

# Collective Worship Policy



## ST JOHN PAYNE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Date of Issue	Review Date	Nominated Lead Member of Staff	Nominated Committee
Autumn 2023	Autumn 2026	Headteacher & Chaplain	Curriculum & Personnel

## **Introduction**

The Governors of St John Payne Catholic School are fully aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to Collective Worship (appendix 1) and they take account of the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, Education Act 1996 and the School Standards Framework Act 1998.

As a Catholic Voluntary Aided School, the Governors of St John Payne Catholic School take account of the Diocesan Trust Deed which states that acts of worship shall be consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church. The Foundation Governors have particular responsibility for seeing that the Catholic character of the school is reflected in Collective Acts of Worship and are in accordance with the Trust Deed.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and cannot be subsumed under any part of the curriculum. It is distinctive and meets legal requirements. Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

School leaders and the wider staff community are committed to witnessing with and alongside the young people in our care, affirming and nurturing their growth in faith.

## **Our School Chapel**

At the heart of our school is the Chapel, containing the Blessed Sacrament, the presence of Jesus living among us. It is this reality that informs all of our Collective Worship, since it springs from this conscious awareness of the Eucharistic Presence of Christ at the centre of our school. This centrality of the Eucharist was a key part of the life of our Patron, Saint John Payne, who had a Eucharistic vision while saying Mass: he saw Christ Crucified, at the elevation of the Sacred Host. For us the Chapel, and specifically the Tabernacle, highlight the central importance of Christ and his Blessed Sacrament, as the source and summit of all our worship.

## **Definitions**

Collective Worship is our worship of God in **A**doration, **C**ontrition, **T**hanksgiving, and **S**upplication (ACTS). It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Worship is at the heart of St John Payne Catholic School.

## **1. Growth in Faith**

We expect our worship (a) to increase the young people's *knowledge of the faith*, as well as (b) to increase their *own faith*, that is, the *virtue of faith* which God has given to them. The rationale is simple: *Lex orandi, lex credendi* – The Law of Prayer is the Law of Belief. This means that we believe that which we pray, since we pray *because* we believe, and what we pray manifests what we believe. A young person therefore learns to worship *with the Church*, meaning that s/he learns *how* to pray as well as *what* to pray; *how* to believe, as well as *what* to believe. After all, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk 11:1), and, "I believe Lord, help my unbelief" (Mk 9:24).

## **2. The Sacred Liturgy**

Liturgy is defined as the "official worship" of the Catholic Church and is strictly limited to the celebration of the Sacraments and the Divine Office. The Liturgy in which the school takes part includes the sacraments of the Mass and of Reconciliation. These are governed by the Church, not by us.

We use the term "liturgies" only loosely, to indicate an act of worship which we design for collective use elsewhere in school, one which may include symbol, action, and gesture, but which is not a Sacrament or an official Church service.

## **3. Prayer**

Prayer may be an individual experience, or if it is an activity with others may form part of an act of worship. Prayer is a *dialogue* or *conversation* with God, sometimes using words (spoken or sung), sometimes in silence. God has initiated the conversation by creating us by his Word (Jn 1:1-3), and then by sending Jesus, his Word to take on our human flesh and live among us (Jn 1:14) and making us his children (Jn 1:12-13). The Word (*Logos*) invites us to respond to God the Father (*dialogue*) in love, trust, and obedience, through Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit: Here we have the Trinitarian nature of all Catholic Worship.

## **4. Non-Liturgical Acts of Worship**

An assembly is any experience of gathering/assembling in school. It may include an act of worship but the difference between worship and assembly is always made clear. Assemblies, Bible Reflections, Meditations and Collective Devotions, while designed by staff are nonetheless inspired by the Church's official worship and are in accordance with her teaching. We have more creative freedom with these than when we are preparing or participating in the Sacraments as a school community.

## Core Values

Our School Motto is *Avita Pro Fide*. Our motto encourages us to value the traditions of our forebears. We foster and encourage respect for our Catholic tradition, including by encouraging reverent participation in the liturgical life of the Church, a life of personal prayer and the pursuit of sanctity, and the kind of heroic virtue personified by St John Payne in his supreme witness of martyrdom.

This informs our core values, which are:

- To work as a three-way partnership with the home, the school and the parish to support the education of the whole child.
- To help each student to realise their full potential by adopting an appropriate curriculum and adapting our teaching style to cater for individual needs.
- To meet each student's personal and social needs
- To promote the acquisition of moral values.
- To create an environment in which students are happy, feel safe, feel valued as individuals and learn to co-operate with one another.
- To foster a community where life is lived according to Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- To provide opportunities for students and staff to experience, express, celebrate and live out our faith.

*In all that we do, our aim is to truly care for those with whom we work by doing as Jesus has instructed us: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34).*

## Aim of Collective Worship Policy

The aim of the Collective Worship policy is to provide the opportunity for students to develop their sense of faith by

- Worshipping God
- Learning reverence for the Sacred and respect for one another's dignity
- Reflecting on Christian values and on their own beliefs, while respecting other people's
- Developing an understanding of belonging to the Church and of community spirit
- Considering spiritual and moral issues
- Learning about the official worship of the Church through participation in the Liturgy
- Responding to and taking an active part in the worship offered
- Leading and developing the worship offered where appropriate

## **Character of Collective Worship**

Our Collective Worship is consistent with the Rites, practices and teaching of the Catholic Church. In the context of our Collective Worship, our attitude towards members of other Christian denominations and members of other religions is one of welcome. While we pray according to our tradition, and encourage the participation of all only as their conscience dictates, we aim to include, not offend, those present who do not share our Catholic Faith, and allow them, especially through the periods of silent meditation or non-doctrinal-specific reflections, to pray in their own way and thus not be excluded.

However, we acknowledge that parents can lawfully withdraw their children from acts of Collective Worship up to the age of sixteen, after which the student may decide for themselves, as per the guidance from the department for education.

Our Collective Worship will be prayerful, reverent and joyful and as essentially a part of the day as any other school activity. Student participation and preparation is greatly encouraged and implemented. The seasons of the Church's year give our Collective Worship its framework, while the needs and events of our world, home, school, towns and society inform its content.

Specifically:

1. Every effort will be made to give students positive experiences, based on sound educational, pastoral and liturgical principles.
2. Legitimate variety in Collective Worship will include the use of different media (music, hymnody, song, works of sacred art) as well as a range of methods (listening, meditating, responding; silence for prayer; collective vocal prayer, and learning of certain prayers by heart). It will be enhanced by the use of Scriptural passages and reflections on current events or moral questions.
3. Acts of Worship will prepare students for the liturgical life of the Church and will usually follow the basic structure of Christian Worship. They will learn about gesture, symbol, and their meaning (e.g. standing, kneeling, genuflecting, bowing, crossing ourselves, taking holy water etc.).
4. Acts of Worship will take into account, as far as possible, the age, aptitudes and backgrounds of the students.
5. Masses for large-scale participation will highlight a special occasion, while Masses for form groups or year groups may follow the liturgy of the day or suit a special event where appropriate.
6. Students should be well prepared, by the Chaplain as well as by their teachers, for the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the devout reception of Holy Communion (being in a state of grace, having fasted for 1 hour, having clean hands, etc.).

## **School Vision and Philosophy**

Our Collective Worship leads us to build up a school community which is:

- **Christ centered**

The school recognises the dignity of each human person and the command of Christ to love and care for each other. We are to recognise Christ present in each other and create a community of care and belonging. In short, 'We must bring Christ to all and all to Christ.'

- **Faith enlightened**

In the school, faith, culture and life are in harmony. The Catholic faith is at the heart of the school life and is integral to its liturgies, rituals, symbolism and prayer spaces. Christ is the reason for this school.

- **Shows concern for the poor, the weak and the vulnerable**

The school works towards eradicating injustice, alleviating suffering and its causes, and the creation of a fairer society. Students will learn to challenge injustices and to question the status quo in the light of the Gospel message. Thus inspired, they can enact positive social change and the promotion of a fairer society, in a spirit of charity and the promotion of the common good. All students witness Catholic Social teaching embodied not only through the faith life of the school but weaved throughout the whole curriculum.

- **Builds communities**

In building up the Kingdom of God, the school takes its social responsibility seriously, with respect for the precious gift of life from conception to the grave, and with the desire to enable all to live with dignity. The school is a community where parents, staff and students share a common vision as a community of love.

- **Pursues excellence**

The school enables every student to achieve their potential. It is committed to high quality teaching and learning, and to building a community of reflective learners working to the highest standards. Our vision includes the achievement of spiritual, as well as academic excellence, since growth in holiness and virtue is as important as growth in knowledge.

## **Organisation and Management of Collective Worship**

The overall responsibility for Collective Worship lies with the Headteacher in consultation with the governors. The following structure and systems are subject to SLT approval and review.

- 8.30 am on Mondays and Fridays - Staff briefing will begin with a prayer led by the Headteacher or the school lay Chaplain.

- 8.15 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays – Subject meetings and pastoral year group meetings begin with a prayer led by the Head of Department or Head of Year respectively.
- Each student attends one Headteacher assembly and one Head of Year assembly each week. Students also attend Head of House assemblies with their vertical tutor group peers on a three-week rotation. Students are encouraged to take part in assemblies/readings, and to join in the hymns in Headteacher assemblies.
- Form tutors begin each day with the school prayer or another prayer provided by the Chaplain. During form time once a week the vice form captain oversees the prayer board, updating the requests from each member of their form.
- Each form group takes part in Bible reflections once a week using class bibles to read passages of scripture from; students are encouraged to take an active part in this process throughout the year. The student chaplaincy leadership team works with the Chaplain to provide suggestions for pieces of scripture, or a catholic practice that they do not have a clear understanding of, and in turn the bible reflections are based on these topics with explanations provided. As Saint Peter advises us (2 Pet 1:20-21), the Scriptures are to be read as God's revelation through the Spirit, and are to be interpreted with the Church and in the light of her tradition. Students are encouraged to explore the treasures of the Scriptures on their own and as a class, while being warned against the dangers of erroneous interpretation, fundamentalism, literalism, and private judgement in matters of biblical interpretation. Elucidations of difficult passages drawn from the Church's Magisterium, or from the sayings of the Fathers of the Church and other saints, help enormously in this regard, and can also form part of our Bible reflections.
- A closing prayer is said at the end of each school day.
- Masses are on Holy days of Obligation and special feast days throughout the school year. In addition to this the school organises class Masses and Form Group Masses throughout the year. The priests from Mid-Essex Deanery offer these Masses and on occasions we welcome visiting priests from further afield. The Chaplaincy team aided by chaplaincy student leaders help to prepare all the Masses we have in school. Anyone who wishes to serve, read, help with the music or prepare the hall for Mass is encouraged to offer their services.
- Year 7 and 8 attend a retreat with the Chaplain and her team.
- Year 9 students also attend Mass at Aylesford.
- Students in KS4 are encouraged to attend the monthly youth Mass with BCYS – school provide the transport.
- Each year we have Mass to celebrate the arrival of our new Years 7 and 12.

- Each year we have Leavers' Masses for Years 11 and 13.
- Each year we visit one of our feeder primary schools and join with their patronal feast Mass celebrations.
- Every Tuesday at 8am a staff Mass is celebrated. All are invited and welcome.
- Every Thursday during lunchtime, students and staff come together to pray in the Chapel in Adoration.
- Each year we have a school Mass to celebrate the Feast of St John Payne.
- Our commitment to our Catholic observances also offers all Catholic students the opportunity for receiving the sacrament of reconciliation and to receive ashes at Ash Wednesday liturgies in school.
- The Legion of Mary visit school once a week and lead a group of students in praying the Rosary, followed by Adoration.
- Each year we pray the Angelus each day throughout October & May. In Eastertide the Church's practice is to replace the Angelus with the "Regina Caeli".
- Each year the whole school (separately/simultaneously) meets together for Collective Worship for such important events as the Advent Service and Lenten Service. These events are coordinated by the school Chaplaincy team in conjunction with the SLT.

### **Policy Monitoring and Review**

- The monitoring of Collective Worship forms part of the school improvement plan.
- The Governing body include the monitoring of Collective Worship on their agenda.
- The school consults with Mid-Essex Deanery clergy regarding matters relating to the school's provision of Collective Worship.
- Issues raised in the monitoring process will be used to further develop Collective Worship.
- Monitoring of Collective Worship includes observations of collective acts of worship, discussions with those who lead worship, discussions with those who experience worship (pupils, parents, governors and other members of the school community).
- CPD on leading prayer will be provided so that both Catholic and non-Catholic members of staff are competent in leading worship in our school and facilitating the prayer of staff and students alike. Staff development and in-service training will be recorded.
- Monitoring will check on resources, visual aids, etc.



- From time to time a school audit for Collective Worship will be conducted to assist in monitoring Collective Worship.
- When the monitoring of Collective Worship has been completed it will lead to an evaluation of the current position and plans for the further development of Collective Worship within the school.
- Chaplaincy team, Subject Leader for RE/RS and SLT to visit tutor groups and to support and develop acts of Collective Worship.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring of progress towards implementation of this policy annually will be conducted by Subject Leader for RE/RS and Senior Team link.

## **Workload Impact Assessment Checklist**

- The school will produce an annual directed time calendar to monitor workload and working hours.
- This policy is consistent with teachers' contractual entitlements.
- This policy and its related procedures were introduced following full and proper consultation.
- This policy has specific regard in relation to workload impact; it has not added additional hours of working and does not duplicate any other existing policies.
- This policy has a one-year shelf life.
- This policy will not result in any additional meetings / activities.
- All staff have had proper training and support to ensure they are able to carry out the contents of this policy without additional burden.

## **Conclusion**

Our desire to worship God is itself his gift; "our praises add nothing to your greatness, but profit us for salvation, through Christ our Lord" (*Preface, Roman Missal*). Put more simply: prayer does not change God; it changes us. Worship is what God *deserves*; but it is what we *need*. Worship is our duty; but through it we are filled, fed and nourished. Worship leads us to God, who is at the heart of all we do; but through it he comes down to us, to allow us to grow in virtue, in holiness, and in love for one another. This is how our school is built up in love.

## **Appendix 1: Collective Worship**

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.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collective-worship-in-schools>

<https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/religious-education/item/1003584-collective-worship>

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