



## Collective Worship Policy

**Review Date:** May 2027

**Review By:** Chaplain and Ordained Chaplaincy Adviser

**Final Approval:** Senior Leadership Team

### Academy Context

The Core Values of the academy which relate specifically to this policy state that we are working together to form relationships based on

- **Faith** - everyone is invited to develop their understanding of Christian belief, worship and lifestyle.
- **Justice** - everyone is entitled to be treated fairly and to promote the self-esteem of others.
- **Responsibility** - everyone is expected to understand the consequences of their actions.
- **Truth** - everyone is required to be honest and to communicate in a positive manner.
- **Compassion** - everyone is encouraged to be generous in their concern for others.

These values enable us to fulfil our vision to Unlock Unique Potential and underpin 'Our Intent'.

### Data Protection

Any personal data processed in the delivery of this policy will be processed in accordance with the academy Data Protection policy.

### Introduction

#### **Unlocking Doors; Welcoming In**

Collective worship contributes significantly to our unique ethos as a Church of England academy. Symbolically it takes place at the start of every day, setting the tone for all that lies ahead. It incorporates opportunities to be still, to reflect, to celebrate and to worship in various inclusive ways. Above all, it is an opportunity to give thanks and praise to God and to explore spirituality.

Well-crafted acts of worship play a powerful part in students' personal development, spiritual growth, understanding of Anglican traditions. It contributes to Unlocking Unique Potential (our vision) and living out our Core Values. Collective worship is a spiritual, moral, social and cultural expression of what it means to be an individual and a member of a faith school community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with

- the Church of England's education vision: 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'<sup>1</sup>,
- the Academy's Theological Underpinning document and
- the SIAMS inspection framework.

### Policy

Bishop Stopford School will ensure:

- collective worship is a distinctively Christian experience;
- Church of England expectations are upheld;

<sup>1</sup> [Education and Schools | The Church of England](#)

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- inclusive, invitational and inspirational experiences (Appendix 1);
- student leadership of worship is encouraged;
- that daily and other acts of worship are well prepared, consider appropriate themes and observe the Church calendar;
- Communion is conducted in line with Church of England requirements and principles about participation are shared with students (Appendix 2);
- cultural sensitivities are observed in planning and delivering collective worship;
- collective worship programmes are flexible enough to accommodate change (for example, in response to a local traumatic event);
- opportunities for considering *>Something More?* (the Academy's approach to spirituality);
- parents are informed of their right to withdraw their child/ren from collective worship (Appendix 3)

## **Responsibilities**

### **All**

- To respect the requirement for collective worship in this Church of England academy
- To undertake CPD as required in relation to collective worship

### **Chaplain**

- To organise the collective worship timetable, speakers and themes
- To provide resources which enable meaningful daily worship
- To engage with faith leaders to contribute to collective worship
- To ensure students are at the heart of collective worship
- To lead acts of collective worship
- To evaluate collective worship
- To work with the Ordained Chaplaincy Adviser and leaders to ensure the policy is enacted

### **Pastoral Team**

- To manage assemblies and collective worship and uphold their central importance
- To contribute to delivery and evaluation
- To promote understanding of collective worship in year groups and tutor groups
- To ensure acts of worship in form time – both daily and weekly - are conducted appropriately

### **Ordained Chaplaincy Adviser**

- To advise on the delivery of collective worship
- To contribute to review and evaluation
- To lead collective worship
- To provide training for the Chaplain and other members of the community as appropriate

### **Senior Leadership Team**

- To lead collective worship as required
- To contribute to the review and development of collective worship
- To interact with the Ordained Chaplaincy Adviser and trustees in respect of this policy
- To consider appropriate provision for students of other faiths
- To approve, monitor and quality assure policy

### **Trustees**

- To oversee arrangements for collective worship
- To contribute to quality assurance processes, including providing a Chaplaincy Link Governor
- To support the ethos of the academy in respect of collective worship and spirituality

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## Appendix 1

### Practices

It is helpful to see collective worship metaphorically as a roaring log fire in a room with an open door: people are invited in and welcome to come as close to the fire as they desire. Invitation is given to engage or to respond privately as well as publicly. In collective worship, participants are challenged to think for themselves. The teachings of the Bible, and of Christ and about Christ and prayer are explicit.

1. Collective worship will be '**distinctively Christian**', with a range of elements such as prayer, reflective hymns or worship music, a Bible passage, or the school's Bible verse (Micah 6:8). *If the leader is not comfortable delivering these elements, they can invite a student to lead, or ask the Chaplain to arrange this for them.*
2. Stillness and Silence: the act of worship will begin and end with students entering and leaving in silence. Heads of Year and form tutors will manage the arrival of students and their conduct. (The person leading collective worship may choose to use a video or music to support this phase to ensure a time of meaningful personal reflection.)
3. Engagement and Exploration: the content of collective worship will allow all students the opportunity to consider deeper questions and explore what faith may mean to them.
4. Attentiveness: staff are role models to students throughout: full attention is expected.
5. Collective worship length: 12-15 minutes
6. Audibility: different venues are used for assemblies. Where necessary, microphones will be used to ensure content is accessible for all.

### Inspirational

- Encourage a sense of expectancy and awe.
- Speak positively about collective worship so that students look forward to its challenge of thinking ideas through for themselves.
- Vary approaches to aid focus: the arts, images, drama, short films, active opportunities, story telling.

### Invitational

- Promote the understanding that the Christian faith is relevant today and to individuals personally.
- Invite those attending to reflect for themselves.
- Ask questions: rhetorical or otherwise.
- Invite feedback.
- Signpost opportunities for follow-up and deeper exploration.

### Inclusive

- Ensure that everyone is considered in the preparation of collective worship, and particularly those with protected characteristics through choice of resources and content.
- Involve students in preparing and participating and delivering assemblies.
- Be culturally sensitive and humble.
- Take account of feedback from a range of students (eg age, gender, ethnicity, faith) in designing collective worship.

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## Appendix 2

### The Place of Communion at Bishop Stopford School

#### **Introduction**

Communion has been celebrated continually in the Christian church since it was instituted by Jesus before he died. It is also known as Eucharist and the Lord's Supper.

It is a commemoration and celebration, and a sign of obedience in following Jesus' command to remember him in sharing in bread and wine. It reminds Christians as they meet together of the foundations of the faith: that Jesus became human, he died and rose to life, his sacrifice being accepted by God the Father. We read about Communion historically in three of the Gospels, where Jesus inaugurates it: Matthew 26: 26-28; Mark 14: 22-24; Luke 22: 19-20. It is also explained in the New Testament after Jesus ascended to heaven. Paul, one of the early church leaders, gave a theological account of Communion in a letter to a church in the city of Corinth: 2 Corinthians 11.

Communion, therefore, is one of only two sacraments ordained by Christ - baptism being the second. It demonstrates in a shared act the basis on which Christianity is founded – the work of Jesus, the Son of God. The sacraments are received with faith, repentance and thanksgiving. The visible elements of Communion – bread and wine - remind communicants of Jesus' atoning death, and it gives them time as a community to express their thanks for the benefits of his death for them.

As part of Communion, participants are asked to consider their own unworthiness, to acknowledge their own failings and to repent of them before participating.

As outlined above, Communion has been a distinctive sacrament of the church for over 2000 years. It is a corporate act, which symbolises the unity of Christians as they together remember Jesus as he requested. Communion is conducted in many ways across various Anglican traditions and other Christian denominations. In some, for example, participation is reserved for those who are baptised; in others, all are invited to take part. However, those present are invited to participate on the basis of belief in the fundamentals of the faith – most usually expressed through a creed or a statement of faith.

A Church of England academy is not church per se. However, it has a responsibility to uphold the tenets of the Anglican faith and to give those in its community opportunities to experience liturgy. Communion is an essential part of that liturgy

#### **Principles**

- Collective worship<sup>1</sup> is a part of the rhythm of the school day, week, term and year.
- As a Church of England academy, Communion is a part of that rhythm.
- Communion should be inspiring<sup>2</sup> as part of the wider provision of Collective Worship.
- Participation in Communion is by open invitation to all who attend; it is the individual's choice to participate, not that of the celebrant nor the School.
- Those attending should understand the basis of Communion to make a rightly informed choice about whether or not to take bread and wine.
- The teaching of the foundational beliefs which Communion signifies must be shared in the Communion service, so those attending make the decision as to whether or not to participate on each occasion.
- The conduct of Communion will not contravene a student's, parents' or member of staff's church's/faiths' practice as far as this is practically known.

#### **The Role of the Chaplain and those leading Communion**

1. The Chaplain will introduce new students to the Anglican ethos of the school, and Communion will be explained as part of that introduction. (Some students will be from other Christian traditions where Communion may be celebrated in different ways; others are from different faith traditions. Many will

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not have experienced Communion and what it means.) The reason for holding Communion and the individual choice to participate will be explained.

2. Staff will be given an introduction to the ethos of Bishop Stopford School as part of their Induction programme.
3. In each Communion service, the beliefs on which participation in Communion is founded will be clearly shared, through explicit reference to a creed or statement of belief. Celebrants are required to verbalise this clearly and to explain the basis of participation. (See example below.)
4. Those attending will be given an explicit choice to participate, and be encouraged *not* to take part if they do not assent to the beliefs which have been stated.
5. Those attending will be offered a blessing as an alternative to Communion, or the opportunity to remain seated and to respect others as they participate.
6. We ask those leading Communion to avoid religious 'jargon' – particularly when it comes to taking bread and wine so that those attending have the ritual clearly explained to them. (See example below.)
7. After a Communion service, students will be invited to discuss what it means or any other aspects of the service with the Chaplain/celebrant.
8. All celebrants must adhere to the School's requirements with regard to participation in Communion.

### **Exemplar Script**

'And now we come to the time in our service where everyone is invited to share bread and wine. This is a choice, and we want to make sure that the choice you make— either to come up and take bread and wine or not – is the right choice for you. So let's take a moment to remember *why* this is a *significant* choice. Taking part in Communion is a way of showing what we believe – and sharing that belief with others. In the words of one of the New Testament creeds (a creed is simply a statement of faith), by taking Communion, we are declaring that we believe that, ' Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, he was buried, and he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.'<sup>3</sup>

If this is your belief today, you are very welcome to take part in Communion. If you do believe this, but wouldn't normally take Communion in your church, please don't feel you have to change what you'd normally do. If you don't believe this, then it's right *not* to take bread and wine.

Everyone is invited to come up for a blessing, or - if you would prefer - you can remain quietly where you are, showing your respect for others as they take part.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Right to Withdraw from Daily Collective Worship**

Parents and carers are informed of the legal right to withdraw their child/ren from collective worship via the Academy's Newsletter annually. This is the Academy's the main form of communication.

Procedure:

Notify an Assistant Head who addresses the matter and makes alternative provision in line with parental wishes.

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