

## ***Sutton Courtenay Primary School Collective Worship Policy 2026***

*Approved by the Local Governing Body: 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026  
To be reviewed by the Local Governing Body by: March 2029*

### **Introduction**

At Sutton Courtenay Church of England Primary School, RE plays an important role in expressing the Christian vision of the school. RE reflects the ethos and values that are held and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and worldviews, whether religious or non-religious. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of our pupils from all backgrounds and traditions. Vision and Values

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is “Love life; love learning; love one another.” This is theologically underpinned by Matthew 7:25 and shapes everything we do—fostering joy in learning, respect for others, and a deep sense of belonging. At Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School, we aim to create a learning community where every child feels valued, inspired, and supported to grow as confident, compassionate individuals. Education here opens doors, nurtures curiosity, and builds strong foundations for lifelong learning.

### **Our Values - The Way We Do Things Here**

As a Church of England school, our Christian values underpin all that we do. We nurture spiritual growth alongside academic and personal development, encouraging children to reflect, care, and act with integrity. Strong partnerships with families, the parish, and the wider community enrich our school life and help us live out these values in meaningful ways.

Our Christian ethos is rooted in three guiding principles:

Ready - We come prepared to learn, explore, and grow every day.

Respectful - We treat others with kindness and dignity, valuing every voice and every difference.

Responsible - We take ownership of our actions and choices, contributing positively to our school and wider community.

### **Legal Requirements.**

By law, in a Church school, Collective Worship must:

- be provided daily for all registered pupils;
- reflect the school's Trust Deed.

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that Collective Worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Arrangements for Collective Worship in a Church school are the responsibility of the governors in consultation with the Head Teacher. The main legal requirements for Collective Worship are:

- Collective Worship in a church school should be carried out in accordance with the school's founding Trust Deed.
- the school must provide an act of Collective Worship for all pupils every day
- this 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 unit.
- Parental requests for withdrawal should be granted without delay. Children should not be withdrawn from Collective Worship for other purposes, e.g. reading/phonics groups, music lessons, to do so is to break the law.

Collective Worship is central to the life of our school. Worship offers the pupils and others in our school an opportunity to reflect on values and issues in the context of our Christian vision and ethos. It is an expression of our vision and shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school. We aim for our Collective Worship to be invitational, inclusive and inspirational and warmly invite all members of our school community to join.

### **Right to withdraw**

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can also exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own RE. This provision will be the parents' responsibility. This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE and can do so without giving any explanation. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. However, this does not apply to teachers who have been specifically employed to teach or lead RE. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the teaching of RE, a letter requesting this must be submitted to the head of the school and its chair of governors. If a teacher withdraws from the teaching of RE, the school must still make provisions for the pupils to receive their entitlement to RE.

When a request to withdraw is received by a school, the request should be granted without delay. The school may offer to speak with the parent to try to understand the basis for the withdrawal but only after the request has been granted. The school must make clear that the parent's right to withdraw their child has been granted and that parents are not required to give reasons for their request.

### **Our worship has 3 underlying principles:**

1. It is inclusive and contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils and adults
2. It is invitational and respects the dignity of all participants
3. It is inspiring and combines a range of experiences

### **It is inclusive**

Our understanding of Christianity is that it is an inclusive faith which mirrors the attitude of Christ in the Gospels. Thus, we welcome children and staff of all faiths and worldviews to our worship. Through their Christian character our acts of Collective Worship will:

- recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, lifestyles, faiths and worldviews which exist in our school and local community;
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for everyone to attend;
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils;
- foster active roles of pupils, parents and members of the local community, in preparation, participation and leadership.

### **It is invitational**

Acts of Collective Worship will:

- nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in everyone through working for social justice and encouraging pupils to consider the needs of others through charitable service and courageous advocacy;

- nurture reflection, stillness, meditation and prayer;
- provide pupils with (age appropriate) opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of their lives through music, images and words;
- provide a sense of occasion that is separate from the rest of the school day;
- foster an appreciation of the natural world and our shared responsibilities for maintaining it;
- develop clear partnerships between worship in the school and the wider community.

### **It is inspiring**

Our acts of Collective Worship provide wider opportunities to:

- promote wide ownership of our Christian vision;
- assist learners to have increased awareness and to reflect upon fundamental issues about life;
- enhance, complement and extend curricular work;
- develop learners' understanding of the Christian faith and Church (Anglican) practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical content;
- encounter and explore Jesus' teachings and the trinitarian nature of Christian faith;
- identify opportunities for Christian celebration which can be associated with other school events;
- include appropriate references to and elements of other faiths and worldviews;
- support the community to respond to celebrations and challenges;
- support the community to seek ways of working together for the good of all;
- include opportunities to celebrate the academic, social, personal and wider achievements of pupils.

### **The purpose of our Collective Worship**

**The purpose of Collective Worship provides pupils and staff the opportunity to:**

celebrate -

- Christian seasons and festivals;
- school values associated with our vision;
- pupils' and adults' achievements;
- experience prayer, stillness, worship and reflection;
- grow in understanding of and participation in prayer;
- create a reflective approach to life including the exploration of deep questions;

- develop as a community centred on our clear and distinctive Christian vision;
- experience a variety of styles of worship;
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship;
- feel safe and affirmed;
- worship God on their own terms;
- promote participants' thinking beyond the time given to worship itself.

**Worship in our school will reflect aspects of the curriculum and in particular will:**

- nurture spiritual growth;
- enable participants to consider moral questions in a Christian context;
- enhance social understanding and encourage responses to issues through courageous advocacy;
- give participants a chance to reflect on the place and importance of faith in the lives of people today;
- encourage participants to explore beliefs drawn from their own cultural heritage;
- reflect the teachings of Jesus and a trinitarian theology.

Pupils, staff and parents of all faiths and worldviews, are welcome to worship which is an expression of our distinctive Christian vision. Our school is a community that celebrates religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and encourages dialogue and understanding. We believe that we can all learn from each other and that Collective Worship is an educational entitlement for all. In worship, we create the opportunity to explore the place of faith in people's lives, and in the communities where we live. This worship occurs at various times of day and with a mixture of grouping of pupils. Through regular acts of worship our school has the opportunity of offering thanksgiving and praise to God through a range of liturgical patterns.

**Collective Worship will:**

- be acceptable to the whole community, staff and children
- include a variety of elements at different times
- involve the pupils at an age-appropriate level
- have a dedicated focus which signifies what is being reflected upon
- provide a dedicated opportunity for students to reflect/respond to the input

### **Acts of worship often include ritual aspects of enabling worship:**

- stories and readings
- songs, hymns and music
- dance and drama
- prayer, meditations
- creative silence
- sacred/secular readings
- artifacts and natural materials
- children's contributions

### **The pattern of our Collective Worship**

Collective Worship takes place in a variety of groupings, in the school hall, in classrooms and on occasions outside. On occasions worship takes place in the church. We follow the seasons of the Church year and within these significant festivals and other special days are observed. These may include Harvest, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Pentecost; other days such as Epiphany and Candlemas may also be celebrated occasionally. Other important days in the calendar such as Remembrance and the Leavers' Service also feature in Collective Worship.

### **Leading Collective Worship**

Worship has a variety of leaders from both within school and from the local Church Community. Pupils are given opportunities to lead worship throughout the year. Visitors are welcome to contribute to Collective Worship from time to time and are given guidance from our worship policy. Leaders from faiths within the area help us to increase the pupils' awareness, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these faiths.

### **Planning acts of Collective Worship**

Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience. Leaders plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme and the needs of the pupils. The themes of worship are chosen to both express and explore our vision and the way in which this vision is experienced in school through the associated values. Throughout their time at our school children will encounter a wide variety of activities such as dance and drama alongside more traditional elements of worship such as prayer and song.

Prayer is a vital part of our worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to God reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Pupils who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

Our worship is regularly reviewed through discussions with participants, observation and reflection. and our evaluations are fed into the planning for future worship.

### **The role of the Governing Board**

- Governors should be aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to Collective Worship, and take account of the policy and guidelines of the Diocese
- In Church schools, governors must take account of the legal requirements, any school Trust Deed and guidelines issued by the Diocese
- Governors must be actively involved and familiar with all documentation regarding Collective Worship issued on their behalf and be actively involved in the process of Collective Worship development within the school
- governors should ensure that Collective Worship is appropriately reviewed as part of the school improvement plan and be actively involved in the review process
- Governors should be aware of the requirement under SIAMS for the inspection of Collective Worship
- it is a statutory requirement that a school prospectus includes details of Collective Worship provided at the school. These details should inform parents of the parental right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship. The arrangements and provision made for those children withdrawn from worship should be clearly stated