

Collective Worship Policy

Designated Teacher: Deputy Headteacher

Adopted: Date: Jan 2016

Review Period: Three Years

Review Date: Date: Jan 2019

“Educating for Life”

Our Values



Rationale:

The mission of St John Fisher Catholic High School is to provide a process of teaching and learning, which seeks the reality of Christ. His values, ideals and teaching lie at the centre of our relationships and activities. To this end we seek to create a true community of faith and place of learning.

1.1 St. John Fisher Catholic High School strives to be a worshipping community of faith, where all its members may celebrate and live out their faith through prayer, reflection and worship. Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of school life as the school seeks to fulfill its mission. To this end the school has a policy on collective worship.

1.2 The nature of collective worship in a Catholic Christian School is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action to God's invitation to enter into a relationship with God, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

2.0 Definitions and Distinctions



It is important to be clear about our use of terminology when dealing with the whole area of 'collective worship' in schools. Collective worship is the term used in legislation in this country but it is not a phrase we would readily use in a Catholic context. 'Prayer and liturgy' are terms with which we are more familiar.

'Prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours.

God thirsts that we may thirst for him.'

The Catechism of the Catholic Church identifies the following forms of prayer.

Blessing and Adoration

Petition

Intercession

Thanksgiving

Praise

2.3 'Liturgy' literally means 'work of the people' and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is the formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action.

3.0 Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be a single - act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups). We also acknowledge that collective worship and assembly are distinct activities and that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not necessarily fulfill this statutory requirement. While an assembly and act of worship may sometimes form part of the same gathering, in order for the gathering to be regarded as worship, it must actively engage the pupils in the key elements of worship. This may include opportunities for adoration, prayer or reflection.

3.1 The Act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including Religious Education.

3.2 In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, the responsibility for ensuring that arrangements for Collective worship are in place rests with the Governing Body. The



Headteacher will ensure that Collective Worship takes place in accordance with the agreed arrangements.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. In a Catholic School, parents and prospective parents are made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured. All parents attending St John Fisher are required on admission of their child, to support the Christian ethos of the school. While this does not affect their statutory rights, there is an expectation that all pupils will participate in collective worship.

4.0 The place of collective worship in the life of the school.

4.1 We endorse the belief that collective worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it

Those who form part of the worshipping community in church

Those for whom school may be their first and/or only experience of church

Those from other Christian traditions -or none

Those from other faith backgrounds.

4.2 All pupils are required to attend and respect school acts of worship and liturgy. The invitation is that they do so with an open heart and mind.

4.3 One of the most important tasks of Catholic schools is to lead pupils, through celebrating liturgies, towards an understanding and appreciation of Prayer and the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. The Eucharist remains a central element in the life of the Church and therefore the life of the school.

5.0 The aims of collective worship

We believe that collective worship in our school aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

To contemplate something of the mystery of God and experience a sense of awe and wonder

To take time out "to wonder at", "to come to terms with" and "to give worth to" God and His Creation.

To reflect on spiritual and moral issues



To explore and reflect on their own beliefs
To respond to and celebrate life
To give thanks and praise to God
To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
To develop a common ethos and shared values
To enrich religious experience
To grow in liturgical understanding and development
To learn prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
To reinforce positive attitudes
To participate fully in a collective experience

6.0 Principles

6.1 All Acts of worship in this school will

Prepare pupils for the liturgical life of the church

Take into account, as far as possible, the age, aptitudes and backgrounds of the pupils

Follow the basic structure of Christian worship

Give pupils positive liturgical experiences in order to prepare them for and develop their capacity to take part in the liturgical life of the church

Be based on sound educational, pastoral and liturgical principles.

In order to do this, celebrations will:

Be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience

Be simple including a variety of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

7. The organization of Collective Worship



7.1 Weekly Pattern of Assemblies, which include an act of worship (8.50 -9.10am). If a Form is not involved in hall or Chapel assembly, the act of collective worship will take place in the Form Base.

	Hall	Chapel	Form Base
Monday	9, 10	11	7, 8, 12, 13
Tuesday	12, 13	10	7, 8, 9, 11
Wednesday	7, 8	9	10,11,12,13
Thursday	11	8	7, 9,10,12,13
Friday	12, 13	7	8, 9, 10, 11

Every member of staff receives the above timetable at the beginning of the year. All additional acts of worship are recorded on a liturgy schedule, which is included in the school's published liturgical calendar.

The planning and content of Collective Worship

8.1 Collective worship is planned:

Following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, the Religious Education Curriculum, significant dates and the curriculum.

Involving consultation with appropriate parties and with reference to school aims and policies.

With flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community

To develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

8.2 Collective worship is recorded

On a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources

Through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos, etc.

9.0 Monitoring Evaluation and Delivery of Collective worship

9.1 At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.



9.2 Resources

Resources will be available to all staff leading acts of collective worship. These will be stored so that they are readily available on the school intranet.

9.3 The lay chaplain will determine a weekly theme based on the Church's liturgical year.

9.4 The oratory and chaplaincy area will be available for pupils as a refuge and place of prayer and worship.

10.00 Voluntary Worship, Retreats and Liturgies

10.1 Pupils and staff are invited to attend a weekly voluntary Mass in the School Chapel. During the seasons of Advent and Lent, all pupils attend a service of reconciliation and are invited to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

10.2 All pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in Days of Recollection and Residential Retreats. These include:

Year 7 Day of Recollection

Year 8 Day of Recollection

Year 9 Residential Retreat

Year 10 Lourdes Pilgrimage

Year 11 Residential Retreat

10.3 Masses will be celebrated in school to mark the beginning of the school year, the feast of our patron St John Fisher, and on other Holy Days of Obligation that fall on a school working day. There will also be masses to celebrate key points in the school year e.g. Year 7 Community Mass of Welcome, Year 11 Leavers Mass.

10.4 Appropriate liturgies will be in place to mark the Church's liturgical year, so that all members of the school community are aware of its significance to the Life and Worship of the Church. E.g. Advent, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost.

10.5 The school will ensure that pupils are fully aware of issues of the Common Good and Justice and Peace through its programme of assemblies and "off-timetable days" e.g. CAFOD, which will be linked with appropriate prayer and worship.

10.6 The school acknowledges the importance of creating opportunities for staff to pray together. Monday briefing will start the week with a prayer and INSET Days will always



involve an appropriate service or liturgy.

Celebrating the Eucharist

11.1 The Eucharist is the central liturgical act of our Catholic community. Eucharistic celebrations will highlight a special occasion and the same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharist as to other acts of school worship. Opportunities for pupils to participate will be maximised. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to guidelines produced by the National Liturgy Office and Diocesan Vicariate for Evangelisation & Liturgy Commission.

11.2 The Holy Mass will be celebrated in school to mark the beginning of the school year, the Feast of our patron St John Fisher, and on other Holy Days of Obligation that fall on a school working day. There will also be masses to celebrate key points in the school year e.g. Year 7 Community Mass of Welcome, Year 11 Leavers Mass.

11.3 The Coordinator for Collective Worship is Ric Slatter, School Lay Chaplain. The School Priest Chaplain is Fr Stephen Webb. The school acknowledges the support of all the local clergy in celebrating the Eucharist and other liturgies.

12.0 Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed annually by the whole school staff and Link Governor for RE. The policy will be reviewed periodically by the governing body, where the Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

