

Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust

Collective Worship Policy

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Context

The Bath & Wells Diocesan Academies Trust (the Trust) is a complex learning community. In order to ensure that the Trust is a safe, supportive environment where pupils and staff can learn and thrive, there needs to be clear procedures, structures, and expectations in place. Trust policies are a formal way of documenting the Trust's approach and values and are designed to provide an instant picture of the principles of the Trust. They form an important framework that will ensure consistency in applying the agreed values and principles across all elements of the Trust.

The **Collective Worship Policy** is a statutory requirement under the Education Reform Act 1988, reinforced in academy funding agreements, and is also a key focus of SIAMS inspection in Church of England and Methodist schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that daily Collective Worship takes place in all Trust schools, in line with legal and funding requirements.
- Provide inclusive, invitational, and inspiring opportunities for pupils and staff to grow spiritually, morally, socially, and culturally.
- Enable Collective Worship to be the “heartbeat” of Church school life, expressing and sustaining the Trust's Christian distinctiveness.
- Ensure that worship reflects the Anglican and Methodist traditions where relevant, while respecting diversity across all Trust schools.

Scope

This policy relates to all schools in the Bath & Wells Diocesan Academies Trust, including Church of England schools, Methodist schools, and Community schools.

Trust Alignment

This policy supports the Bath & Wells Diocesan Academies Trust's five pledges and the strategic priority: *High quality and inclusive education that ensures excellent outcomes for all children.*

- **Pledge 1: Children at the heart of decision making**
Collective Worship places children at the centre of planning, leading, and evaluating worship. Pupil worship teams ensure children's voices shape the spiritual life of their school.
- **Pledge 2: Removing barriers, challenging injustice, celebrating diversity**
Collective Worship is invitational, inclusive, and inspiring, ensuring that all pupils and staff—of all faiths or none—can participate with integrity. Themes address justice, compassion, and diversity, celebrating the richness of all communities we serve.
- **Pledge 3: Maximising resources**
Shared planning frameworks, training, and resources are coordinated across the Trust to ensure high-quality Collective Worship. Expertise from clergy, local churches, and the Diocese is leveraged efficiently to enrich worship in every school.
- **Pledge 4: Valuing our workforce**
Staff are supported with CPD, guidance, and collaborative opportunities so they can lead worship with confidence. This strengthens staff wellbeing, reduces workload, and empowers them to flourish as leaders of spiritual development.
- **Pledge 5: Developing and sustaining a unique vision for each school**
Collective Worship reflects each school's distinctive Christian vision, values, and context. Local church partnerships and community traditions enrich worship, ensuring it is meaningful and unique to each school family within the Trust.

Other Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following:

- Religious Education (RE) Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

Monitoring

This policy is owned by the Director of Education and Christian Distinctiveness Lead and will be subject to annual review by the Board of Trustees. As part of this review, the Christian Distinctiveness Lead, will report on:

- compliance with statutory requirements;
- the quality, inclusivity, and impact of Collective Worship across the Trust;
- outcomes from school-level monitoring, TLC Member reports, and SIAMS feedback.

At school level:

- The **Headteacher and RE Lead** are accountable for daily delivery and quality assurance.
- Monitoring methods may include learning walks, observation, pupil and staff feedback, and review of planning.
- TLC Members receive reports on Collective Worship provision and impact.

Policy Statement

The Bath & Wells Diocesan Academies Trust has a mixture of Anglican, Methodist, and Community schools. The daily act of Collective Worship is the unique heartbeat of a Church School and an integral 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, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. The contributions of staff, pupils, church clergy, and other visitors are highly valued. 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. Worship in schools is aspirational, evolving, and dynamic.

- **Methodist schools** follow the traditions of 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)
- **Community schools** provide worship that is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.

Legal Expectations

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.

Additional Guidance:

- 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*)

Right to Withdraw

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:

- a) can be made at no additional cost to the school;
- b) 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

Collective Worship should be **Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring**, contributing to school ethos. It is a time when the school communities can:

- Share common aims and values.
- Celebrate achievement and special times.
- Explore the world we live in.
- Develop community spirit.
- Explore theologically rooted Christian vision.

For Pupils:

Collective Worship contributes to the development of the pupil as a whole person, by providing opportunities to:

- Consider spiritual and moral issues.
- Explore personal beliefs.
- Develop spirituality.
- Reinforce positive attitudes.
- Participate and respond meaningfully.

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.

When planning Collective Worship check that:

- Content is age-appropriate and meaningful.
- Pupils are actively involved in planning, leading, and evaluating worship.
- Collective Worship grows from the local context and pupils' experiences.
- Parents, pupils, and staff are invited to engage without compulsion.
- Each act includes **reflection and/or prayer**; pupils may pray in their own way.
- Planning is led jointly by the **RE Co-ordinator / Headteacher** and pupil worship teams, with support from the **Trust Christian Distinctive Lead/ADE** and the School Improvement Team.
- Half-termly planning sheets provide themes, special occasions, and topical issues; British Values are incorporated throughout the year.
- Duration guidance: acts of worship are encouraged to be **15–20 minutes**, adapted to age and context.

The Act of Collective Worship

- Teaching and learning styles are varied, including interactive and active methods.
- Resources are chosen to suit content, pupils' age, aptitude, and backgrounds.
- Worship reflects Christian values, but respects other faiths and cultural backgrounds.
- British Values are included as part of the yearly cycle.

Visits and Visitors

- Visits to places of worship and visitors are integral to learning and spiritual development.
- Visitors welcome to share experiences and educate, not evangelise.
- Local churches are valuable partners for weekly and annual services (Harvest, Christmas, Easter, Leavers').
- All visits follow **safeguarding, Prevent, and H&S policies**.

Equal Opportunities

- Collective Worship celebrates diversity and ensures every voice is valued.
- Worship provides an inclusive space for children and staff of all faiths and none.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability

- **Headteacher and RE Lead** are responsible for ensuring daily Collective Worship occurs and is high quality.

- Monitoring methods include learning walks, pupil and staff feedback, observation, and review of planning and reflections. Monitoring sheets have been provided.
- Termly reports are provided to TLC Members.
- Schools maintain records of planning, reflections, photos, videos, and notes from visitors.
- Evidence of pupil engagement and spiritual development informs future planning and continuous improvement.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually by the **Board of Trustees**. The Christian Distinctiveness Lead will report on compliance, quality, and impact across the Trust.