

St John's Highbury Vale CE Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

St John's Highbury Vale Church of England
Primary School vision for Education:

*"I can do all things through Christ
who strengthens me."* **Philippians 4:13**

This can be lived out through our school motto,
'every child, every opportunity, every day.'

At the heart of our school vision is a desire for an authentic and life-giving relationship with one another and with God. We believe that through Christ, who gives us the strength, all can achieve within a learning environment where every child is valued as a unique individual created in the image of God, and where teaching and learning is of a consistently high standard.

At St John's Highbury Vale, our Christian vision and values are central to our ethos and to our teaching. The aims and purpose of our Collective Worship are:

- To celebrate our Christian faith through daily collective worship;
- To provide an opportunity for children and staff to worship God together, through prayer, music, singing and reflection;
- To provide experience of reflection and prayer as spiritual resources;
- To develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding;
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs and better understand the views and beliefs of others;
- To promote the Christian values of the whole school community; establishing a common ethos and vision, which are delivered and reinforced through six key values;
- To offer children, staff and those involved in the life of the school an opportunity to draw closer to God through Jesus Christ, and in doing so build community spirit in and beyond the school;
- To teach children how to worship, providing them with the language of worship and experience of a wide variety of forms of worship;
- To celebrate gifts, talents, achievements and significant occasions, including festivals.

Collective Worship

We understand collective worship to be a special act or occasion, whose purpose is to show reverence to God. The divine relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit is where we find our inspiration for our school motto: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13. Collective worship involves all members of the school community coming together and participating in praise, reflection, silence and prayer. We invite everyone to take part in collective worship.

St John's Highbury Vale is a Voluntary Aided Church of England primary school. We base our collective worship on the teachings of the Bible and the traditions of the Christian Church in line with the liturgical calendar and the RE syllabus. We pride ourselves on ensuring that our whole school vision, 'Every Child, Every Opportunity, Every Day', and our six core values; Friendship, Respect, Forgiveness, Love, Wisdom and Courage, are at the heart of our daily worship and reflections.

Equality and diversity is something we are especially passionate about, therefore we conduct all worship sessions in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school community. Children of other faiths or of no faith are respected and included in all prayer. When appropriate, we hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions and festivals that are represented in school and in the wider community.

Through Collective Worship, we use our vision and core values to address and deliver key learning around current affairs, topical issues, celebrations around

historical events and our PSHE/British Values scheme of work. Opportunities for awe and wonder are planned into Collective Worship where possible.

Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective worship provides a means of developing an appreciation that goes beyond the material world, fostering a concern for others and providing a forum for exploring the schools vision and values.

Collective Worship is held daily. It can be held either with the whole school or separate foundation/KS1 and KS2.

Collective Worship offers opportunities for co-operation and the fostering of strong relationships between the school and the local community it serves. The school has close links with Christ Church on Highbury Grove, St Thomas' on St Thomas' Road and St Augustine's on Highbury New Park. The clergy from these parishes are a valued resource and are very involved with the life of the school. The clergy deliver Collective Worship weekly in school on a rotational basis as well as offering pastoral support to children, staff members and the parents and carers. We celebrate the Church's calendar by holding special services for significant festivals both in school and in all three Churches.

Collective Worship is delivered in a calm and respectful way. Children are aware that they are entering into a period of calm reflection and that appropriate behaviour is expected. Children are invited to participate in prayer, song, silence and reflection. The atmosphere is set through the lighting of a candle. Music and other artefacts can also be used to focus the attention of the children. To ensure consistent delivery of Collective Worship we have devised a specific format to follow for those planning sessions; see Appendix A.

We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the Christian faith, and we also observe the festivals and mark the events of the Christian and, when appropriate, non-Christian faith calendars. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies are related to topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum, specifically PSHE and British Values. Collective Worship timetables are planned well in advance so that staff members and clergy are aware of themes before the day they take place.

Collective Worship themes:

- Celebration of achievement
- Class assemblies termly, where learning is shared with the whole school and parents
- Sharing of school vision and values through Bible-based stories linked to the liturgical calendar, led by members of the clergy
- Global themes and events - led by teachers

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- 'Open the Book' Assemblies - run by members of Christ Church
- Worship through singing/music - led by the music teacher
- Explicit teaching of the school vision and values, making relevant connections through children's life experience at school and beyond

Class assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. Children are encouraged to participate by showing their work to the other children, staff members and parents. There is a termly rota to ensure all classes are able to share their learning. Celebration assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and outside school, including for their attendance. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos and vision of the school, which is that all children are valued, and all achievements are recognised, whether academic or extra-curricular. St John's Highbury Vale is a successful school, and we will continue to celebrate the successes of all our children during Collective Worship, 'Every Child, Every Opportunity, Every Day'.

Parents are welcome to attend assemblies on Friday mornings. We encourage their attendance, as this promotes community spirit, and shows the school and home working together in support of the children's achievements.

Right of withdrawal

We expect all children and staff to attend assemblies. However, a parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that time. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The Head of School keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of the head teacher, the LDBS appointed governor and the foundation governors from Christ Church, St Thomas' and St Augustine's churches. The LDBS governor, as the link governor, will liaise with the Head of School every term and report to the governing body. Other contributors to the monitoring process include pupil feedback, LDBS advisors and the SIAMS report.

Policy reviewed by the Curriculum and Achievement Committee on 11th February, 2022.

Appendix A

Checklist for Collective Worship

This also applies to class, celebration and music assemblies – modify as appropriate.

- Ensure that the Worship has been planned and prepared for well in advance of delivery.
- Entry music should be played whilst children come into the hall. Children should enter silently and respectfully.
- A focus question should be displayed on the Interactive Whiteboard as the children come into the hall space to draw their attention to and give them time to start to think about the theme of the collective worship.
- The candle should be lit and the school prayer said in unison.
- Main teaching should be linked to one of the six key values of the school and all worship sessions should include a biblical reference. All who deliver Collective Worship have been provided with specific Biblical links that can be used, however others may be used if more appropriate; see Appendix B
- Visual aids and artefacts to be used when introducing concepts/ issues etc that the children may have difficulty imagining or may not have experienced.
- Reflection: this is the most important part of the assembly as it signifies the start of the worship element
 - Begin the reflection with, 'I wonder...', – draw out the key theme, moral, etc.
 - Pause for effect periodically throughout this period
 - Finish by watching the candle for 15 - 20 seconds in complete silence
 - Complete the reflection by requesting

"Now let's get ready to pray".

This gives everyone the opportunity to put their hands together or simply to bow their head in an act of respect – bearing in mind different religions represented in the school.

- End the reflection by saying together '*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*'.
- Candle to be blown out
- Whole school then sing together (songs should be linked to the theme of worship where possible)
- Dismiss the children to music or singing