

# Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust

## Collective Worship Policy



### Policy Statement

1. As an academy with a religious designation, the legal documentation associated with the Trust stipulates that collective worship must be in accordance with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England. In a church academy, worship is an affirmation and celebration of the Christian foundation, values and ethos of the academy and provides a space and a place for telling the story of Jesus.
2. Worship is therefore central to the life and purposes of the academy and will reflect the Christian understanding of God as Trinity. This will include belief in God, the source of all being and life; belief in Jesus, who reveals God's love and redeems God's world by his life, death and resurrection; and belief in the Holy Spirit, who makes the presence of Jesus known in the world.

### Purpose and Scope:

3. This policy is intended to provide guidance to Local Governing Bodies, all staff and parents regarding the legal framework for collective worship and the effective delivery of collective worship within individual academies.

### Legal Framework

4. Legislation dictates that there must be a daily act of collective worship for all pupils that takes account of their age and aptitude. The 1988 Education Reform Act states parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.
5. However, worship in the context of a church academy has a central place in the life of the community. Prayer and time to reflect are part of each academy day and pupils are encouraged to pray in a variety of creative ways. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the Principal to discuss their concerns and requirements. The Local Governing Body have the responsibility for worship in a church academy, in consultation with the Principal. There is an expectation that staff will be fully involved in worship in this academy and will attend acts of collective worship with pupils.

### Aims

6. Through collective worship academies aim to:
  - a. provide an experience of worship that will help all present to respond to the presence, power and peace of God, allowing the expression of an encounter with God in verbal and non-verbal language.
  - b. provide opportunities for reflection, participation and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved, take part in ritual and "special time" that encourages calm, stillness, peace and praise and provides children with an opportunity to experience different aspects of Christian worship, including thanksgiving and confession.

- c. enable children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the church year so that children are offered a pattern of meanings and a symbolic framework which can begin to integrate experience.
  - d. explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers and introduce children to some well known Christian prayers, e.g. Lord's Prayer
  - e. strengthen and support the academy community, giving expression to, and reaffirming, the core Christian values agreed by all stakeholders in the academy. Worship will not compromise the integrity and dignity of individuals but will provide a shared experience which is educational in nature; a time where individuals can reflect inwardly and where together the academy community can explore ways of living which reflect the shared values and vision of the school.
  - f. develop a sense of self-worth and celebrate the gifts that each pupil and adult brings to the academy community, recognising the uniqueness of each individual made in the image of God
  - g. reflect on the puzzling questions that life poses and to respond to the wonder and mystery of the world around us.
  - h. foster a concern for others within the academy community and wider world.
  - i. foster an appreciation, and awareness, of our responsibility for the created world.
  - j. encourage respect of others religious beliefs and practices.
  - k. evoke a sense of beauty, awe, wonder and feelings of pride, pity, compassion, etc through exploring the spirituality of life and experience.
7. Provide opportunities to experience worship in a church setting, in order to support the links between the school and local worshipping communities.

## **Organisation**

8. The planning and organisation of collective worship is important to ensure that it remains a central focus for the life of the academy community. In planning worship, all academies will consider:
- a. how all members of the academy community, including pupils are equipped to plan and lead acts of worship
  - b. how the Christian values of the academy are identified, expressed and celebrated through collective worship
  - c. how explicit links are made between Bible stories and the Christian values of the academy
  - d. the different groupings for worship, including Key Stage/class/tutor group worship
  - e. at what point in the academy day worship is held and the amount of time allocated
  - f. who leads worship e.g.: a visitor, the Principal, staff members, pupils or the whole class

## **Content**

9. Careful consideration must be given to the content, approach and structure of worship. Most worship will typically contain four elements: welcome, learning, reflecting, responding. During the week there will be opportunities for celebration, including marking academy and individual pupil successes as well as celebrating the life of the wider community. Music and song will often be used as a focus for praise and worship and to support opportunities for reflection.
10. Academies will give consideration to different settings and places for worship (whether in classrooms, the local church, the school hall or an outside space) and how the worship spaces are made special. It is important that an appropriate atmosphere is created and this can be done in variety of means, including and atmosphere for worship is created by using: liturgical colours of the seasons of the Church Year; Christian signs and symbols; candles; music; ritual and liturgical responses.
11. Pupils will be encouraged, when appropriate, to help to plan and/or lead worship. This may take a variety of form, including being encouraged to ask and answer questions; act or mime a story; reading poems, prayers and stories; exploring art work or leading the music/singing.

## **Coordination of worship**

12. Each academy will have a named worship co-ordinator who maintains clear forward plans and evaluates the impact of worship on the life of the community. In planning worship the coordinator should consider how worship takes account of the church year, the Bible as a source book of inspiration and learning and the Church of England's commitment to ecumenism and dialogue with other faiths. They should also consider the range and variety of materials used, including: different leaders; visitors; outside groups; websites; artefacts; stories; artwork; music; film clips and focal points e.g. a picture or candle.

## **Supporting visitors who lead worship**

13. In a church academy there is an expectation that members of the local church will regularly lead some acts of worship. It is the responsibility of the academy to ensure that visitors are given appropriate background information to help them prepare worship. This should include the nature of collective worship in the academy; the theme of the proposed worship i.e. the Christian value in focus and any other information relating to subject matter; the age range of the pupils; the length of the collective worship; the resources available for use and an understanding that they are not there to proselytise.
14. Visitors should be greeted on arrival and shown the facilities, afterwards you may offer refreshments and give some feedback on their contribution. It is expected that staff will always be present when visitors are leading worship.

## **Evaluation of worship**

15. It is an expectation of the SIAMS framework that the academy will reflect on the quality of acts of collective worship and engage stakeholders in this process. How worship is evaluated and monitored and who is involved must therefore be carefully considered. When evaluating worship, consideration should be given to how those present perceived a particular act of worship. Participants may be asked to reflect on how did the worship created a sense of special time and place; the balance of the four elements of worship; opportunities to focus on matters of worth to individuals, the academy community or the wider world; a sense of occasion that allowed for an encounter with God and how particular acts of worship have made an impact on school life and practice.

## **Related Policies**

Behaviour Policy