



# Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

## Collective Worship Policy



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## **Harrietsham Church of England Primary School**

### **Collective Worship Policy**

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## **School Context:**

### **Harrietsham CEP Vision Statement**

*We are a warm, welcoming, and inclusive school rooted in our rural community. Like the mustard seed we grew from tiny beginnings and our branches are now spread wide –providing support and taking our values beyond the school gates. All those in our community feel safe and nurtured - able to flourish and grow academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically to achieve their full God-given potential.*

### ***“Nurtured we flourish”***

We are a nurturing school. As such we believe in, and follow, **The Six Principles of Nurture** in all of our practice.

1. Children’s learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe base.
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.
4. Language is a vital means of communication.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. The importance of transition in children’s lives.

### **Our Values**

The roots of our vision are in the parable of the Mustard Seed.

*‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches’.*

***Matthew 13 31-32***

In order to grow and reach our potential, everything that we do in school is driven by our vision and underpinned by our core Christian values of:

### ***Love, Fellowship and Forgiveness***

## **How is this policy a reflection of our distinctive Christian vision?**

As a Church of England School, collective worship is the beating heart of our school life. It brings and gives life to all we do; providing the opportunity to grow the spiritual potential of every member of our school community, no matter what point they are at in their own spiritual journey. Collective worship is a sacred and significant protected time of each school day, where we gather as a school family, rooted in our school values to reflect on, and respond to, life’s big questions and to celebrate our successes. Our times of worship make an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural nurture of the whole school community, enabling all to flourish and achieve their God given potential.

Our acts of collective worship strengthen and support the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of Love, Forgiveness and Fellowship and celebrates the central role that everyone plays in our 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)

Therefore, Collective Worship in Church of England schools must be inclusive and invitational of all, to ensure all can be present with integrity.

### **The legal requirements of Collective Worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools.**

- Collective Worship must be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Governance and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- The Governing Body should ensure that **all** pupils **each day** engage meaningfully in a real act of Collective Worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church.
- Arrangements for Collective Worship in schools of a religious character are the responsibility of the Governing Body, 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'.
- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending Collective Worship at the school, then the school must comply. (*Education Reform Act 1988. s9 (3)*). The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from Collective Worship.

## An Introduction to collective worship at Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

Gathering together is important to us – it is a special time in the day when all can join together. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, recognising and following the Christian liturgical year.

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship therefore will be:

- **Inclusive** – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.
- **Invitational** – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship will provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- **Inspiring** – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions.

## **Aims of collective worship**

Collective Worship offers pupils, staff and the wider school community the opportunity, not compulsion (this opportunity is given as an invitation rather than an instruction), to:

- Gather together to share sacred moments of joy, challenge, grief and love.
- Explore the school's distinctive Christian vision and values in action.
- Reflect on the nature of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts.
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Be still, pray and reflect.
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events.
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness.
- Explore Christian values and attitudes.
- Share each other's joys and challenges.
- Celebrate significant and special times in the Christian calendar.
- Celebrate personal, and school, achievements.

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:

- Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home. Spirituality at Harrietsham is taught through the Windows, Mirrors and Doors approach.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

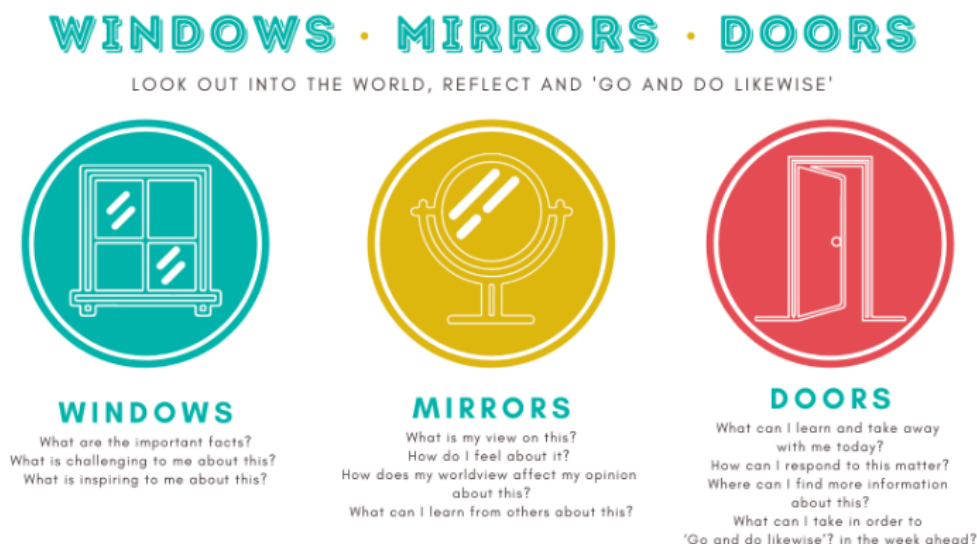
## Spirituality at Harrietsham

At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, we recognise our responsibility to provide meaningful experiences, opportunities, and spaces for spiritual development. Our goal is to help children deepen their understanding of themselves, others, and the world around them.

We support this process through our “Windows, Mirrors, and Doors” approach, which encourages children to encounter the world, reflect on their experiences, and grow as individuals, fostering a sense of purpose and transformation.

The Windows, Mirrors, and Doors Approach offers a framework for developing children's spirituality by providing opportunities for encounter, reflection, and transformation:

- **Windows:** Opportunities to look out on the world to gaze and wonder: The 'awe and wonder' moments; the things we find amazing, make us go 'Wow!' and take our breath away.  
*Encounter: Learning about life.*
- **Mirrors:** Giving opportunities for children to reflect: To look inward, to consider some of the big questions of life, to explore their own insights and those of others.  
*Reflection: Learning from life.*
- **Doors:** Giving opportunities to children to respond: To do or think something new, to go through the door of a creative expression of their own thoughts and convictions.  
*Transformation: Learning to live life by putting into action what they believe.*



## The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship through invitational and inclusive language:

- 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.
- Saying prayers from a number of sources.
- 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.

We also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican - Anglican sentences and responses are used at the beginning and end of worship.

## **Implementation**

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors e.g. Family Trust, in consultation with the collective worship leader.

The act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class.

Our school plans systematically and cohesively using the Canterbury Diocesan Collective Worship Planning which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and this enables continuity.

We meet daily:

- Monday - Whole School Worship (SLT led)
- Tuesday - Whole School Worship (Teacher led)
- Wednesday – Key Stage One Music Worship and Key Stage Two Class Worship
- Thursday – Key Stage One Class Worship and Key Stage Two Music and Church worship led by the Len Valley Benefice team
- Friday - Celebration Worship, to which parents/carers and members of the wider school community are invited. These are led by different members of the school community.

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

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- **Gather** – We welcome the community with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle.
- **Engage** – We share a key message – usually through a bible story / reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message.
- **Respond** – Pupils discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing.
- **Send** – We share the message of the worship again and set a challenge asking pupils to think about how this will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with liturgy, the blowing out of our special candle and music.

## **Expectations of pupils**

At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, there is an expectation that all pupils will be involved within worship on a regular basis. This may be through opportunities planned ahead of time (for example class input in Harvest Festival or readings and thoughts during Easter Services) or unplanned through questioning, asking for volunteers or simply responding to moments of spontaneity.

Pupils are invited to evaluate and reflect on the impact of acts of worship they have joined with. Their voice is integral to improving the structure, content and in shaping future plans for worship.

Pupils have the opportunity to plan and lead worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the Collective Worship leader to develop their own understanding of worship and to design times of worship to support the spiritual development of their peers. The school worship group is called 'The Shining Lights' and comprises of pupils from years 1 to 6.



Pupils are encouraged to actively engage with collective worship, participating in the different elements. At all times they are expected to behave with respect to others, including those leading. If worship takes place in the school hall, they are required to enter and leave the gathering calmly.

## **Developing worship**

Parents, pupils and adults at Harrietsham Church of England Primary School are entitled to be led in worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a Church School context.

Therefore, all those leading worship, including clergy, should have access to regular Diocesan led training.

The leader for collective worship will:

- Ensure that all pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship, therefore meeting statutory requirements.
- Ensure that all staff have access to, and are welcome at, a daily act of collective worship.
- Ensure that collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring.
- Attend regular training and network meetings with the Canterbury Diocese.
- Produce, and regularly review, the collective worship policy to ensure that it reflects current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with the Headteacher and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of collective worship across the school.
- Ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading, planning and joining worship.
- Join those who are leading worship to provide supportive feedback on how worship could be developed.
- Evaluate the impact of collective worship on the whole school community by gathering pupil and adult voice.
- Signpost staff to a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and resources, to help develop their confidence in leading acts of worship.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited to lead collective worship.
- Meet with and encourage pupil leaders of worship to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.

The school allocates part of its budget to support the daily act of collect worship.

## **Visitors leading worship**

Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies which can be found on the school website [www.harrietsham.kent.sch.uk](http://www.harrietsham.kent.sch.uk).

They should discuss the content of any worship with the Collective Worship Leader or a member of the Senior Leadership Team in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of the Collective Worship Leader, Senior Leaders and Foundation Governors to ensure that all visitors who are leading worship in school are trained and properly briefed about the



school, its pupil context and our school's vision. They will be supported and monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation process of worship.

## **Self-assessment and Inspection**

Our school regularly evaluates all acts of collective worship and the impact they have on the school and our wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop. Our findings are shared during Shining Lights and Quality of Education Committee meetings. The findings are reflected upon and use to impact future practice.

Those planning worship include elements to encourage understanding and impact, such as dramatisation of a bible passage. They also think about creative ways to engage the school community in worship, such as through questioning and 'talk time' / 'reflection time'.

We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils when assessing the impact of worship in our school. We review and consider these on a regular basis. These are shared with the Quality of Education Committee and play an integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school.

**The impact of Collective Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).**

## **Parental Withdrawal**

Worship is regarded as a special time in our school day where we gather as a school family. Reflecting our ethos as a Church of England school, collective worship is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none to be present with integrity.

We respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship, so would welcome the opportunity to discuss this decision with them. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw children from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.