



**WESTONZOYLAND**

Community Primary School and Pre-school

# Collective Worship Policy

**September 2024**

Ratified by: .....

Headteacher  
Andy Clark

Ratified by: .....

Chairs of Governors

Review date: September 2025

## **Introduction and Legalisation:**

The Collective Worship Policy at Westonzoyland Community Primary School pays due regard to statutory requirements and has taken account of the guidance offered by the LA through its SACRE.

Under the Education Act 1996, all maintained schools, except maintained special schools, must provide daily collective worship for all registered pupils. Daily collective worship is not required in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The DfE published non-statutory guidance on collective worship in 1994. This guidance remains current. The guidance explains in paragraph 60 that collective worship in schools without a designated religious character will be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian nature". Paragraph 61 adds that collective worship should not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.

The Collective Worship Policy of Westonzoyland Community Primary School is consonant with the philosophy and vision of the school as expressed in the school prospectus and development plan. Assemblies are conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faiths and beliefs of all members of the school.

## **Definition of Collective Worship:**

Collective worship is a time when the whole school, or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all pupils an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship acknowledges that a school is a collection of different individuals and beliefs, and implies inclusiveness and no commitment to any particular faith.

It is important to distinguish between RE and collective worship and to ensure that RE is given specific curriculum time in order to meet the requirements of the appropriate agreed syllabus. In community and voluntary controlled schools this will be 'Awareness, Mystery and Value' (AMV), the locally agreed syllabus for RE in Somerset.

Collective worship is not Worship where everyone is committed to a particular faith. For example engaging in a school prayer to any particular form of God (or even a God at all).

## **Aims of Collective Worship at Westonzoyland:**

Collective Worship contributes Westonzoyland Community Primary School through us having opportunities to:

- share common aims and values
- celebrate achievement and special times
- explore together the world in which we live
- develop a community spirit

## **Collective Worship at Westonzoyland:**

At our school:

- Where the Headteacher, staff, guests or visitors wish to lead a prayer children and staff must be given an option to opt in or out depending on their own belief systems
- Collective acts of worship are incorporated into (but not limited to) whole school assemblies, RE and RHSE lessons
- Collective worship will at times feature aspects of the curriculum, which will enhance the experiences of pupils by reflecting on the work done in classes.

## The Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective worship time is distinct from curriculum time. However, in Westonzoyland Community Primary School, At times, Collective worship will enrich classwork through its consideration of subject matter from different perspectives.

Collective worship is organised to provide a variety of groupings and will take place in the school hall or the classroom.

### Leadership:

Every member of the teaching staff and occasional visitors will be involved in leading acts of worship at some point in the school year.

### Planning Acts of Collective Worship:

The content of all acts of Collective worship will be considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils.

Termly planning sheets list themes, special occasions and events, but will be flexible to allow the inclusion of current and topical issues. Together with weekly planning and recording sheets, these will ensure that there is continuity and progression, and enable the monitoring and evaluation of acts of worship to take place.

### The Act of Collective Worship:

A variety of teaching and learning styles and active and interactive methods are appropriate in acts of Collective worship. Any and all of the methods employed in the classroom can be used effectively in acts of Collective worship. A variety of resources will also be used. Leaders will choose the style/method and resources, which are appropriate to the content, the age, aptitude and the background of the pupils.

The content and process must be sufficiently stimulating in order to evoke a response in the individual. This may not be visual, but opportunity must be given to express this response through reflection and prayer.

If announcements are to be given at the same time as an act of worship then they will be of a positive nature, which at times may enhance the act of worship itself. Announcements will be made preceding the act of worship and a clearly defined break between them and the act of worship will be made.

### Withdrawal:

**Parents** have the right to have their children excused from **religious** worship. For example, this might be for songs of a religious nature or a prayer. This request should be made in writing to the Headteacher. In order to gain a clear insight into the exact exemptions required, the Headteacher may then follow this up with a further conversation.

**Most pupils** do not have the right to opt themselves out of religious worship. In May 2008 a report by Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights called for any child of "sufficient maturity, intelligence and understanding" to be given the right to withdraw from compulsory worship. However, under Section 55 of the Education and Inspections Act, it remains the case that only pupils in sixth form education or over the age of compulsory school age may withdraw themselves from collective worship.

**Schools** can apply to the local authority's SACRE for exemption from the "broadly Christian" requirement for some or all of their pupils. This is called a "determination", and alternative worship must be provided for these pupils, although parents still have the right to have their children excused from this worship. These exemptions are covered by Schedule 20 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

**Teachers** cannot be required to attend or lead religious worship, but do not have a right to withdraw from the non-worship part of assembly. Teachers cannot be required to teach RE unless their contract shows they have been explicitly employed to teach it. Teachers cannot be disadvantaged in their employment because of their religious opinions or the fact that they do not attend religious worship.