

St. Michael's Church of England Middle School Collective Worship Policy

1. Rationale

The School Collective Worship Policy reflects and reinforces the school's aims and ethos:

'Each child, uniquely made in God's image, merits the best that we can give'. It aims to demonstrate the partnership between the conduct and content of school worship and the ethos of the whole school based on Christian values of aspiration, belief and creativity, derived from core Biblical texts:

Aspiration

'...don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best.' Colossians 3:22 (The Message)

Belief 'If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light'.

Matthew 6: 22 (The Message)

We are built on Christian foundations, where everyone is valued and respected regardless of their faith position.

Creativity

'For we are God's poetry*', created in Christ Jesus to do good works' (*Original Greek word is poiema which is where we get our word poetry from. In modern translations they have used 'handiwork' but we love the creative implications of the original text!) Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

The development of Collective Worship at St Michael's sits within the overall MAT commitment to nurture every individual including spiritual development: *'Spirituality is not something we can see; it is something we feel inside ourselves. It is about awe and wonder, asking questions and inspiration. It is being aware of something 'bigger' outside ourselves and our connectedness with others, the world and beyond.'*

2. Collective Worship at St Michael's

At St. Michael's Middle School we consider Collective worship to be a significant educational activity that both reflects and explores the school's distinctive Christian character and contributes to the academic achievement, personal development and well being of all learners. Worship at St Michael's Middle School is a celebration intended to promote awe and wonder and a love of God. We aim to develop spiritual insights and beliefs, encourage concern for others locally and in the wider world, and to assist children in their own search for meaning and purpose in life. Collective Worship involves members of the school coming together and we encourage everyone to take an active part. Worship at St Michael's is broadly Christian in nature, in accordance with the trust deed of the school and in line with the 1988 Education Reform Act. We usually base our Worship on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Christian Church including the elements of Christian worship such as prayers, hymns, Bible stories and readings. We conduct our acts of worship in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school.

Collective Worship at St. Michael's Middle School is expected to:

- be inspirational and inclusive. It should engage all learners and they should be able to talk about the impact it makes on their relationships and on life in the school.
- regularly provide opportunities for pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world through the teachings of Jesus and the Bible, and develop understanding of the Trinity and relate these to the school's core Christian values.
- provide an opportunity for children to worship God and celebrate each unique individual made in the image of God

- enable children to explore their own beliefs, allow reflection and response to fundamental questions of life and those things that are of concern and value to all
- encourage participation and response with opportunities to celebrate and give thanks for different achievements and special occasions including festivals
- provide members of the school community with the opportunity to praise and reach out to God, experience stillness and quiet, respond to Christian language and symbolism and experience a variety of forms of prayer and meditation, to experience and understand the cycle of the church year.
- develop in children a sense of community spirit, promote a common ethos, with shared values, and to reinforce positive attitudes
- contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children and foster a concern for the needs of others
- help children begin to understand the nature and purpose of worship providing a foundation for a mature understanding and practice of worship in the future
- Help learners learn to think beyond themselves, by developing an awareness of issues in the wider world, and encourage them to be active and engaged in advocating concerns of justice, peace, care of creation and concern for the poor.
- To provide foundations for making wise decisions in the conduct of relationships and life choice

2. Legal Requirements

The law requires the Headteacher and Governing Body of every school to provide a daily act of Collective Worship which is in line with the schools Trust Deed and foundation. It is a statutory requirement that a daily act of Collective Worship is offered to all children. Every child at St Michael's has the opportunity to participate in such an act every day and we expect all children to attend assemblies. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be withdrawn from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child. 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 headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship. Staff retain the right to withdraw from worship should they so desire.

3. Planning/Evaluation of Collective Worship

Specific time is set aside for this activity and we recognise the importance of marking out the act of Collective Worship from other assembly activities. We seek to mark out this special time by lighting a candle and using a liturgical greeting. Each tutor group has a 'class candle' which is brought from the classroom as a visual reminder that the whole school is preparing to meet together in the presence of God, and to encourage stillness and receptivity. We also make 'space for the spirit' by using 'Diaries of Reflection' in some class worship times. These also offer specific opportunities for reverence or veneration according to children's own beliefs and traditions.

Each person leading worship is expected to plan his or her act of worship with the same degree of thoroughness as any other aspect of their teaching. We encourage a 4 stage structure of planning including 'gathering' 'engaging' 'responding' 'sending'. Collective worship themes are planned termly, drawing from a wide range of resource material gathered from diocesan resources and wider church and taking into account the major festivals of the Church's year.

A worship-planning group meets once a term led by the worship coordinator. These meetings are an opportunity to review and evaluate the last terms Acts of Collective Worship and to plan themes for the next term. The views of pupils about collective worship are sought through the School Council/Collective Worship team. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in the planning, leading and monitoring of Collective worship.

Collective Worship is coordinated by Anna Thompson-Brown, assisted by Revd Suzanne Pattle, ex officio governor and Vicar of St Michael and All Angels Colehill. Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of the Collective Worship leader and Governors. The Collective Worship leader receives feedback from the school community and collects records from each member of staff at the end of every term.

4. Our pattern of Collective Worship

Whole School celebration/ Act of worship:

The school gathers for whole school act of worship every Monday where the weekly theme is introduced, explored and reflections for the week are introduced. Staff and pupils may contribute music, drama and dance. This worship will normally provide opportunities for spiritual development. The weekly theme is reinforced on Wednesday whole school act of worship, which is often led by visitors to the school.

Praise Worship

Once a week the school gathers for 'Praise' worship in which achievements of pupils at the school are celebrated.

Year group / KS worship is held once a fortnight:

These are taken by teachers from each year group. The acts of worship generally follow themes that are aligned to the school's weekly theme and values but include a recognition of the church's year and make space for other national events. The content of these acts of worship can be varied but still include a significant Christian input.

Tutor/Class Teacher-led Reflections, e.g. Diaries of Reflection:

Once a fortnight pupils meet in tutor groups for this act of worship. Pupils reflect on statements, thoughts or ideas, provided or approved by teachers. Pupils may also contribute ideas for reflection. A response may be made in diary form. Subject to usual disclosure procedures these responses are confidential between the pupils and his/her tutor. Pupils who believe in God are invited to reflect that, through these thoughts, God may be helping them to discover the most important directions and values for their lives.

Once a week the school gathers for a tutor group led collective worship, which is usually focused on one of the weekly themes, our school values, a school experience (for example, a school visit/trip) or a festival.

Visitors:

Visitors should understand the educational aims of Collective Worship at the school and the need to avoid any proselytising. Attempts to persuade pupils to adopt a particular religious or non-religious belief are not appropriate. In general the Headteacher is consulted before a visiting speaker is confirmed. Visitors should not speak about raising money for any particular cause(s) without the prior permission of the Headteacher.

Staff and Community Involvement in Collective Worship

Certain named individuals [Vicar Suzanne Pattle, Dan Desmond, Martin McLemon, Peter Breckwoldt and Stephen Gillham] are involved on a regular basis in collective worship. Other staff and pupils are given the opportunity of being involved in this programme every term.

Summary of St. Michael's Middle School pattern of worship

Monday	1:55pm – Classroom / hall / PAD	Class collective worship / Year group / KS worship
Tuesday	1:55pm - Hall	Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher / Collective Worship Lead
Wednesday	1:55pm – Hall	Visitor
Thursday	1:55pm - Hall	Praise Worship / church based worship
Friday	1:55pm - Hall	Tutor group led worship

Policy agreed by the Academy Committee on [date]

Appendix: Visitors to CW