Elsenham C. of E. Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

Adopted by Governors **September 2026**

Next review due by: **September 2027**

Produced in consultation with Diocese of Chelmsford

At Elsenham C. of E. Primary school, our vision for all is to flourish in an inclusive community, where everyone's uniqueness is valued. We strive to provide a rich learning journey, focussed on achieving high standards, both personally and academically. Learners will be equipped with the skills to become resilient individuals, ready for an ambitious future.

Our values: Love, Hope, Faith, Wisdom and Kindness

In the Bible, we learn about the kind of people God wants us to be. At school, we all try to put these values into practice in everything that we do and in everything we try to be.

At Elsenham Church of England Primary School, we are driven by our deep-rooted Christian commitment to the children's well-being and education. We want to develop a safe and exciting environment where all God's children flourish through opportunities and collaboration in a nurturing environment to become lifelong learners.

Introduction

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of love, hope, faith, wisdom and kindness and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

What is Collective Worship?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

"… Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'. (DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)

Corporate worship assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness)
Collective worship, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values. Collective Worship should be:

*"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes." (*DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)

Collective Worship gives pupils and school staff the opportunity to:

- Engage in an act of community
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national and global events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness

• Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts

• Affirm Christian values and attitudes

• Share each other's joys and challenges

• Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar

In line with the requirements of the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship:

a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
b) Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
c) Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God and its language.
d) Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship:

• Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit

• Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance

• Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Saints Days amongst ordinary days

• Learning and saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the blessings in common use

• Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern

• Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning

• The use of prayer, silence and reflection.

• Using prayers from Common Worship

• Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship

What does it look like at Elsenham?

We meet daily for Worship and use Picture News to provide a current news story. We then look at images and a thought-provoking question. Below is an example of rota that we follow:

Monday- Our head teacher, Mr Pawley, leads this worship. Our school Christian values are embedded in these sessions through Bible stories, anecdotes and interactions. Then, children are invited to focus on them during the week. The news story may also be introduced and the thought-provoking question is presented to the children.

We do not ask children to declare a personal faith in God. Just to simply say thank you for all that has happened and reminds children that Christians believe that God is faithful.

Tuesday- We gather in classrooms to sing hymns and songs both modern and traditional and reflect the Christian and seasonal calendar, alongside discussing their Christian meanings. Singing is recorded hundreds of times in the Bible, where God's people, in whatever situation they were in, sung out their praise, adoration, thanks, sorrow or lament to God. Christians believe that when you sing you bring glory to God, offering Him the praise and worship He deserves for His great love and mercy. *Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5: 19-20*

Wednesday- Members of Elsenham, Henham and Ugley parish church come in to school to support children with their understanding of how our school values link with Christian teachings. They aim to enhance religious literacy and familiarity with the Bible as well as key stories and teachings from the Bible.

Thursday- Worship is held in classrooms where a discussion takes place on the question of the week, based on current affairs. Children have the opportunity to share their views and courageous advocacy is encouraged where children want to act upon any opinions they feel strongly about. Our classroom worship is a special time that holds the same structure of whole-school assemblies, including the symbol of a cross and candle and ending with a prayer.

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20

Friday- We hold a celebration worship to rejoice in successes of the week in the form of the 'House Marble Count' and 'Stars of the Week', which are awarded based on our five school values. It is also an opportunity share a snapshot (thought bubble) from each class regarding the big question. A Young Transformers award will also be given in this assembly to recognise achievements beyond the classroom. This is an opportunity to reflect the belief that our gifts and talents are God-given and precious in the sight of God. As such, we must nurture and use our gifts in the service of others. It is an excellent time to express our spirituality and show how we are living out our Christian values.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities including music, silence, symbolism, drama and use of IT.

Regardless of the type of worship happening that day, every Worship consists of four stages:

• **Gather** – we welcome the community, for example, (with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle)

• **Engage** – we share, for example, (a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message)

• **Respond** – pupils, for example, (discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing)

• **Send** – we share, for example, (the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with a sending our phrase, final prayer and music)

Worship Crew

Pupils plan and support worship on a voluntary basis, especially during key Christian dates. They work with the collective worship leader to develop their own understanding of worship and to design a worship to support the spiritual development of their peers. They also take the lead on special celebrations such as Harvest and the Christingle services, working closely with our Reverend. The Worship Crew were vital for with the launch of 'Picture News', which is a school-wide approach to worship and reflection on current news affairs. They meet regularly to reflect on the week, prepare for any significant events in the religious calendar, update display boards and share future, long-term plans and ideas.

Monitoring

Self-assessment by the collective worship lead and regular support from the Diocesan of Chelmsford help to evaluate our acts of collective worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community.

The *legal requirements* of collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools.

• Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England

• The Directors should ensure that all pupils each day engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church

• Arrangements for collective worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Directors, after consulting with the Headteacher (DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53)

• All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)

• All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of collective worship' Parental Withdrawal Worship is regarded as special time which wholly reflects our ethos as a church school. It is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none. We respect the right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship. However, as collective worship is central to our ethos, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this decision with parents.

Appendix

Liturgical colours used during whole school worship and displayed in two other prominent places in the upper and lower buildings.

White:

- From Christmas Day to the Presentation at the Temple (2nd Feb)
- From Easter Day to the eve of Pentecost.

Red:

- Holy week; Pentecost; All Saint's Day (1st Nov) to the beginning of Advent.

Purple:

- Advent; Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday

Green:

- From the Presentation (2nd Feb) to Shrove Tuesday; from Pentecost to All Saint's Eve (31st Oct)

In chronological order:

White 25th Dec – 2nd Feb
Green 2nd Feb – Shrove Tuesday
Purple Ash Wednesday – Palm Sunday (Lent)
Red Holy Week
White Easter Day – Pentecost
Red Pentecost
Green Pentecost – 31st Oct
Red 1st November – Advent
Purple Advent – 24th December