



# St Nicholas C of E (VA) Primary and Nursery School

## Collective Worship

**Approved:** November 2024  
**Review:** November 2027

*"But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love  
forever and ever. Psalm 52:8*

**Learning, Loving, Living in God's Family**



**“But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God’s unfailing love for ever and ever.” Psalm 52:8**

St Nicholas C of E VA Primary and Nursery School takes its inspiration from Psalm 52 verse 8 which is attributed to King David.

Our Christian Vision is strongly rooted within the Christian narrative of Psalm 52 verse 8 but also the teachings of Jesus Christ and the parable of the sower- Matthew 13:1-13

As part of God’s faithful and fruitful family, we start as seeds, and from our roots in learning, loving and living we branch out and grow into flourishing trees. The seeds need fertile soil to take root, grow and flourish.

Through nurturing and motivation, we will be a school community that seeks to unlock the hidden treasure in each child. As we strive to shape confident, creative and independent learners, who embrace Christian values and grow in God’s light. We will learn and grow together, tackling life’s challenges, and celebrating everyone’s achievements; as we shape responsible, compassionate and inspirational members of society.

**St Nicholas C of E Primary and Nursery School is the fertile soil which enables all members of the school community to grow.**



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## Our school vision for Collective Worship

As a church school, we hold to a vision that worship is an affirmation and celebration of our Christian ethos where staff and children have the opportunity to learn, worship and grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. It is not simply a statutory duty. At St Nicholas school, we want to see Collective Worship enable pupils and staff to gather together to respond to the presence, power and peace of God through prayer, reflection, singing, celebrating and sharing feelings. Worship should enable participants to develop an understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We recognise that not all staff or children have a Christian faith. We welcome everyone to Collective Worship and offer it as a shared space for reflection and spiritual growth where our communities grow together in love and respect.

## Legal Requirements

All schools must take note of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

1. All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
2. The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the school and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
3. All acts of Collective Worship in Church schools must be Christian in character. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for worship such as the whole school, year groups, tutor groups, classes, or other combinations.
4. Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
5. The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises but all schools may hold their act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.

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6. Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a Church of England school rests with the governing body in consultation with the Headteacher. Foundation Governors have a special role in ensuring the Collective Worship is linked to the Trust Deeds.

7. The Headteacher has a responsibility to ensure all arrangements for Collective Worship are secured.

## Principles of collective worship

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality. Collective worship therefore will be:

- **Inclusive** – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.
- **Invitational** – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to ‘do anything’. Rather, worship will provide 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. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- **Inspiring** – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community’s behaviour and actions

## Anglican Faith and Practice

In addition to the above, we provide acts of Collective Worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England as a part of the heritage of our schools. Along with churches, our acts of Collective Worship have the following characteristics (abbreviated to B.L.E.S.S.E.D.)

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**BIBLICAL**- the Bible is used to encounter the teachings of Jesus and as a sourcebook for inspiration and learning. Pupils are made familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture.

**LITURGICAL** - aspects of Anglican liturgy, such as greetings, are used to create a framework for worship; pupils are also introduced to a variety of well-known prayers – many of which express central beliefs of Christians throughout the ages.

**EUCCHARISTIC** – we introduce children to the central act of Anglican worship, either in RE or through our own school celebration with the local priest.

**SEASONAL** - we observe the cycle of the Anglican year including celebrations of the major Christian festivals.

**SYMBOLIC** – we use Christian symbols as a focus for reflection.

**ECUMENICAL** – we work with other local Christian denominations.

**DIVERSE** – we provide opportunities to discover the variety of worship in Anglican churches, through valuing both meditation and silence, dance, prayer, reflection, story, quiet songs and louder expressions of praise, etc. We seek to provide a worship space which is attractive and well prepared with thought given to colour, space, seating, ambience and music. We foster links with the local parish Church, involving clergy in leading Collective Worship and providing coherence with worship in church. Throughout the year, we aim to visit the parish church regularly for worship times as part of the Christian calendar. We aim for our Collective Worship to be creative and to inspire pupils into action.

## **Connections with other Christian denominations and faiths**

The Church of England sees itself as part of a global church and promotes ecumenism. In all our schools, we work to promote links with other local churches and Christian organisations and welcome their clergy and leaders as contributors to acts of Collective Worship. We recognise that some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, some worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting in which no-one's integrity is compromised and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe. We aim to provide a space for reflection, where everyone finds something positive for themselves.

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## Rights and Responsibilities

As established by the 1944 Education Act and reinforced in this policy, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. If a parent is considering withdrawing their child from Collective Worship they should make contact with the Headteacher in writing. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act. This includes the school continuing to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from Collective Worship. We are able to seek further advice from the Diocese, if needed.

## Aims and Purpose

In relation to the issues of withdrawal, it is helpful for parents to be aware of the aims and purpose of Collective Worship, as defined by the Education Reform Act 1988:

- To provide an opportunity for the children to worship God.
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues.
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs.
- To encourage participation and response.
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit.
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.

Within our provision of Christian Worship, we try to meet these aims for all children.

Aspects of Collective Worship are discussed regularly in a staff meeting and by the children designated as Collective Worship leaders.

## Planning

Planning for Collective Worship is led by the headteacher and is undertaken in consultation with the school adult community. Plans follow the cycle of the Anglican year, celebrating festivals and saints' days as appropriate. Christian values are explored in a variety of ways, through story, song, prayer and reflection. 'Roots and Fruits' is most commonly used as the basis of these plans. Pupils as well as adults engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of Collective Worship. Our preferred approach for individual acts of worship is to follow the pattern of GATHER, ENGAGE, RESPOND, SEND – this approach offers a pattern which both

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staff and children can use and is useful for evaluation. The headteacher ensures that leaders and visiting speakers receive copies of the long-term plans. Individuals and groups are responsible for using the plans as a basis for developing their own short-term plans for individual acts of worship.

## Organisation

At St Nicholas an act of Collective Worship is held daily. This may involve the whole school or smaller class or key stage groups. Where collective worship forms part of an assembly, we ensure that there is a clear distinction between the two elements of gathering.

The headteacher and other members of staff together with groups of children take turns to conduct Collective Worship, along with Reverend Karen Mitchell.

At St Nicholas we conduct Collective Worship in a dignified and respectful way expecting children to behave appropriately. We create a suitable atmosphere by using music, pictures or other artefacts to act as a focal point. We use Friday morning as a celebration, to share in the success of the children as they grow whilst promoting the ethos and vision of the school.

Aspects of Collective Worship are discussed regularly in a staff meeting and by the children, designated as Collective Worship leaders.

Governors are welcome to attend acts of worship at any time.

## Resources

St Nicholas school has a budget for Collective Worship which is distinct from the budget for Religious Education. Good quality assembly books, access to websites, music and child-friendly Bibles are all be available.

## Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development

We recognise that SMSC development should be fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of Collective Worship provide a multitude of opportunities in this area. For example, children will be encouraged to reflect on and celebrate the deeper meanings of life, consider their own behaviour and recognise the need for forgiveness, appreciate the contributions of others and

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respond to their needs, value their own culture and the culture of others. The school also compliments the teaching of SMSC and PSHE with the 'No Outsiders' program elements of which are sometimes employed in collective worship.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

At St Nicholas we aim to develop the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship by continuing to keep records of Collective Worship and surveying adults and children as to their views on its effectiveness. We intend to make the criteria for successful worship available to all those who plan and lead it. The coordinator and others will routinely observe and monitor acts of Collective Worship in line with these criteria.

## **Inclusion**

In line with the Equalities Act 2010, St Nicholas are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability, religion, physical or sensory disability or any other protected characteristic. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs as appropriate e.g. taking account of different learning styles and using multi-sensory approaches.

## **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

*The Governors of St Nicholas Primary and Nursery School have made safeguarding a fundamental priority and are committed to ensuring that safeguarding of children and young people remains at the core of their work. For this reason, the principles of excellent safeguarding practice are integral to the culture of St Nicholas and every aspect of the school's work. This policy supports this commitment to safeguarding and should be read in conjunction with other school policies as appropriate. It is every person's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and it remains a paramount concern of all who work in and who are part of the St Nicholas' community.*

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

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