

Aldbury C of E Primary and Nursery School



Collective Worship Policy

‘To live life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10)

Approved by: FGB	Date: October 2024
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Policy Statement

Collective worship allows for a clear expression of the school's ethos, affirming the importance of relationships and the sharing of experiences. It is an important vehicle for pupils to explore and share beliefs, consider the importance of prayer, meditation and silence, the relevance of ideas and beliefs to their own lives, think about the needs of others and develop a sense of community.

Background to Collective Worship at Our School

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character" for the majority of the time. They must also be "appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils". As a church school our acts of worship are explicitly Christian although we are sympathetic to other faiths. Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christians. In addition, there are children who are of faiths other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in asking our children to worship, we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to convert the children but to give them a balanced, educated understanding within a spiritual setting. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times.

The headteacher, alongside the RE Lead, is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body and with guidance from our church partners (Diocesan and Parish). Parents have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from collective worship.

Values and Aims

We believe, at this school, that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship: Our acts of collective worship are part of the school's aim to educate for 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10), recognising that physical and intellectual development is united with spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The four basic elements of Wisdom, Hope, Community and Dignity run through our approach to collective worship. Together they form an 'ecology' of the fullness of life, each in interplay with all the others. (CofE Vision for Education 2016)

We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

The aims and purpose of Collective Worship as defined by the Education Reform Act 1988 are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for the children to worship God
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs
- To encourage participation and response
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes

The Legal Requirements

'To live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)



We seek to comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
- The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- All acts of Collective Worship in Church schools must be Christian in character. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for worship such as the whole school, year groups, classes, or other combinations.
- Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
- The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises but all school are able to hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.

Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a Church of England school rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the Headteacher.

Principles of collective worship

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality (see Church of England's Collective Worship Guidance).¹ 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.

Organisation of Collective Worship

At Aldbury we combine our acts of worship with assembly. The school meets each day either as a whole school or in classes. Our youngest pupils (Nursery and Reception) join whole school worship as appropriate.

Our Collective Worship always includes reflection time, song and a prayer.

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Prayers can be either the school prayer, a class prayer, the Lord's Prayer, a prayer written by the children

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf>

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or another to fit with the theme of the worship.

At the beginning of the lunch hour, grace is said by either an adult or child in each class. Prayers are also said at the end of the school day. For our older pupils (Year 5 and 6) and those in younger year groups who choose to, this time can be used for personal reflection or a personal prayer. Every classroom has a Reflective Area, where the value of the half term is explicitly shared and where examples of prayer can be found. Children can use these spaces if they need a moment to reflect during the school day.

All staff, as well as the Vicar, are involved in leading assemblies and collective worship.

We take the themes of our assemblies from our Christian Values and the traditions of the Christian faith, we reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar as well as being mindful of prominent celebrations from other faiths. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. We plan our assemblies as part of a series of themes well in advance of the day. We aim to include the children in the planning and delivery of our Collective Worship wherever possible.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories and readings.
- Dance and drama
- Prayer, reflection, meditation, songs, hymns and music
- Artefacts and natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points/School Candle/Children's Crosses
- Dialogue/reflective silence
- Visitors

We invite parents to special occasion services, worship in church at Christmas, Harvest and Easter. This promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children.

We welcome governors' attendance at Collective Worship at any time.

Connections with other Christian denominations and faiths

The Anglican Communion sees itself as part of a global church and promotes ecumenism. At Aldbury, we work to promote links with other local churches and Christian organisations and welcome their clergy and leaders as contributors to acts of collective worship. We recognise that while some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, many worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting in which the integrity of those present is not compromised, where everyone finds something positive for themselves and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.

Typical Timetable

Monday	Whole school worship with a Values theme
Tuesday	Whole school choral worship where the value is the theme for the music wherever 'To live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)



	possible. This may also be related to the Christian Calendar e.g. Christmas
Wednesday	Whole school worship led by the Vicar
Thursday	Whole school worship with a worldview perspective – Picture News is our usual driver for this.
Friday	Celebration Worship usually led by the headteacher. The ‘What a Star’ celebration is linked to the Values theme

At Aldbury we evaluate our acts of worship against our aims and some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being

Staff, Governors and Children are involved in evaluating collective worship.

Staff non-contact time.

We appreciate the need for staff to have some time during the school day set aside for planning and preparation. We also recognise the value of the whole school, including staff being involved in our school worship. Therefore, we ask that teaching staff attend collective worship every Friday as well as Collective worship led by the Vicar. All staff attend services in church led by the Vicar as well as Parent Assemblies and Celebration services in school and church.

Record Keeping, Evaluation and Monitoring

A file is kept online recording details of each act of worship. Evaluations will also be recorded here. Training is encouraged and available for those who wish to lead acts of worship.

Equal Opportunities and special needs issues

All pupils, regardless of academic ability, age, gender and ethnic origin will have access to a wide range of appropriate resources to support their understanding of the collective worship being delivered.

Rights and Responsibilities

As established by the 1944 Act and reinforced through this policy, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, having chosen to send their children to Aldbury, it is hoped that no one will exercise this right. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act.