



SOUTHWARK DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Developing Church of England Education

# **POLICY STATEMENT**

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS**

Approved by: Schools Committee  
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Review date: November 2025



## POLICY STATEMENT

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

**“In a Church school Collective Worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring.”**

*Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools: An Evaluation Schedule for Schools and Inspectors. 2018.*

This policy should be read and is aligned with ‘Inclusive Invitational Inspiring’ Collective Worship in Church of England Schools Guidance Document.

The daily act of Collective Worship is a legal requirement in all schools. In a Church of England School, it should always be Christian worship and reflect the traditions of the Church of England, developing learners’ experience and understanding of Anglican traditions and practice.

Collective Worship should make a major contribution to upholding and supporting the religious character and Christian distinctiveness of a church school. It should be an expression of the school’s Christian vision and the heartbeat of the school. The importance of worship therefore must be relevant and central to its life.

Collective Worship should be of the highest quality as an offering to God. It should aim to inspire and affect pupils and adults. Through Collective Worship, pupils and adults should be offered “an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives.”<sup>1</sup>

It should promote spiritual growth in all participants whatever their faith or none. There should be opportunity for everyone in the school to participate; this includes the chance for all pupils to plan and lead worship.

There needs to be opportunities to:

- ✓ unpack the school’s Christian vision;
- ✓ promote and affirm distinctively Christian values;
- ✓ experience the richness and beauty of Anglican liturgy;
- ✓ sing, pray, be silent and give praise and thanksgiving to God;
- ✓ reflect on the attributes of God and on the teachings of Jesus Christ;
- ✓ listen to and learn from The Holy Bible;
- ✓ celebrate special times in the liturgical calendar;
- ✓ share each other’s joys and challenges;
- ✓ offer a prayerful and worshipful context around local, national and international situations and events;
- ✓ foster respect and unity, helping the community to live well together;
- ✓ deepen spiritual awareness and reflection;
- ✓ experience services of The Eucharist, (depending on the tradition of the parish church).

Collective Worship should influence the thinking and day-to-day actions of the whole school community outside the act of Collective Worship itself, deeply impacting upon school life and on the daily lives of the members of the school community both inside and outside school.

A designated person should be responsible for co-ordinating Collective Worship provision in the school. There should be a partnership with the Incumbent / School Chaplain in developing and leading the school’s programme of Collective Worship and use made of the parish church for some worship. There needs to be professional development, support and resources to equip all staff in leading quality collective worship.

For Collective Worship to be truly effective and make a full contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school, it is an expectation that the whole school community should be included. In particular, no pupils should be excluded as experiencing daily Collective Worship is their entitlement and an important aspect of being part of a church school.

For Collective Worship to be excellent, there should be a clear structure which includes creative and thorough planning and a formal system of evaluation. For this reason, it is recommended a Faith Group, involving a wide

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<sup>1</sup> Inclusive Invitational Inspiring Collective Worship in Church of England Schools Guidance Document *The Church of England Education Office 2021*



variety of stakeholders, meets periodically to monitor and evaluate Collective Worship policy and practice. They should have regard for 'Inclusive Invitational Inspiring' and the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools through which the impact of Collective Worship will be inspected.

It is expected that by working in a Church of England school, the staff share the vision and distinctive Christian ethos of the school and readily participate in Collective Worship. Although legally parents/carers have the option of withdrawing their children from Collective Worship, it is hoped that by applying to a church school, parents/carers understand the school's distinctive Christian character. Parents/carers hopefully would therefore recognise Collective Worship as central to the life of the school and not feel it necessary to withdraw their child. For these reasons it is vital that the aims of Collective Worship are properly understood by the whole school community and that although the Collective Worship is clearly of a Christian nature, it is inclusive and affirming and therefore seen as relevant for all pupils in our diocesan Church of England schools.

Above all, Collective Worship should be "the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all . . . to flourish and to 'live life in all its fullness.' John 10:10" 1