



Sleights Church of England
(Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

September 2026

*Working together to be happy; to flourish; to succeed
through our Christian values
perseverance, respect and trust.*

This policy intends to outline the policy and procedure for collective worship at Sleights Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School.

In our Church school, our vision is to “work together to be happy; to flourish; to succeed”. This policy intends to outline how our whole school community lives this out in relation to collective worship.

Our Christian Values of are firmly rooted in this policy.

Christian Value	How is this value lived out in our Collective Worship policy?
perseverance	<i>I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me</i> (Philippians 4:13) Our school community encourages all children to push on and persevere, even when things get difficult. In Collective Worship, we learn through Christian teachings that God is always there to support us, to persevere and to “keep going”, even when things are difficult: both in learning and our wider life.
Respect	<i>So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you</i> (Matthew 7:12) At Sleights, Collective Worship is regarded as a special time which wholly reflects our ethos as a Church school. It aims to promote mutual respect between all members of the school community and beyond. It is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none.
Trust	<i>My God is my strength in whom I trust</i> (Psalm 18:2) We rely on feedback from children and families in relation to homework. We value this feedback. Trust and open dialogue with families is well established, so that where families and children feel they need to withdraw from certain aspects of Collective Worship, this is discussed with the Headteacher and managed seamlessly.

Rationale

This Collective Worship policy reflects and reinforces the school's aims, ethos and values and demonstrates the partnership between the conduct and content of school worship and the ethos of the whole school.

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the distinctiveness of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of **Working together to be happy; to flourish and succeed through our Christian Values of perseverance, respect and trust** and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily act of collective worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

In Church of England schools, collective worship is seen as more than a daily ‘awe and wonder’ moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.

We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives. Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this.

Therefore, Collective Worship at Sleights Church of England (VC) Primary School is planned to:

- explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation; and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.
- to be inspirational and inclusive;
- help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God.
- offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice
- be inspirational and inclusive, engaging all learners. They can talk about the impact it makes on their relationships and on life in the school
- help all learners to understand Anglican and other Christian traditions found in the UK and worldwide.
- an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals.

Legal Requirements

The law requires the Headteacher and Governing Body of every school to provide a daily act of Collective Worship which is in line with the school's Trust Deed and foundation.

Withdrawal from Collective Worship

We acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. Should a parent/guardian wish to withdraw their child from Collective Worship we ask that they inform the school by a conversation with the Headteacher and in writing headteacher@sleights.n-yorks.sch.uk

We will endeavour to communicate clearly the place of inclusive and invitational Collective Worship to ensure that parents are in possession of all the necessary information. However, should a parent/guardian request that their child be withdrawn we will not attempt to persuade them to alter their decision. If a pupil is withdrawn from Collective Worship the school is required to provide supervision but should not incur any additional cost in so doing.

See Appendix A – Advice from the Diocese of York in relation to Right of Withdrawal.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Sleights Church of England (VC) Primary School is a school for everyone, regardless of beliefs. Therefore, during Collective Worship, we are always sensitive to the very wide range of backgrounds and beliefs represented by our school community. This includes:

- those who have, or who come from families with, Christian commitment and belief
- parents who have chosen a church school (or who support its ethos) because they wish their children to experience something of the Christian faith
- members of other faith communities
- those who may not share in any particular religious belief

We also recognise that some pupils may have additional needs to support them to access Collective Worship. All worship is invitational and classroom adaptations will be considered in planning. For example, hearing loops may be used, or technology to mirror devices and onscreen information for all pupils.

Planning Collective Worship

Themes for Collective Worship are planned by the co-ordinator, the pupil collective worship planning team and foundation governors, using the Roots and Fruits framework and Journey Through the Bible resources, as a basis. Planning focusses primarily upon the study of a value as follows:

	Year A	Year B
Autumn 1	Generosity	Thankfulness
Autumn 2	Compassion	Trust
Spring 1	Courage	Perseverance
Spring 2	Forgiveness	Justice
Summer 1	Friendship	Service
Summer 2	Respect	Truthfulness

The Christian calendar and areas of interest shown by pupils, in their own faith, are also taken into account in Collective worship planning.

Whole school Collective Worship is held on 4 days of the week with class-based worship held on the remaining day.

Once a week on a Friday, the School gathers for this worship, in which achievements of pupils at the school are celebrated. This worship will normally provide opportunities for spiritual development.

Pupils are involved in the planning and leading of Collective Worship in the following ways:

- Worship leaders planning and delivering in class acts of worship.
- Daily welcome word leaders start the worship.
- Each class may have responsibility for preparing and delivering part of a longer Collective Worship which may be held at Church to celebrate a specific time of year (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Harvest).
- Year 6 prepare and deliver the act of worship in church that is their Leavers' Service;
- In most acts of collective worship, individual pupils are invited to lead prayers, which pupils of all ages are keen to do;
- Pupils are invited to be volunteers on an 'ad hoc' basis to act out or role play situations/stories.

Implementation and Delivery

We mark out this special time by lighting three candles (to represent the Trinity), entering and exiting calmly and quietly, having time for stillness and reflection, saying 'welcome words' and responses together, singing and listening to music.

Each person leading worship is expected to plan his or her act of worship with the same degree of thoroughness as any other aspect of their teaching. We encourage a 4-stage structure of planning:

- **Gathering:** We welcome the community with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle.
- **Engaging:** We share a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message
- **Responding:** Pupils discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing
- **Sending:** We share the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will impact upon their day, learning and/or behaviour. We close worship with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of the candles.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities, including: music, silence, symbolism, drama, ICT etc.

Responsibilities

Worship Leaders

Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 can volunteer to be a member of the Welcome Leaders group. Alongside the Welcome Word leaders, children take it in turns to carry out routine tasks such as setting up the Worship Table, welcoming and dismissing, organising the music and operating the computer/projector. In addition, they regularly plan and prepare the delivery of the content of Collective Worship with the Worship Leader (e.g. reading the story, acting out, preparing role plays)

Worship Co-ordinator/Foundation Governor

Lead and work alongside the Worship Group to plan and organise collective worship across school and the wider community through both daily worship and those celebrating specific times throughout the Christian calendar.

Visitors

Visitors should understand the educational aims of Collective Worship at the school and the need to avoid any proselytising. Attempts to persuade pupils to adopt a particular religious or non-religious belief are not appropriate. In general the Headteacher is consulted before a visiting speaker is confirmed. Visitors should not speak about raising money for any particular cause(s) without the prior permission of the Headteacher.

Staff and Community Involvement in Collective Worship

All staff are involved in the school's Collective Worship programme. Our programme includes weekly staff leaders from the teaching team, a weekly 'critical friend' support from the teaching team and a worshipper from the teaching support team. Other staff and pupils are given the opportunity of being involved in this programme every term.

Visitors at Sleights include:

- The Reverend Jo Parker, who is the incumbent at St John's Church. Reverend Jo works with school staff to plan and deliver worship in line with the school's plan.
- Heather and Chris from Open the Book visit regularly to deliver and share stories from the Bible, with the children taking on key roles during these worships.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation strategies currently used by staff and governors for assessing the outcomes of collective worship are:

- Observation of the children's attentiveness and level of interest shown during the sessions. Observations are conducted by staff and governors.
- Feedback from pupils and parents by means of annual surveys.
- Feedback from pupils through regular collective worship planning team meetings.
- Termly collective worship meetings with the foundation governors.
- Observation of the children's general behaviour in and around school.

The monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship forms part of the school's programme of monitoring. This is done through:

- formal observations of Acts of Collective Worship led by a range of leaders;
- peer reviews of collective worship by staff.
- pupil discussion groups with the Headteacher or Governor;
- informal observations of how pupils are putting the messages from Collective Worship into practice;
- pupils' responses and ideas during Collective Worship
- written evidence in response to prompts in the whole school reflection corner which links with the Collective Worship theme.
- written and photographic evidence from prayer spaces.
- Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in consultation with the Diocese of York(SIAMS).

The school's foundation governors have a role monitoring Collective Worship

The programme of acts of Collective Worship is coordinated by The Worship co-ordinator.



DIOCESE OF YORK

This guidance sits alongside the [Diocese of York Collective Worship Guidelines](#) and the [National Society's Collective Worship Guidance for Schools](#); it does not replace it.

Collective Worship: What does the legislation require and what is the context in a Church school?

The Education Reform Act 1988 section 7(1) and the corresponding section of the Education Act 1993 states that there is a legal duty for school without a religious foundation to provide a daily act of worship which is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.

In a Church school, the requirement for the daily act of worship is to reflect the Anglican status of the school as expressed in its trust deed.

In the case of a foundation school which has a religious character or a voluntary school, the required collective worship shall be – (a) in accordance with any provision of the trust deed relating to the school, or (b) where – (i) provision for that purpose is not made by such a deed, and (ii) the school has a religious character in accordance with the tenets and practices of the religion or religious denomination specifies in relation to the school.

School Standards and Framework Act 1996 s70 and Schedule 20 5a

This must be offered to every pupil, every day – except in the case of withdrawal. The school must not withdraw pupils from their entitlement to collective worship, for example to deliver an intervention or increase curriculum time.

High quality collective worship, which is 'Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring' has a significant contribution to make to the life of a Church school.

Collective worship enables the Christian vision of the school to be explored, shared and reflected upon. It provides a space for pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, where they can discover different ways of expressing their own spirituality and worship. It also makes a significant contribution to the ways in which the school community can come together to celebrate, learn, pray and – at times – lament corporately.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child(ren) from collective worship, the [School Standards Framework 1998 Act \(Section 71\)](#) states that:

If the parent requests that their child is excused—

(a) from receiving religious education given in the school in accordance with the school's basic curriculum,

(b) from attendance at religious worship in the school, or

(c) both from receiving such education and from such attendance, the pupil shall be so excused until the request is withdrawn.

Key Points

- A Church school has a legal duty to provide collective worship in accordance with its trust deed for every pupil every day.
- A pupil can legally be withdrawn from collective worship by the person(s) who has/have parental responsibility
- A pupil in post-16 provision may withdraw themselves.
- The parents/ pupils (in post-16 provision) are not required to supply a reason for the withdrawal.
- Withdrawal can be partial – i.e. from specific aspects of collective worship such as acts of worship in church.
- Withdrawal from collective worship takes place during the school day and so pupils do not need to be at home to be withdrawn. Therefore, any absence related to avoidance of collective worship (i.e. parents/carers keeping their children at home / arriving late to avoid a morning collective worship or service at Church) should be recorded as an unauthorised absence, since it is unnecessary for the pupil to be kept at home during these times.
- The school is recommended to make alternative arrangements for any pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship.
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) requires schools to *'eliminate discrimination... advance equality... foster good relations.'*
- Collective worship which is 'inclusive, invitational and inspiring' is well-placed to support the development of meaningful and high-quality relationships within the school community – across faiths, worldviews, cultures and beliefs – and enables pupils to understand how to advocate for one another in creating a culture which eliminates discrimination and advances equality.
- It should also ensure, where possible, that any pupil withdrawn from collective worship by their parents (or self in post-16 provision) is not excluded from the life of the school community as a result.

Procedures for withdrawal

- As a principle, the school should ensure that its worship is sufficiently inclusive, invitational and inspirational, and fully accessible for its pupils within the bounds of the school's trust deed.
- The school should ensure it has a clear policy and written procedures for handling a withdrawal request or parental complaint about collective worship which complies with the law.
- Clear procedures for both should be set out within the school's collective worship policy and made available to parents, e.g. through the school website and induction



information. Where multiple languages are spoken, translations of these documents should be made available where possible.

- In order not to place an 'undue burden' on parents (or the pupil if in post-16 provision), requests for withdrawal should be granted without question since parents/ pupils are not required to give a reason to exercise the right to withdraw.
- It is appropriate for a school to request this in writing, to avoid doubt at a later date.
- If appropriate, the school may wish to gather information from parents who have exercised their right to withdraw in order to understand any particular concerns about the collective worship provided within the school for evaluation purposes. However, care must be taken not to stigmatise or burden the parents in any way.
- For prospective parents, it is important to explain as clearly as possible what the arrangements for collective worship in the school are and how this relates to the Christian character of the school. Through conversation, it can arise that parents hold misconceptions about collective worship and its purpose.
- Wherever possible, the school should find ways to communicate with parents/ carers re its provision of collective worship and be as open and transparent as possible, whilst always ensuring a safe environment for the pupils.
- It can be very helpful, for example, to invite any interested parents to observe collective worship to understand its place within the life of the school, and to help answer their questions about its purpose or implementation. This must not affect a parents' right to withdraw their child or be seen in any way as conditional.
- When dealing with a withdrawal, the school should describe to the parents what alternative arrangements will be made for their child. It is important that good records are kept of the parent/carer(s)' request and the associated actions in case of any challenges at a later date.
- The pupil(s) must be suitably supervised, but the school must not be burdened by the cost or disruption of providing alternative supervision arrangements.
- Alternative arrangements should not be used as an opportunity for additional curriculum time, but should ensure that the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural needs of the pupil(s) are attended to and any gaps which arise as a result of non-attendance at collective worship can be filled.
- There is no requirement to provide an alternative 'assembly'.
- Material can be supplied by parents for this, although if that is the case, these must be checked for suitability by the school to ensure they do not contravene the school's policies or other duties (particularly safeguarding). This is only possible if it can be done without additional cost or disruption to the school.
- Where possible the school may look to include withdrawn pupils in celebration events, if they can easily be included in the non-religious elements of these events. For example, including the pupil in a certificate-awarding element, but withdrawing them from the singing and prayer element of the worship. This is not a requirement, and schools will need to assess whether this is manageable within their own contexts.