



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

(Including Classroom Prayer & Worship)

2022-2024

‘Hand in hand with Jesus’

Mission Statement

Brother, sister, let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you; pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant too.

Introduction

St. Vincent's is proud to be a Catholic school. We will provide our pupils with the opportunity to study and learn about our Catholic faith, seeking to further the growth of fundamental Christian concepts, values attitudes and actions. Through prayer and worship we will aim to develop our relationship with God, both as individuals and as members of a worshipping community.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. 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.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

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.

Collective worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church;
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church;
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none;
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

At St. Vincent's, everything we do stems from our mission statement. As a school family, we strive to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and St. Vincent, the patron saint of our school.

Principles

All Acts of Worship at St Vincent's will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way;
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.¹ In order to do this, celebrations will:
 - be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;

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- be short and appropriately paced (children's attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life i.e., 5-6 minutes for Key Stage 1 and 7-10 minutes for Key Stage 2);
- be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Aims

At St. Vincent's we believe that, as a Catholic School we should enrich the religious experiences of pupils and staff. We believe that children's prayer will be supported, deepened and enriched as they become part of a praying community of adults and children. We believe collective worship should aim to:

- introduce pupils to aspects of worship within a supportive environment.
- introduce and allow children to experience prayer in a variety of forms (class p/w, assembly, sung, reflective, meditative, silent, written, illustrated).
- inspire the pupils to lead prayer and worship
- reflect on spiritual and moral issues.
- contemplate something of the mystery of God
- explore their own beliefs
- respond to and celebrate life
- experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- develop a common ethos and shared values
- enrich religious experience
- grow in liturgical understanding and development
- reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- reinforce positive attitudes
- participate fully
- take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'
- develop a reverence for God and foster a sense of joy, awe and wonder in creation.
- develop an awareness of the presence of God in others and in oneself.

We believe that Collective Worship in our school aims to provide these opportunities for all pupils and staff:

School and Class Organisation

Time Table

Monday – Collective worship in class led by the teacher.

Tuesday – Collective worship/class mass led by the teacher.

Wednesday – KS1 and KS2 assemblies.

Thursday – Collective worship in class led by the teacher.

Friday – Year group led assembly for whole school or planned Collective Worship.

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Planning

Staff keep plans of Collective Worship, class masses and class assemblies as a record for future reference.

Leading

In accordance with our development plan, we will give our pupils opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship, using a school wide consistent approach:

- each table or group plan and lead one aspect of the Collective Worship:
- Gather (Welcome), Listen (Word), Respond in Prayer (Worship), Respond in Action (Welfare), Go Forth (Witness)
- the same group will plan and lead the same section every time there is a Collective Worship for half a term to build up their confidence.

Holy Days of Obligation and Other Special Days in the Church’s Year

- Holy Days will be celebrated as a school community with a mass in church.
- Other days will be highlighted in the classroom or sometimes in church with a liturgical or non liturgical service.

Resources

- Most resources are kept in the teachers’ classrooms. There is also a selection of resources in the RE cupboards on the link corridor. Posters are kept in the drawers in both the Y2/3 and Y4/5 area.
- The RE co-ordinator, Mrs McGrail, will update these and respond to the staff as and when the need arises. Teachers may also wish to use their own resources, such as flowers, music, photos, pictures, etc – in the classroom.

Organisation within the School

Principles

Our worship will aim to:

- Be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain (e.g. class worship and Key Stage and whole school assemblies).
- Be flexible and responsive to changing situations within the school and wider community.
- Reflect on the teachings of the Catholic Church whilst respecting other traditions.
- Create a prayerful atmosphere and provide a full range of experiences.

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Classroom Prayer and Worship

- Will be appropriate to the age of the children and be an appropriate length (e.g. 5 year old 5 mins. 10 year old 10 mins).
- Each classroom should create a space for a prayer/worship focus and will keep a record of it and class responses in a class ‘Collective Worship’ floor book, to be displayed on the class altar.
- In Key Stage 2 our aim is to develop pupils’ skills to enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship, rather than always participating or contributing in a token way. (KS2).
- Use thoughtful and appropriate resources.
- We say a prayer of thanksgiving at lunchtime before the children leave the classroom and at the beginning of the afternoon session. Prayers are also said at the beginning and end of the day.

Recording and Evaluating

- Through observation, teachers will measure pupils’ response to prayer and worship.
- Observing attitudes during formal and informal prayer.
- RE co-ordinator to observe classroom prayer/worship, consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils.
- Appraise children’s personal prayers during assemblies and class led p/w.
- Each class will have a floor book to keep evidence of class and whole school Collective Worship, which will have a piece per week, showing photographs, readings and prayers.

Conclusion

In order to ensure that collective worship within the school is a relevant, meaningful and a positive contribution to the religious, spiritual and moral development of all members of the school family, collective worship in our school will be:

- properly planned
- adequately resourced
- led and inspired by teachers and pupils
- monitored and valued

Appendix 1

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship which may at times form part of the school development plan

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- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that Collective Worship takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it.
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the governors and head teacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship
- Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating
- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an Act of Collective Worship
- Informing the head teacher of standards and developments in Collective Worship

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and head teacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Collective Worship
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Collective Worship
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan RE Advisor
- Professional development / Ongoing formation
- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Collective Worship including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently

Appendix 2

Legal Requirements

- We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups.) We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that collective worship and assembly are distinct activities.

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They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

- The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.
- As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, “on a special occasion”.
- In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School or Catholic school which has converted to an academy, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the head teacher.
- Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship. However, given the importance of Collective Worship in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to ‘timetabled slots’

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the RE Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

Review date: September 2024