



## **Mission Statement**

Let God's love shine in our lives as we grow and learn together through living out the Gospel Values:

Being honest

Being fair

Being forgiving

Being respectful

Aiming high and doing our very best...and valuing the world around us.

***Let God's Love Shine in our Lives as we Grow and Learn Together***

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY**

**Adopted date:**

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**Ratified date:**

**Who ratified:**

**Next Review:**

**Head teacher Signature**

**Chair of Governors' Signature:**

### **Introduction**

Our Mission Statement underpins this policy and its principles and should be read in conjunction with our Religious Education, SMSC and RSE policies

All schools are required to offer a Christian act of collective worship every day. Parents can choose to withdraw their children up to 16, and if you're older you can choose to withdraw yourself.

### **Why is collective worship important in Catholic schools?**

In schools with a designated religious character, like Catholic schools, collective worship is far more than a statutory requirement. It is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Collective worship is an important part of a Catholic school's distinctive ethos.

Taking part in daily collective worship helps build community cohesion by creating a consistent structure around the core values and symbols of Christianity. In Catholic schools, pupil participation and engagement in worship are important criteria in the diocesan inspection of Catholic education, not least during the daily act of collective worship. From Reception to Year 13, pupils are invited to play an active part in collective worship.

Throughout the year, Catholic school communities come together to celebrate important events in the Church's calendar, such as Lent and Advent, as well as the start and end of the academic year. Through regular prayer and worship, including Mass, the rhythm of the Church's year becomes a normal part of school life and each pupil's life.

These activities are integral to the Catholic identity and life of the school; they would take place in all Catholic schools, whether or not schools were required by statute to provide collective worship.

### **Why is collective worship important in all schools?**

Britain is a multicultural and multi-faith society. In this context, collective worship remains an essential part of the life of every school, for community schools and academies just as much as in denominational faith schools. Many schools continue to hold acts of collective worship because of the value to the school community and to children's broader educational development.

Collective worship offers all schools the chance to explore and understand the values at the heart of their ethos. From forgiveness and humility, to gratitude and justice, collective worship gives pupils a space and time to reflect.

If it is a part of a school's routine, collective worship provides a shared language of values to build a close-knit cohesive community. Whether in times of crisis or celebration, the time set aside in the school day for reflection provides everyone with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community.

### **Aims of Collective Worship at St Alban's Catholic Primary School**

St Alban's is a smaller than average Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary school taking children from FS2 to Y6 with currently 175 on roll. The school serves the local parishes of St Alban's Catholic Church of Denaby and Conisbrough and English Martyrs, Mexborough all of which are in the town of Doncaster. The school is in the highest 20% of socio-

economically deprived catchments in the country and currently 4<sup>th</sup> most deprived in Doncaster with 34.29% FSM, higher than average proportion of children with SEN at 27.43%, most of whom have speech, language and communication and/or social, emotional and mental health needs. Most children are of White British heritage (%) with a significantly lower than average proportion of children with EAL at 4.75% (all of whom are White Eastern European). St Alban's has lower than national levels of stability with the latest figures at 70% although since January 2021 there has been a 10% increase in number on roll therefore there are increasing mobility factors. There have been increases in attendance with the current attendance at 97.48% although persistent attendance is in the highest 20% nationally for children with FSM and in the lowest 20% nationally for children with SEN. Behaviour in school is good and there have been no permanent or fixed term exclusions in recent academic years. The Section 48 inspection graded the school good. Stable and permanent staffing is now secure with all teachers permanent members of staff and the vast majority of support staff also permanent. A successful succession plan has been in place over the last two years with the Head teacher and Deputy Head Teacher commencing their designate posts in January 2021 after an 18 month period of a co-leadership model with the now retired previous Head teacher. The school is on a rapid journey of school improvement to secure a good Ofsted judgement at the next imminent inspection. Doncaster LA, in conjunction with the Diocese of Hallam and the school leadership team and Governing Body, have risk assessed the school and designated it as a self-improving school with the capacity to achieve a good judgement at the next Ofsted inspection. St Alban's works in successful partnership with the parish, Doncaster LA and the Diocesan family of schools, including those across South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire within the Hallam Diocese.

Our aim is to nurture and develop in all children a sense of prayer as a meaningful and desirable facet of our relationship with God.

### **Intent of Collective Worship**

#### **Objectives:**

- To develop community spirit and to promote a common ethos and shared values
- To enable children to reflect upon and celebrate the Word of God
- To enable children to see prayer as a natural expression of their developing relationship with God
- To encourage spontaneous prayer as a means of communicating
- To know the formal prayers of the Church such as:
  - The Sign of the Cross
  - Our Father
  - Hail Mary
  - Acts of Contrition

Simple creeds and Gloria's- and to be able to recite them collectively

- To give opportunities for children to plan and lead collective worship
- To give opportunities for children to lead Gospel assemblies
- To give opportunities for silent reflection and to develop in children a sense of stillness leading to meditation an opportunity for children to examine
- To provide an opportunity for the children to worship God
- To provide children the opportunity to share and examine the "Word of the Week." This is a key word taken from the Gospel readings.
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues
- To encourage participation and response
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes
- To teach children how to worship

The act of Collective worship is central to the life of the school. It is a way of affirming our individuality and our communal belonging to the Body of Christ. Collective worship is a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school community.

### Implementation of Collective Worship

#### Teaching

Although the teacher initiates some of the acts of worship, the children are encouraged to plan and lead class based worship. We encourage children to participate in assemblies and masses. In line with our RSE, we use Ten:Ten resources for our Collective Worship as this creates a consistent approach to the overall Religious Education for all year groups and this will enable our children to develop their skills. The following is an overview of the structure of the TEN:TEN resources.

The vision of Ten Ten Resources is to help school communities grow in **faith, love, understanding** and **compassion**. We do this by creating a wide-range of unique media-rich resources, inspired by our Catholic faith.

#### The 5 Strands of Collective Worship

- **Weekly Assemblies** – rooted in the Sunday Mass readings, each assembly includes an easy-to-follow teacher script with differentiated guidance alongside original, creative content such as film, story, song and animation, always leading to prayer and reflection.
- **Daily Classroom Prayer** – five daily prayers (Monday to Friday) to be led in the classroom by staff or child prayer leaders, rooted in the Sunday Mass readings.
- **Links to Home** – a one-page monthly newsletter for parents which shares articles inspired by the assemblies; the newsletter can be sent home as an email, a printout, or the articles can be used as part of the school newsletter.

- **Staffroom Prayers**– resources to support all staff within the school community including, for example, staffroom prayers, input on vocation, support for non-Catholic teachers and inset training on how to use Ten Ten Resources.
- **Other Resources** – including teacher training materials, guided meditation, liturgies, resources for special occasions, etc.

**Daily Classroom Prayers** are short, daily prayers for the classroom.

Designed to be simple-to-lead, the prayers can be implemented as part of your daily work and routine. They can also be led by pupils using the easy-to-follow online slides, if you wish. Designated Prayer Leaders may lead these sessions

Each week, the five daily prayers provided a prayerful reflection on the weekly Gospel and they adopt a variety of prayer styles and worship to ensure engagement from pupils. Providing them with exposure to new ways of praying. Differentiation for age is also given when this is required.

Graces are said at the end of morning/start of afternoon sessions. Morning and end of day prayers are said in class at the beginning and end of every school day.

Worship at certain times of the year – parents and families of the class whose turn it is are invited to participate, as well as the Parish Priest.

### **Staffroom Prayers:**

These provide a weekly reflection for all members of staff in school. They are sensitively pitched to include all members of staff, providing a gentle personal reflection on the Sunday Gospels and these will become our prayer at the start of our staff meetings.

### **Further celebrations include:**

- Children's Masses at the beginning and end of the School terms
- Class Masses in KS1 and KS2
- Family Masses throughout the year
- Harvest Festival Mass
- Children join the Parish for the celebration of Mass on special feasts and Holy days
- Remembrance Assemblies
- Carol Service
- KS1 Nativity
- Foundation Stage Nativity
- Holy Week Liturgies
- Special Assemblies to welcome particular individuals to school
- Saint Alban's Day celebrations

- Stations of the Cross

Parents and parishioners will be invited through the school newsletter, the parish bulletin and personal letters from the children and teacher.

## **Information on Prayer**

### **Why is prayer necessary?**

Prayer is the foundation of Christian Life. Prayer is communication or communion with God. Through prayers we are drawn deeper into the life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself taught us the need for prayer. In Gethsemane as He prepared Himself for the climax of His life, Jesus received the strength He needed in prayer to His Father, "Abba Father Take this cup away from me, but let it be as you not I, would have it." At moments of His public ministry when those in need were pressing around Him, Jesus went off to a lonely place and prayed there.

### **What is Prayer?**

We can pray anywhere and at any time. The first step is to place ourselves, as we are, in the presence of God. The second step in prayer is to pray. This means speaking to the Lord, asking Him for our needs and thanking Him for the many gifts He has given to us. This leads to praise and adoration. The third step is to be silent so the Lord Himself can guide the direction of our hearts.

### **How do we Pray?**

The best prayers are those that come from the heart. There are times however, when we find it almost "impossible" to pray: and then we need prayer books and the prayers we have learned by heart. Our children should have the opportunity to find out about and respond in a variety of ways to Jesus' example and teaching with regard to prayer. They should be encouraged to explore the different forms of prayer, and to be helped to grow in appreciation of the importance of prayer in sustaining a living relationship with God. Children's experience of prayer and worship in school, which for some of our children will be the only prayer experiences they will receive, will have a deep impact on their spiritual development as Christians, and a love of their Catholic heritage which they can take into their adult life. Their loves of Prayer Worship must be continually developed and fostered. In prayer we become aware of God's presence with us and his love for us. We listen to Him in order to discover His will for us and to express to Him our gratitude, praise, love and adoration.

### **Fostering a love of prayer**

We can foster the children's life of prayer by helping them become aware of God's presence in their lives and His love for them and by leading them to respond to Him in a manner appropriate to their age. Children learn to pray chiefly by sharing in the faith and prayer of adult Christians, especially parents, priests and teachers.

Therefore, we believe that we should go a step beyond teaching them prayers, we should pray with them in their presence. We should encourage them to pray by themselves, especially in the morning and at night.

There are many ways of helping the children meet God Our Father in prayer:

- Prayers of silence
- Own prayer
- Spontaneous prayer
- Prayers through gestures or actions
- Prayers of the Church
- Prayers through music and song

### **Prayers of Silence:**

To help the children participate in a prayerful silence, we can use various ways of focussing their minds on prayer. We can ask them to concentrate on an object, a picture, a lighted candle, some quiet background music or by giving them guidance about what to think: "Let's think about..."

### **Spontaneous Prayer:**

Once we have begun it is often difficult to stop children praying spontaneously. The children may not be able to express their thoughts accurately at first, and they may initially be shy or embarrassed. Many of their prayers may be prayers of petition for a

sick parent, grandparent or friend. At St Gregory's we try to encourage them to pray not only for what they want, but also to pray that things will turn out as God knows best. We also encourage the children to express thanksgiving, love and praise to God the Father in their spontaneous prayer. Praying through gesture or action: We encourage children to make even the simplest gestures thoughtfully so that the gesture or action is a prayer in itself. Gestures that the children will be taught as they move through the school will include: making the Sign of the Cross, joining their hands, offering the sign of peace, bowing their heads at the name of Jesus, genuflection, hands gestures, processions etc.

Formal/Traditional Prayers: As the children move through school they will be taught and introduced to the commonly used prayers of the Church so that they are able to join in and participate in parish celebrations. We also have a school Prayer book that the children are encouraged to read and share. The introduction of many of the responses of the Holy Mass are incorporated into their classroom and assembly prayer and worship celebrations.

### **Impact of Collective Worship**

All acts of worship encourage the children to develop a reverence and a positive attitude to praying.

Praying through Music and Song: Listening to reflective music can create an atmosphere conducive to prayer and reflection. The singing of hymns can be so joyful. "Singing hymns is praying twice." Reflective music and singing are both used during prayer and worship sessions. An act of Collective Worship with children should last about one minute for each year of the child's life: e.g. A maximum of 5 minutes for Reception/Year 1 children. A maximum of 10 minutes for Yr. 6 children. We gather weekly for hymn practice to share this love of music and love of God.

### **Equal opportunities**

All children are given an equal chance to join in collective worship according to their age and ability. Each day should begin and end with a short prayer. The main purpose of our school assemblies is to bring the school community or part of the school community together in Worship and Prayer. Within each assembly there is always an opportunity for Prayer and Worship, and involves the children taking part in a variety of prayer experiences. Opportunities are provided for the children to participate in whole school masses and key stage assemblies.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act which states that collective worship should be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", we usually base our assemblies on the teachings of Christ, Gospel stories and teachings and the traditions of the Catholic Church. However, we try to conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school community.

While the majority of acts of worship in the school are Christian, we hold assemblies that reflect moral values and which reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and in the wider community.

All classes participate in a daily act of collective worship. This may take the form of class prayers, liturgies or assemblies.

Our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies and prayers, to display their work to other children and to raise issues which they may have discussed in their classes. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and that all achievements are recognised.

Collective worship is an integral part of RE lessons to adopt a liturgy approach to lessons. Wherever possible, the above framework is used as a structure for lessons, making every RE lesson a purposeful, meaningful and relevant experience in the children's lives. This message is then extended into all areas of school life, as worship and RE learning for life is central to all we do. Children are encouraged to take this message home to 'spread the word', which frequently results in children coming back to school in the days that follow, with prayers, responses, artefacts and offerings from home.



We invite parents, carers and friends from the community to celebrate Masses, Liturgies and assemblies, as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the partnership between the home, the school and the parish working together to support our children.

We work closely with the parish community, where children are invited to lead Masses, plan celebrations and work together with our parishioners. The Parish Priest is regularly involved in this process, along with members of the Liturgy Committee, formed in September 2013.

### **Right of withdrawal**

Voluntary aided schools in England and Wales must ensure that religious education is provided as part of the school's basic curriculum. In Catholic schools this is done in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, discipline and norms of the Catholic Church. Academies in England are required by their funding agreement and Articles of Association to comply with similar requirements.

Similarly, in state funded schools in England and Wales are required by law to take part in an act of collective worship on each school day. In Catholic schools this is done in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church.

Parents of pupils in VA schools and voluntary academies are permitted to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of religious education and/or collective worship given at the school and any such request shall stand until such time that the parent's request is withdrawn. Sixth form pupils may, on their own behalf, wholly or partly withdraw from attendance at collective worship at the school