



Collective Worship Policy

This policy provides the framework for acts of Collective Worship at St Stephen's. It relates to the aims and values of the school which are embedded in the strong Christian ethos of St. Stephen's and links with the vision of the Southwark Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust.

Collective Worship is central to the life of St Stephen's School. It is seen as the "beating heart" of all we do in developing a school family that worships and flourishes as spiritual beings.

1. Aims and Purposes

The aims and purposes of collective worship are:

- To enable everyone to feel a sense of belonging in the school family when worshipping together
- To develop spiritual awareness and growth.
- To establish our school community as one based on the ministry and teaching of Christ.
- To provide an opportunity for Children to contribute and express their response to God, no matter what their personal commitment through an inclusive, invitational and inspirational approach
- To celebrate and value individual, group and whole school achievements.
- To build a sense of community spirit in which there is an awareness of responsibilities, common values and reinforcement of positive attitudes.

2. Collective Worship

- 2.1** We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves the school coming together and participating in worship.
- 2.2** We base our collective worship on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our collective worship in a manner that is sensitive to the individual beliefs and faith of all members of our school community.

3. The Programme of Themes

- 3.1** Our collective worship follows half-termly themes running on a yearly cycle. We have planned our collective worship themes based on the teachings of Jesus as well as our School Values, the traditions of the Anglican Church and other relevant content and events. This programme ensures that the children are given the opportunity to explore a wide range of issues in depth. It also ensures that those leading collective worship are clear about the aims and how their contribution fits a wider picture. (See Programme of Themes)

4. The Organisation of Collective Worship

- 4.1** We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school
- 4.2** Collective worship is led by school staff, school governors, outside clergy and other visiting speakers and organisations who follow the Programme of Themes to guide their contributions.
- 4.3** We conduct collective worship in a dignified and respectful way. We communicate to children that the purpose of this time is to focus on God, to be together as a family and to reflect on our behaviour and attitudes. We regard it as a special time and expect the children to respond in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful as they enter and leave the hall so they are ready to listen and actively participate. Collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspirational.
- 4.4** We create an atmosphere of awe and wonder by using music and visual aids as a focal point for the children.
- 4.5** Teaching staff are expected to attend the daily collective worship and support staff are welcome. On Fridays when we celebrate individuals' achievements as well as other special events.
- 4.6** We welcome governors' attendance at our collective worship at any time.
- 4.7** Parents are invited to special times of Collective Worship.
- 4.8** Collective worship is recorded and evaluated by a member of the teaching staff. This is to ensure that our aims for collective worship are being fulfilled.

5. Right of Withdrawal

We expect all children to attend collective worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending collective worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act as was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

6. Special Occasions

- 6.1** While structure is important, we realise there is a need to be flexible. Sometimes it is necessary to forfeit the planned theme in order to address a national, local or school family situation in order for children to make sense of what is going on around them.
- 6.2** Our collective worship times reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar such as Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and Harvest. These acts of collective worship sometimes take place at St John's Church, which is local to the school, and parents are always encouraged to attend.
- 6.3** Every Friday the act of collective worship includes celebrating individual pupils' achievements. This serves as an opportunity to acknowledge and reward the children for their achievements both in and out of school. Individuals are also commended for their displays of positive behaviour, attitudes and awarding of House points promoting the ethos of the school that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised.

7. The role of music and singing in Collective Worship

- 7.1** Music plays an important part in the life of our school and therefore in collective worship. There are regular opportunities for different groups, individuals, children and adults to perform a variety of music on a wide range of instruments. This not only celebrates the achievement of the children in their musical abilities and allows them to play as an expression of worship, but also gives the listeners a time to be reflective and explore how different styles make them feel.

7.2 At St Stephen's we greatly value the contribution that singing makes to our lives, how it can help us to express our worship to God, help us to feel a sense of identity and belonging and also help one another to be reflective. Children have the freedom to express themselves as they sing. The songs we sing come from a variety of traditions and cultures and are used to enrich the theme of collective worship and as a time of personal response. We also share our singing with the local community in different contexts.

8. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the RE coordinator to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. Collective worship is regularly recorded and evaluated, and the programme of themes is reviewed and updated to ensure it remains relevant and inspiring.

Supporting Documents

Other documents that support this Policy are:

- RE Policy
- Spirituality Statement

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years in the light of current legislation, identified good practice and SDBE guidance.