

## **SECTION 2 - CORE (C) POLICIES**

### **C1 - WORSHIP POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

At St George's School, A Church of England Academy, Religious Education and Collective Worship include a daily act of worship which follows the rites, practice and doctrine of the Church of England.

It is the duty of the Governing Body to secure that, subject to the legal requirements which apply to Voluntary Aided schools e.g. The Education Reform Act 1988, section 6, all students at St George's School shall take part in the daily act of collective worship as required by the Act in accordance with the trust deed and traditions of our school and the demands of Diocesan policy.

Collective Worship clearly plays a major part in promoting the Christian aims, values and ethos of the school as expressed in our mission statement:

Collective Worship is at the heart of our school life and Governors see it as an essential part of all the students' education. As such we are concerned to resource it properly and to ensure that it is of the highest standard. The worship and prayer life of the school is not limited to legal daily acts of worship; opportunities will be taken to use reflection exercises throughout the curriculum.

#### **1. Worship or Assembly**

Schools have traditionally often referred to "assembly" rather than "collective worship". We believe the two do not have to be distinct; "assembly" being the gathering together to share a common purpose e.g. celebration of achievement, "worship" being a time to acknowledge, reflect on and respond to God. We believe that our achievements should be seen within the setting of our Christian beliefs and values and as a realisation of our God given gifts and talents. Collective worship is also the place where we acknowledge the infinitely larger world we live in and are touched by its mystery, awe and wonder. We do recognise that there are times when we assemble together for purposes other than worship e.g. simple notices or announcements – such times are legally distinct from worship and hence withdrawal rights do not apply.

Forms of worship within the Church of England do differ and these differences enable us to provide a varied range of approaches to worship whilst remaining true to our trust deed. As well as drawing on our denominational heritage, we also expect to draw on the rich tapestry of practice in the world wide Christian church. Stories and other material from another faith

may be used from time to time where these might effectively illustrate Christian values and support the development of respect for self and other people.

Whatever the approaches and material used, we expect that students will be introduced to the following key beliefs and aspects of our Christian faith and helped to explore them:

- The nature of God as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Jesus as the Son of God who, through His life, death and resurrection. Redeemed Humanity
- The nature of human beings as children of God, part of His creation and destined for eternal life.
- The central 15 Christian and how these are lived out in everyday life.
- The central place of the Bible as a source of knowledge about God and Jesus and as a source of inspiration and guidance.
- The importance of prayer. In building a relationship with God.
- The central symbols of Christianity notably the cross.
- The cycle of the Church Year.

Our school policy sets out a framework within which all staff can operate and gives guidance on content, organisation and resources. This document is designed for all staff, school governors, Cidari directors, inspection teams and Diocesan advisors/inspectors. Copies are provided for all teachers, for the Chair of Governors Curriculum Committee (to be made available upon request to any Governor) and for the Headteacher (to be made available on request to supply teachers, support staff, trainee teachers and parents). An additional copy is kept in the office for advisors or inspection teams.

## **2. Responsibility for this policy**

Responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the Governing Body in consultation with the Head and Worship Team. Governors should:

- Contribute to and then agree the school policy for collective worship
- Receive reports on school worship.
- Ensure that there is a group responsible for collective worship
- Ensure that funding is identified for resourcing collective worship
- Agree those occasions when collective worship will be held in church
- Attend collective worship in school when possible
- Ensure that collective worship has a place in the School Development Plan
- Agree when and how collective worship is reviewed
- Agree wording about worship in the school prospectus.

### **3. Aims**

Within the context of a Church School, collective worship should support both the children and adults throughout their own faith journey. Enabling them to take part in developing their own beliefs, values and traditions through an exploration of shared human experience with an emphasis on Anglican beliefs and practices as is appropriate to the school situation.

Collective worship is an integral part of the ethos of the school as expressed in our mission statement. Students are given a sound foundation in knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith as appropriate for their age and abilities. Through knowledge, discussion and thought, students are helped to explore and define their personal faith.

Therefore the aims of collective worship at St. George's School are to enable all students and staff to:

- Experience and participate in a caring Christian community
- Develop their own beliefs, values and traditions
- Develop self-confidence and a positive self-esteem in relation to their worth to God
- Gain in their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith as appropriate to their age and abilities
- Begin to understand the nature of God as revealed Father Son & Holy Spirit
- Celebrate the major festivals and selected Saints' days of the church year
- Learn about the significance of the Bible to Christians.
- Develop an understanding of, and confidence in, Anglican beliefs and practices.
- Learn the Lord's Prayer, the Grace and other appropriate prayers and responses.
- Develop the ability to be still and reflective
- Understand what worship is and begin to develop their own relationship with God.
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder at creation and the gift of life
- Explore important questions about life and creation, including areas such as love, truth, loss, suffering etc.
- Share the achievements, joys and difficulties of all members of the school community in the presence of God.
- Develop performance skills and participate confidently in group preparation and share their God given talents through Worship
- Understanding of community – local, national and international and our responsibility within the wider world.
- Contribute to Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural (SMSC) development .
- To provide an experience of Worship that will allow students to respond to the presence, power and peace of God
- Provide the whole school community with the opportunity of Praise and reach out to God
- Foster and enable a concern for the needs of others, recognition of the vulnerability of the self and others in our community.

#### **4. Organisation and Delivery**

In order to achieve the aims outlined previously, collective worship at St. George's School is organised into either whole College or form tutor groupings. Worship takes place at a common time. Worship is led by SLT, year group leaders, staff and students. We also have invited guests leading assemblies on occasions. Members of the clergy from our community grouping visit the school to support worship, spirituality and ethos.

Governors are welcome to join our assemblies whenever they are able to join the school community at this time.

It is very important that we create a worshipful atmosphere for effective collective worship to take place; and share a common time (2pm-2:10pm) thus ensuring little movement in the school building whilst worship takes place.

We celebrate all achievements made both individually or as a school community as part of our worship time. On occasions other messages are given to the children at the beginning of our worship time.

#### **5. Content and Approaches**

In planning collective worship we try to ensure a range of content and activities are used. Any worship time might include:

- Bible passages explored
- Silence and other reflective moments
- Readings and storytelling
- Rituals and responses
- Drama
- Music
- A talk or spoken reflection
- Discussion or questioning
- Interviews/role play
- Use of religious symbols
- Prayer
- Challenges/problem solving
- Recognition of achievements
- Use of visual aids.
- Exploring contemporary issues

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The content of our collective worship tends to follow a fourfold approach:

1. Observance of the church year
2. Celebration of curriculum work
3. Themes drawn from everyday life.
4. "One off" assemblies.

Within these 4 approaches content of our worship includes:

- Sharing and taking note of common experiences
- Expressing concern for others, both those known to themselves and people from the news.
- Looking at the world and our place within it
- Exploring common values, standards and rules
- Exploring specific incidents and issues
- Sharing biblical passages
- Sharing other literature, poetry or art with a Christian theme
- Sharing information about other faiths
- Celebrating and sharing achievements
- Prayer and reflection

#### Cross Curricular Links

Collective worship has clear links to the teaching of R.E. in our school, but there are also links to many other areas of the curriculum. The importance of cross curricular teaching is clear; no subject can be taught in isolation, a broader experience of learning will undoubtedly lead to a greater level of development in all areas of the child's experience – intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual.

- i. English - Speaking and listening are central to taking part in collective worship. Children are encouraged to listen to Biblical and other stories, poems, experiences and opinions. They are equally encouraged to retell stories, take part in role play and explain their views, ideas and experiences. Reading and responding both to the Bible and other reference books is also a fundamental part of collective worship.
- ii. Science - there are of course some specific areas of linked study for example the universe and the story of creation, but in more general terms an understanding of the uniqueness of every individual adds an important dimension to children's scientific investigations about themselves.
- iii. Geography/History - the study of Biblical stories and events inevitably leads to an examination of the impact the environment had on those events and the shaping of beliefs. Children will be involved in contrasting Biblical societies with now, vital if faith is to be relevant to their own lives not just a story of other people from distant lands and in distant times.
- iv. The Arts - The arts can provide a valuable insight into both Christian and other faith practices. Music, pictures, photographs, films and artefacts all help to bring faith and worship alive and real.

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- v. Physical Education - A celebration of talents and achievements of both sporting teams and individuals is an important part of collective worship.

## **6. Resources**

A variety of resources for collective worship are available through the school, some are located in individual classrooms, others are held by the Department or Chaplain. The requirements of the Diocesan syllabus and the age and ability of the students in school leads to the use of the following types of resources:

- The Diocesan R.E. syllabus document
- Teachers' books and articles
- Audio-visual aids
- Story books, posters, artefacts and art work.
- Human resources – clergy, advisors, visitors.
- Worship signs
- Swatch and Pray
- FLAME and Worship 190

## **7. Equal Opportunities**

Equal Opportunities at St George's School is carried out according to our agreed Equal Opportunities Policy.

All staff leading worship are responsible for ensuring that all students irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social circumstances, have access to worship opportunities at a level appropriate to them whilst in our school.

The monitoring of the policy for Equal Opportunities is ultimately the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team, but every member of staff is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the policy in terms of promoting our Christian distinctiveness

## **8. Recording and Reporting**

Records of the Acts of Worship that take place in school are kept by the Worship Co-ordinator. All records kept are straightforward, brief and understandable to those who need to use them. They serve two key purposes:

- To show the range of approaches used
- To show the content covered (including songs used)

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The Worship Team meet half termly to co-ordinate and plan worship. Reporting to the governing body takes place in line with our procedures for reporting all areas of the curriculum. The Chair of Governors takes a strong personal interest in the collective worship in school, occasionally attending acts of worship and discussing worship with the Worship Team.

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation is carried out to enhance the collective worship within our school. Informal evaluations will be carried out at the end of each act of worship by the worship leader and an evaluation of the overall patterns and provision of worship is carried out by the co-ordinator, and an Induction program given to all staff.

Monitoring takes place in a number of ways:

- personal evaluation by the worship leader shared with the co-ordinator
- discussion with individuals or groups of children
- discussion with members of staff
- self-evaluation programme during each half-term.

## **10. INSET/Training Provision**

INSET and training at St George's School is carried out according to our agreed Staff Development Policy.

Staff development needs in collective worship are considered and planned for by the Headteacher. These needs are identified through discussion with individual staff and the system of performance management. These needs are highlighted as part of the co-ordinators' subject development plan, which subsequently becomes part of the School and Staff Development Plans. The effectiveness of training is evaluated by individual members of staff, supported by the co-ordinator.

## **11. The Role of the Worship Team**

The Worship Team is responsible for:

- Determining the aims for collective worship throughout the school and, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, staff and governors, devising objectives or targets to allow the school to achieve these aims. Documenting these aims within the school policy for collective worship.
- Ensuring that the Diocesan Guidelines for RE and collective worship are known and understood by all who lead worship in our school.
- Keeping clear records of the acts of worship taking place in school.
- Monitoring the collective worship in the school thereby ensuring that worship holds its central place within the broad and balanced curriculum of our school. This will

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include the monitoring of resources (including books, practical equipment, ICT soft and hardware), content and approaches.

- Undertaking an annual review of collective worship in school as part of the School Development Planning process.
- Managing the budget allocation for collective worship and advising staff on resources throughout the school.
- Through personal reading and attendance at courses, keeping abreast of developments and evaluate new ideas and approaches in collective worship.
- Keeping staff informed of such developments
- Submitting reports to the governing body as required.

## **Appendix**

### The legal requirements for Religious Education

#### A. Legal requirements.

Religious Education in Church Schools is governed by the 1996 and 1998 Education Acts as well as by the Trust Deed of the school.

The legislation requires Religious Education to be provided for all students (1996 Education Act, Section 352). The type of Religious Education provided must be in accordance with the Trust Deed.

#### B. Parental rights of withdrawal in a Voluntary Aided School

All students in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship unless the parent requests that he might be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school.

The worship and Religious Education provided by St. George's School is in accordance with the Church of England Foundation. Our faith position is not confined to collective worship and RE lessons; it is also reflected throughout the curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the whole ethos of our school reflects our Christian faith, removal of students from Worship or RE (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate students from the religious life of our school.

There are limited arrangements for withdrawal from collective worship in school – children would be supervised by the Special Needs Department.

#### C. Complaints about the provision of Collective Worship

It is hoped that any complaint will be resolved informally by the Headteacher, in consultation with members of the Governing Body and possibly with advice from the Diocese. However, if the complaint is still not satisfactorily resolved, then further procedures come into play and the matter will be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-

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committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese.

This policy was approved by the Worship Team/Governing Body after consultation with staff, RE Head of Department the clergy and lay leaders and lay leaders of St. Paul's, St. Christopher and St. Nicholas', and St Wilfrid's Church, CSA and Diocesan representatives. Mr Berry with the school chaplain is responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of this policy.

This Police was last updated by the Worship Team in June 2015. It is based on Diocesan Guidance and was presented to the Governing Body for approval.

The Worship Policy at St. George's School will be reviewed and modified on a regular basis at least every two years.

It is possible to add amendments to this document prior to a review and these will be incorporated into the next issue. To add comments please complete the information on the following sheet adding the date and signing where indicated.

Names of Worship Team:

Dcn Anne Wren  
Mr. D Berry  
Rev H Houston  
Ms. M Hayhurst  
Fr. C Wren  
Canon Andrew Sage  
Mrs. H.Sage  
Mrs. T Hackney  
Ms. C. Ibbotson  
Mrs. A. Ellis