



Archdiocese of Southwark Diocesan Policy for Collective Worship

Drafted: July 2019

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Preamble to the Policy

The document has been developed by the Education Service team and approved by the Trustees. Governing Bodies in Catholic schools, within the Archdiocese of Southwark, may use this policy as a basis for their own Collective Worship policies. All diocesan policies and guidance are reviewed on a three-yearly cycle or earlier if necessary.

Introduction

‘The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.’¹

Collective Worship in a Catholic school acknowledges and celebrates the life-giving presence of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) in our lives. It is how we, as a community of faith, come together to give glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is through acts of shared Worship, prayer and liturgy, that the Catholic identity of our schools are shaped and sustained.

Sacramental aspects of the Church’s liturgical life, especially the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation, must be intrinsically woven into the fabric of a school’s Catholic identity. It is therefore expected that all schools will have a schedule of liturgical events which will include planned for participation in Mass and other Eucharistic liturgies such as Adoration, and the opportunity for its members to participate in the sacrament of reconciliation during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Legal requirements

The law requires all maintained schools:

- provide daily Collective Worship for all pupils including those in the sixth form (Section 70, 1988 Education Act);
- Acts of Collective Worship are not to be designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school this means that times of Collective Worship are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education;
- recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship.

In addition

- Foundation governors in voluntary aided Catholic schools have a statutory responsibility to preserve and develop the religious character of their schools;
- Governors in Catholic academies give a written commitment to do the same.

Responsibility and oversight of Collective Worship

The governors and headteacher are responsible for ensuring that there are daily timetabled opportunities for whole school, class/form and year/phase group Worship;

¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Each school must ensure:

- that there is a named person who is responsible for leading Collective Worship across the school;
- that Collective Worship, in the form of prayer or liturgy, happens for all pupils daily;
- that all pupils are able to access the prayer and liturgy offered within the school day;
- that Collective Worship is well resourced, both in regard to content and the continued professional development of those planning and leading, this includes enabling pupils to plan and lead;
- that there is regular and comprehensive monitoring of Collective Worship which clearly demonstrates the impact on the school's Catholic mission;

Principles of Collective Worship:

Acts of Worship in our Catholic schools should endeavour to:

- give praise and honour to God;
- give pupils meaningful opportunities to engage in the Sacramental Life of the Church;
- give pupils and students positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family context in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church;
- be of high quality, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- be examples of good practice, which should enable pupils and students to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead Worship.

Aims of Collective Worship

The ultimate aim of Collective Worship in the Catholic school is to provide the space and tools for our young people, within the context of the Catholic faith and traditions:

- to contemplate the mystery of God;
- to develop an understanding of Salvation History through meaningful engagement with the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation;
- to reflect on spiritual and moral issues;
- to foster and nurture relationships;
- to respond to and to celebrate life;
- to experience a sense of belonging and to develop community;
- to nurture a common ethos and shared set of values;
- to enrich religious experience;
- to grow in liturgical understanding and development;
- to reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition;
- to seek appropriate responses to the love of God;
- to take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'