

**St James' CEVA Lower School  
Voluntary Aided**

**Collective Worship Policy**

*Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.*

**Religious Education and Collective Worship. 1/94 Department for Education**

**What is Collective Worship?**

Collective worship occurs where pupils of different beliefs and attitudes assemble as a body, (be that as a school, year group, or class) to share common values and experiences. It is not to be equated with corporate worship where participants share the same faith.

**The Role of Collective Worship**

Whilst there are no legal requirements for schools to hold "assemblies", the law states clearly that all pupils (see Right of Withdrawal for exceptions) are required to participate in a daily act of collective worship.

Collective worship occupies an important place in the life of St James' CEVA Lower School. It provides an opportunity for members of the school community to pause from activity, to gather together, to remind themselves of and reflect upon the beliefs and values which bind our school community together. It reflects the Christian foundation upon which our school is built.

**Collective Worship at St James' CEVA Lower School**

We believe that our times of collective worship can play an important role in deepening the spiritual awareness of our pupils. Collective worship provides pupils with an opportunity to reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of things, to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs.

We will often consider values that are shared by different faiths and reflecting our school population we will sometimes consider the writings and leaders of other faiths. We encourage the children to reflect on the character and achievements of Jesus and Christian leaders as recorded in the Christian Bible.

In addition to the above, special times of collective worship are planned in the school year to acknowledge the significance of key religious festivals from the main religions represented in the school. In line with legislation that collective worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” and to reflect our Christian foundation, we place particular emphasis on the Christian festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Pupils are not themselves required to “celebrate” religious beliefs which neither they nor their family adhere to.

At St James' CEVA Lower School, we believe that collective worship makes a vital contribution to the development of pupils in the following areas:

1. Collective worship contributes to the **moral** development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- Reflect on matters concerning right and wrong;
- Hear about incidents in which, and people in whom, goodness and right are exemplified;
- Learn about religious and other teachings concerning right and wrong.

2. Collective worship contributes to the **social** development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- Gather with others for a common purpose;
- Share times of joy and sadness with others;
- Learn how to behave appropriately within a specific social setting;
- Increase self-confidence in public speaking/ dramatic performance.

3. Collective worship contributes to the **cultural** development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- Hear and respond to music from a range of times, places and cultures;
- Reflect upon ideas concerning the concept of beauty;
- Appreciate the range of talents and gifts found within the school community and beyond.

4. Collective worship contributes to the **intellectual** development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- Learn and engage with their minds;
- Have ideas concerning values confirmed or challenged;
- Reflect on the importance of learning in the context of our school community;
- Consider the power of words.

5. Collective worship contributes to the **spiritual** development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- Reflect upon Christianity
- Reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of things
- Experience times of quiet inactivity and counterbalance the activity that generally marks the school day
- Hear and respond to stories and words from religious and other literature which suggests that there is more to life than meets the eye.

### **Principles and Practices**

1. Good timing is essential. The entire assembly (unless it's a special event) should not exceed 20 minutes. This will include the reflective moment and the notices. Notices will always be given outside of worship. Whole school assembly will take place at the same time each day. The class teachers should lead their class into the hall as quietly and calmly as possible.

2. The focal point of the assembly can take the form of a focused silence, a reading, a piece of music, a picture or anything that informs further on the topic.

3. Prayers will be shared as part of our worship and children will be invited to share in prayer if they choose to, and invite to respond with 'Amen' if they wish; no pressure will be put upon any child to pray or join in with responses, especially in a manner that would go against their own belief system. However, all children are expected to respect this time of prayer and to sit quietly and allow those who choose to pray to do so uninterrupted.

There will be a time for general reflection and silent thought on the theme of the worship. When this occurs, we will invite children to join in with prayer in the following ways: "If it is your custom, you might like to offer a silent prayer to God about..." , an invitation to "Bow your head" or close your eyes, or focus on the candle/other visual stimulus; children may also be invited to offer their own hopes, wishes and prayers on behalf of the school.

4. High expectations of behaviour are expected throughout the assembly. Each class should arrive promptly and in an orderly fashion, entering the worship space quietly and calmly. It is the school's expectation that children and adults will sit quietly and wait for the assembly to begin, listening to the music being played. This moment of quiet is important to set the tone for collective worship. It is expected that all children wear their full uniform for assembly, with shirts neatly tucked in.

5. A candle is lit to indicate the start of worship, followed by a greeting from the Anglican tradition (for example 'May the Lord be with you'). The end of worship is punctuated by a dismissal in the Anglican tradition, such as 'Go in the Peace of the Lord)

## **Record Keeping**

To provide evidence of daily collective worship and a means of review, a CW plan is completed for the year.

Collective Worship will be evaluated regularly in a variety of ways, such as:

- Each term, all members of the school will be invited to identify an act of worship which they particularly enjoyed and explain the impact this worship had on them
- Termly visits from Foundation Governors
- Collation of thoughts, wishes and prayers offered by the school family in response to CW
- Regular opportunities for children to feed back to staff the impact of CW on their day-to-day lives (through interviews, display development, art work etc)

## **Visitors**

Visitors are welcome to contribute to collective worship at St James' CEVA Lower School. However, it will be made clear to them the ages of the children and the guidelines for how they treat prayer. If possible, a copy of the collective worship policy will be sent out to them in advance.

## **Right of Withdrawal**

Parents/guardians have the legal right to withdraw their child from collective worship, provided they give written notification to the school.

At St James' CEVA Lower School we believe that our approach to collective worship is educationally sound, totally inclusive for all children (including those of other faiths/no faith) and crucial to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development of our pupils. It is our expectation that all children will appreciate this time as an opportunity to come together and share important lessons as a whole school family.

Agreed by Governors Oct 15

Review date Oct 18