



BATH & WELLS

Multi Academy Trust

'That they may have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10

Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust

Collective Worship Policy

Approved by:	Bath & Wells Multi Academy Trust Board	Date:	Nov 24
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Policy Statement

The Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust has a mixture of Anglican, Methodist and Community schools. The daily act of collective worship is considered to be the unique heartbeat of a Church School and is an integral and important part of school life. It is a time where everyone comes together to explore their faith and celebrate achievements. It offers all pupils an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The contributions of staff, pupils, church clergy and other visitors are valued highly. Collective Worship is an essential component of an education that enables all pupils, young people and adults to flourish.

Collective Worship and the Law

In Church schools, the requirement is to reflect the Anglican status of the school as expressed in its trust deed liberating those leading Collective Worship to build on the rich, lived diversity of Anglican tradition and identity. In the same way as worship in churches is aspirational, constantly evolving and being re-imagined there is an expectation of a continuous, dynamic reimagining of what Collective Worship means in the Church school. Collective Worship in Methodist schools will follow the traditions from the Methodist Church and John Wesley's rule. *"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."* (1799 collection of sermons.)

Collective Worship in community schools is grounded in the historical past and enshrined in educational law to be *'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character.'*

Legal expectations

a) The law on Collective Worship in Church and Community Schools

Collective Worship:

- in a Church of England School, must be in line with the trust deed of the school and will reflect the traditions of the Church of England;
- has been a legal requirement in maintained schools since 1944 and for academies and free schools is set out in their funding agreement;
- must be provided for every pupil, every day, unless they are withdrawn by their parents. (See below and Appendix Six for more information on right of withdrawal);
- is not part of the taught curriculum time of the school; Collective Worship time should not be used as 'intervention time' as this would result in pupils not receiving their legal entitlement to worship provision;
- is specific in terms of content – i.e. the majority of Collective Worship in a term must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character';
- can take place at any time of the school day, in any place within the school and with any age or school grouping of pupils.

The Education Reform Act of 1988 sets out the law regarding Collective Worship and [Circular 1/94](#) provides further guidance. The law states that Collective Worship in schools should aim to ([Paragraph 50](#)):

- provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God;
- consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs;
- encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of the worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered;
- develop a community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.

Furthermore:

- Collective Worship, subject to the right of withdrawal, is intended to be appropriate for and to include all pupils attending a school; ([Paragraph 54](#))

- although Collective Worship and assembly may take place as part of the same gathering, the difference between the two should be clear. Collective Worship can be related to the day-to-day life, values, ethos, aspirations and concerns of the school; (*Paragraph 58*)
- the timing and organisation of daily Collective Worship can be flexible. It need not be held at the start of the school day. There may be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups. For this purpose, a 'school group' means any group, or combination of groups in which pupils are taught or take part in other school activities; it does not mean a group reflecting particular religious beliefs, for which different provision may be made. (*Paragraphs 68-74*)

The right to withdraw from Collective Worship

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship either partially or wholly. They should make their wishes known to the headteacher of the school and it should be made clear whether it is from all or some specific acts of Collective Worship. No reasons need be given, though they may make arrangements for alternative religious worship to take place for their child provided that such arrangements:

- i. can be made at no additional cost to the school;
- ii. and provided the effect would not be to replace the statutory non-denominational Collective Worship in the school.

Schools have a duty to supervise pupils who are withdrawn from Collective Worship, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises. The school will review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents

Aims and Objectives

The aspiration is to provide Collective Worship that is Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring. It will contribute to the ethos of our different schools and it is our aim that it is a time when the school communities can:

- share common aims and values;
- celebrate achievement and special times;
- explore together the world in which we live;
- develop a community spirit;
- explore their theologically rooted Christian vision.

For the Pupils

We also intend that Collective Worship contributes to the development of the pupil as a whole person by providing opportunities to:

- consider spiritual and moral issues;
- explore their beliefs;
- develop their spirituality;
- reinforce positive attitudes;
- participate and respond.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

The content of all acts of Collective Worship will be considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages of our pupils. Collective Worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning,

leading and the evaluation of worship. Collective Worship in the Church school grows out of the local context and out of pupils' experience, including their cultural backgrounds. Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There is no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship provides 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. Collective Worship always includes a time of prayer and/or reflection. A range of prayers are used including the Lord's Prayer. Pupils and adults will be invited to pray if they wish to do so and invited to pray in their own way.

Collective Worship will be planned jointly between the RE Co-ordinator/Headteacher and a member of the pupil worship team within the school. The Trust Christian Distinctive Lead/ADE will also be available to support with any planning as will any of the School Improvement Team. A document of guidance for Collective Worship is also available on SharePoint. Half Termly planning sheets list themes, special occasions and events, but will be flexible to allow the inclusion of current and topical issues. British Values will also be included as part of the yearly cycle.

The Act of Collective Worship

A variety of teaching and learning styles and active and interactive methods are used in acts of Collective Worship. A variety of resources will also be used. Leaders of Collective Worship will choose the style/method and resources which are appropriate to the school, content, age, aptitude and the background of pupils.

Other Faiths

Although our Trust's worship reflects our Christian beliefs and values, we are committed to respecting each other's faith stance and culture, showing tolerance and understanding regardless of pupils' beliefs. Acts of worship may portray other cultures and beliefs as they reflect the RE studied as part of the curriculum requirements.

Visits and Visitors

As part of the curriculum, appropriate visits are made available for the children in order for them to have first-hand experiences and gain a greater understanding of various places of worship. Visitors to the schools are welcomed and enabled to share their experiences and knowledge – their role is to educate, not to evangelise. The local churches linked to our schools are the most valuable and frequently used resource, with the whole school attending and contributing towards any weekly services and annual Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Leavers' Services.

Equal opportunities

We are deeply committed to ensuring equal opportunities in Collective Worship. We celebrate and embrace diversity, fostering an inclusive environment where every voice is valued and respected. Our approach to worship reflects the rich tapestry of beliefs and traditions within our Trust, creating spaces for all children and staff to engage meaningfully, irrespective of their faith or background.