



## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY**

**March 2023**

Contextualised for South Molton United Church of England Primary School

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| <b>Date approved by Local Governing Body</b>   | <b>19<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b> |
| <b>Review Period</b>                           | <b>2-yearly</b>                      |
| <b>Signed by Chair of Local Governing Body</b> |                                      |



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In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do.

## Our Vision and Values

At South Molton United Church of England Primary School, children have a sense of belonging in a supportive, happy environment, where their range of talents will be nurtured, enabling them to flourish and achieve excellence.

Every child is valued as a unique person and can develop their sense of discovery, expectation and wonder.

We embrace Christian values, which enable us to be compassionate and responsible members of our community and make positive contributions to society.

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# Koinonia



‘Collective worship in a church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.



## **1. Policy Statement**

In South Molton United Church of England Primary School collective worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At South Molton United Church of England Primary School collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through collective worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

## **2. Church of England Guidance**

Collective worship policy at South Molton United Church of England Primary School draws on guidance from the Church of England. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

## **3. Legal Requirements**

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words, the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, "that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", is not relevant. Worship in South Molton United Church of England Primary School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.



The trustees have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the Headteacher.

#### **4. The right of withdrawal**

In South Molton United Church of England Primary School there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from collective worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

*(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)*

#### **5. Guiding Principles**

Collective worship in South Molton United Church of England Primary School aims to:



- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

## **6. Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation**

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and on the school website.



## **7. How collective worship is organised**

- Either a member of staff, a group of pupils, or a member of the clergy / local church leads collective worship in our school.
- Collective worship is planned around half termly themes which are linked to the School's vision and values and include the pattern of the church's year.
- Each person leading worship is expected to plan his or her act of worship with the same degree of thoroughness as any other aspect of their teaching. Collective worship normally uses the Gathering, Engaging, Responding and Sending approach.
- Worship takes place in a variety of settings, for example; in the school hall, in a class and in the local church.
- Collective worship is given a special period in the school day; a time when various groups within the school can meet together for prayer and reflection.
- At South Molton United Church of England Primary School we mark this special time by asking the children to reflect quietly. On occasion and where suitable, we may light a candle.

## **8. Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Foundation Governor, in conjunction with the Local Governing Body, Headteacher, staff and school community have responsibility to ensure that the daily act of collective worship is consistent with the principles and practices of the Church of England and the trust deeds of the school.
- The Headteacher has responsibility for managing collective worship on a day-to-day basis, ensuring compliance with all legal requirements.

## **9. Staff development and training**

- We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. This support is provided by the Diocese of Exeter Education Team.

## **10. Monitoring and evaluation**

- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship is an on-going process that involves input from staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- Feedback provides insight into how worship influences the life of the community and is used to ensure on-going relevance and improvement. Outcomes of monitoring is reported at Local Governing Body meetings and informs the school's development plan.
- At present, monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of collective worship is carried out through pupil surveys and group discussions.

