'Of hope and **justice**' (the last word high- lighted changes each half term to link to the value):

	Leader – Let us go out in the world as messengers...
	Response – Of hope and justice
	(Extinguish the candle)



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Collective Worship is timetabled and follows a weekly pattern of Worship.

When	What	Who
Monday @ 10:10am	Whole School Worship based on our half termly theme	Head of School Assistant Head of School Year Six Worship Leaders
Tuesday @ 9am	Whole School Songs of Praise	All teachers on a rota basis
Wednesday - KS2 @ 9am - KS1 @ 10:10am	Age-appropriate Key Stage Worship e.g. based on Christian themes, Bible stories, linked to the time of year etc.	All teachers on a rota basis
Thursday @ 9:15am	Whole School Worship	Rector Brentwood School's Christian Workers Trust (BSCWT) Visitors Bible led Worship by classes Eucharist led by Rector and children
Friday @ 9:15am	Whole School Worship/ Celebration Time	Head of School Assistant Head of School Class Led Worship

* N.B. Times and organisation of Worships might change due to other whole school factors

Alongside the head of school, all teachers help to lead the Worship on a rota basis. The rector or visitors lead the school once a week in an act of Worship either in the church or in the school hall. The weekly 'Songs of Praise' includes a time of reflection and prayer as well as a focus on the words of each hymn as it is introduced. At the start of each week, the Head of School leads the Worship following the theme for the half term using 'Values for Life' and other resources as recommended by the Diocese. A display linked to the theme is on a Worship board in the main corridor which acts as a constant visual reminder during the school day. Each year group is responsible for creating this display once during the year.

To create an appropriate atmosphere for our collective Worship, a selected piece of music is played as the children assemble and leave both at school and in church.

At the front of the Worship area there is a 'Worship table' covered with a coloured cloth to match the liturgical colours of the seasons of the Church Year. On the table are placed objects also related to that season with candles, a Bible and a cross to act as a stimulus and focus for the day's Worship (if applicable.)



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Each classroom also has its own Worship area for children and adults alike.

Eucharist services are arranged three times a year in the school hall led by the Rector with the pupils participating through sharing a Bible story which may be linked to the Gospel and prayers. (There are two for Key Stage 2 pupils and families and one for Key Stage 1 pupils and families). Pupils who have been confirmed are invited to receive communion and all other pupils receive a blessing.

Harvest is celebrated in the church with the Rector and parents of Foundation and Year 6. At the end of each term and to celebrate the festivals of Christmas and Easter, services are held in the Church for pupils and their families. An end of school year service also takes place in the church – one for infants and one for juniors.

Pupil Participation:

Pupils have an opportunity to participate in our Worship in the following ways:

- To help the head lead Worship through reading, asking questions, sharing prayers.
- Prayer is central to our acts of Worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to Jesus and 'God' reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. We hope that pupils who prefer not to pray will use these moments to reflect on the important messages shared in our Worship.
- Pupils take an active part in Worship. For example: question and answer, dressing up, holding up artefacts, finding mystery items in bags/boxes, talk partners, identifying themes in visual images, reading prayers, Bible reading, singing.
- To help plan and participate in their own class led Worship once a year.
- To help plan and participate in a Bible assembly once a year.
- To write a prayer for their class prayer book based on a theme.
- To take an active part in the Eucharist, Harvest and end of term services.
- Year 6 pupils have responsibility for the music, displaying computer images and words on the screen as well as preparing the hall for Worship.
- To contribute to and participate in particular Sunday Worship church services held at St Mary's e.g. Education Sunday, Christingle and Harvest services.
- Interactive participation at the invitation of the Worship leader or visitor (coming to help at the front is very popular).
- To provide a reflection on the weekly Worship as part of their spiritual development. The Guardian Angels for that week have this responsibility. They then write these reflections to hang on the Prayer Tree or display on the Reflection board.
- Photos are also taken to remind children of the Worship they have taken part in each term and to provide them with an opportunity for reflection on each term's Worship.

Planning

The Worship Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Worship policy development including informing the school development plan.
- Planning the Worship yearly programme in partnership with the Head of School, Clergy, Leadership team, Music co-ordinator and in consultation with staff.
- Following the three yearly cycles of values.



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- Leading whole school INSET to refresh ideas, explore good practice and new initiatives, and to disseminate information as appropriate.
- Working with Worship Leaders and Guardian Angels to deliver Worship on a regular basis
- Ensuring the cycle of the Church year is reflected in our planning and delivery, with a pattern of Worship that reflects Anglican tradition.
- Identifying how Christian values are expressed and celebrated through collective Worship.
- Making explicit links between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school.
- Identifying a range and variety of materials to use in the delivery of Worship, including websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g., a picture or candle.
- Providing the children and adults the opportunity to explore faith in today's world.
- Nurturing and giving opportunities for spiritual growth through prayer, stillness and reflection.

Resourcing, Staff development and training

The budget for Collective Worship is distinct from the budget for Religious Education. There is a wide selection of assembly books and artefacts. We ensure that all staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Visitor Leaders to Collective Worship

We welcome visitors to lead and participate in our Collective Worship. This includes the Brentwood Schools Christian Workers Trust (BSCWT.) Visiting Collective Worship Leaders are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies: the welcoming member of staff/Head of School/Collective Worship Lead will discuss with the visitor, prior to the visitor leading Collective Worship, the content, expectations and practices Collective Worship. The purpose is to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

We recognise that although SMSC development should be fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of Collective Worship provide a multitude of opportunities in this area. For example, children will be encouraged to reflect on and celebrate the deeper meanings of life, consider their own behaviour and recognise the need for forgiveness, appreciate the contributions of others and respond to their needs, value their own culture and the cultures of others.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Collective Worship practice is regularly reviewed by the SLT, through discussions with pupils, staff and our Rector, through observations and reflections. These evaluations feed into the planning and delivery of future Worship.

Collective Worship is monitored by the Head of School, Worship leader and Governors. The SLT discuss the impact of Worship and make changes and adaptations to ensure it continues to develop, enriching children's and adults' experiences.



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Inclusion

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs when appropriate.

Implementation of Policy

The Head of School is responsible for this policy which will be reviewed every two years. Its implementation is the responsibility of all those planning and leading Collective Worship.