

Collective Worship Policy



Rooted in Christian principles, we are dedicated to inspiring and nurturing every member of our community to grow as resilient, empathetic, and courageous individuals. Through a commitment to aspiration, collaboration, and kindness, we foster a love of learning, a strong moral compass, and a deep spiritual awareness. Together, we empower our children to thrive academically and spiritually, becoming compassionate agents of change who positively impact the world around them.

‘The seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.’

Luke 8:15

1. Purpose and aims

Collective worship is central to the life of St Michael's. It provides a daily opportunity for pupils and staff to gather as a community, encounter the Christian story, reflect on the school's values and respond in ways that are invitational, inclusive and reflective. It is intended to be valuable for every member of the school community, whatever their background or belief.

Collective worship gives pupils and staff opportunities to:

- worship God and experience a variety of Anglican and age-appropriate styles of worship;
- celebrate Christian festivals, the school's values, achievement and our work as Global Neighbours;
- grow in their understanding and experience of prayer, while recognising that participation is invitational;
- develop spiritual awareness, a reflective approach to life and understanding of moral issues in a Christian context;
- strengthen social understanding, community and respect for beliefs drawn from different cultural and faith traditions;
- participate in the planning, leading, presentation and evaluation of worship; and
- feel safe, affirmed and known as part of the school community.

2. Statutory basis

As a Voluntary Aided Church of England school, the Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that a daily act of collective worship is provided for all pupils. Collective worship will normally be Christian in character and will reflect the school's Trust Deed and Church of England foundations. Parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of collective worship. The Headteacher and governors will ensure that there is a clear process for withdrawal and appropriate provision for any withdrawn child.

3. Christian character and inclusivity

Collective worship is broadly Christian and rooted in Anglican practice. Prayer is addressed to God and Jesus in accordance with the traditions of the Church of England, but the language of worship will remain accessible and invitational. No pupil will be coerced into prayer or a response that conflicts with their beliefs.

The school respects the beliefs of every family. Pupils who do not wish to join in prayer will be supported to take part respectfully through quiet reflection, reading or another appropriate reflective response. They will not be removed from the hall without agreed supervision and purposeful provision. Where relevant to the theme, worship may include carefully chosen multi-faith perspectives to strengthen pupils' understanding of different beliefs and support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These perspectives will be presented accurately and respectfully while maintaining the Christian character of school worship.

4. Withdrawal from collective worship

A parent/carer who wishes to withdraw their child from all or part of collective worship should make a written request to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will offer to meet with the parent/carer to understand the request, explain the nature of worship and discuss the educational and spiritual implications. The legal right of withdrawal will be respected and will not depend on attending a meeting.

Where a child is withdrawn, the school will provide suitable, supervised alternative provision on site during worship. The arrangements will protect the child's dignity, safety and access to meaningful activity. The school office will retain the written request and a record of the agreed arrangements, and these will be shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis and reviewed when necessary.

5. Worship space and structure

Whole-school worship normally takes place in the school hall, which is also used for physical education, meals and other activities. A focal point, including the lighting of a candle, helps pupils recognise worship as a distinctive time. The candle reminds the community of God's presence; when it is extinguished at the end, pupils are reminded that God's Spirit goes with them. This supports an age-appropriate understanding of the Trinity.

A typical act of worship includes gathering, engagement with a Bible passage, story, theme or question, opportunities to reflect and respond, prayer and sending out. Approaches may include song, music, silence, drama, art, movement and pupil leadership. The content and length will reflect the age, aptitude, background and needs of the pupils.

6. Weekly pattern and contingencies

- **Monday:** Headteacher-led whole-school worship; once each month, a partner from St Michael's Church leads worship.
- **Tuesday and Thursday:** class-based reflection and follow-up linked to Monday's theme.
- **Wednesday:** music-focused worship celebrating faith and values through songs linked to the term's theme.
- **Friday:** celebration worship recognising achievement and pupils who have demonstrated the school values.

If the usual venue or leader is unavailable, or a planned worship is cancelled, a classroom-based reflective session, an appropriately supervised online worship or another planned alternative will be provided so that the daily entitlement is maintained.

7. Early Years and Nursery provision

Collective worship for Nursery and Reception will be developmentally appropriate and usually shorter in length. It will use visual, sensory and concrete resources and make effective use of song, story, movement, repetition and simple opportunities for reflection and prayer. Planning will reflect the needs of younger children and connect appropriately with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and their spiritual development.

8. Planning and curriculum links

Collective worship will be planned through a termly cycle mapped to the school values, the Christian calendar, biblical teaching and appropriate links with the wider curriculum. Plans will identify intended learning or spiritual development, resources, opportunities for pupil leadership, inclusive approaches and indicators of successful engagement. Leaders, including pupils, will select content and activities suited to the season or theme and the age, aptitude and background of the pupils.

Collective worship may reinforce curriculum themes and support personal development and curriculum cohesion, but it remains distinct from Religious Education. Worship is an opportunity to gather and respond as a community; RE is a curriculum subject in which pupils learn about and from religion and worldviews through planned teaching and assessment.

9. Pupil leadership

Pupils will have planned opportunities to contribute to and lead collective worship throughout the year. The Collective Worship and RE Lead will coordinate suitable preparation and training so that leadership is meaningful, inclusive and age-appropriate. Pupil participation may include choosing readings or music, preparing prayers, leading reflection, contributing drama or artwork, welcoming the community and evaluating worship.

10. Safeguarding and supervision

Staff supervising collective worship remain responsible for pupils' welfare and must follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, behaviour expectations, medical arrangements and emergency procedures. A senior leader on duty will ensure that appropriate staffing, supervision and attendance information are available for whole-school and class worship. Any safeguarding concern arising during or following worship must be reported immediately through the school's agreed procedures.

Visitors leading worship will be accompanied by a member of staff and will follow the school's visitor and safeguarding procedures. No visitor will be given unsupervised access to pupils unless the school has confirmed that the appropriate safer-recruitment and enhanced DBS requirements have been met.

11. Roles and responsibilities

- **Governing Body:** ensures that daily collective worship is provided, oversees the denominational character of worship, receives monitoring information and reviews this policy.
- **Headteacher:** has operational responsibility for delivery, quality assurance, safeguarding, withdrawal arrangements and visitor briefings.
- **Collective Worship and RE Lead:** coordinates termly planning, resources, pupil leadership training, evaluation and monitoring.
- **Link governor for RE and Collective Worship -** participates in termly monitoring and reports to the Governing Body: Stuart Durber.
- **Class teachers:** facilitate class-based reflection and follow-up, provide appropriate supervision and help pupils connect worship themes with school life.
- **Visitors:** follow the agreed worship brief, remain within the school's aims and content boundaries, and comply with visitor and safeguarding procedures.

12. Visitor expectations

Visitors are welcomed as valued contributors to collective worship. They will receive written guidance in advance covering the school's vision, Christian foundation, worship aims, age range, inclusive language, content boundaries, timings and safeguarding expectations. Visitors must be accompanied by a staff member unless the school has verified the required enhanced DBS and other relevant checks. The school will retain a record of the visitor briefing and any checks completed.

13. Music and copyright

Music and song will be selected to reflect termly themes, the Christian calendar, school values and pupils' ages. When recorded music, projected lyrics or published songs are used, staff will follow the school's copyright and licensing arrangements, including PRS, PPL and CCLI as applicable. Current song and hymn lists will be stored centrally with worship planning.

14. Monitoring and evaluation

Collective worship will be monitored termly by the Headteacher, the Collective Worship and RE Lead and the named link governor. Monitoring will draw on pupil voice, staff feedback, observation and samples of planning. It will consider pupil engagement, spiritual development, opportunities for pupil leadership, links with school values and curriculum, inclusivity, safeguarding and the impact of follow-up reflection.

The school will keep an annual Collective Worship action plan and evaluation log recording monitoring, findings, actions, owners and review dates. Outcomes will inform future planning and whole-school priorities, including personal development and curriculum cohesion. The Collective Worship and RE Lead will report annually to the Governing Body.

15. Relationship with RE and inspection

Collective worship complements Religious Education but is distinct from it. As a Voluntary Aided Church of England school, denominational RE and collective worship are responsibilities of the Governing Body and are inspected through the statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools, SIAMS. Worship planning, safeguarding and monitoring records may also provide evidence for Ofsted in relation to personal development, leadership and duty of care, although Ofsted does not inspect the denominational content of collective worship.

16. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, Collective Worship and RE Lead and Governing Body, and earlier where there is a change in statutory or Church of England guidance, a safeguarding concern, a significant change in provision or monitoring identifies a need for revision.

Reviewed and updated September 2026.