Cookham Dean Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

Please note: The Education (Assemblies) Bill, which will repeal the requirement for schools in England without a religious character to hold collective worship, is currently being considered in the House of Commons. If it becomes law, this policy will be updated accordingly.

Date policy last reviewed: January 2026

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

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Statement of intent

At Cookham Dean Primary School, we provide 20 minutes of collective worship a day enable pupils to explore their own beliefs and consider spiritual and moral issues.

The act of daily collective worship will be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character; however, other faiths and cultures will be represented.

Collective worship provides the opportunity for the school to meet together in a variety of contexts and enables participating pupils and staff to consider events of the world and appreciate the rich tapestry of human experience and existence.

This policy outlines how the school implements collective worship within our daily routines, including the aims of collective worship and how pupils can be withdrawn.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- The Education Reform Act 1988
- The Education Act 1993
- DfE (1994) 'Religious Education and Collective Worship'
- DfE (2012) 'Religious education (RE) and collective worship in academies and free schools'
- DfE (1994) Religious education and collective worship (Circular 1/94)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- RE Policy
- Guest Speaker Policy
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Education Policy

2. Definition of collective worship

'Worship' is not defined in the legislation; therefore, for the purpose of this policy, **"collective worship"** reflects an act which is special or separate from ordinary school activities. It is a time when individuals come together, and reverence or veneration is paid to a divine being or power.

To take part in collective worship implies more than a passive attendance, such that it should have the ability to elicit responses from pupils even though they may not feel able to actively identify in the act of worship on a particular occasion.

3. Aims of collective worship

Collective worship aims to:

- Provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God.
- Enable pupils to consider spiritual and moral issues, as well as explore their own beliefs.
- Encourage participation and response via active involvement or through listening and participating in the worship offered.
- Develop a spirit of community and an understanding of individuals with other beliefs.
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each individual's life stance, whether religious or not.
- Promote a common ethos and shared values.
- Reinforce positive attitudes.
- Provide pupils with the opportunity to plan, lead or contribute to discussions on key themes and topics, e.g. morality.
- Provide a peaceful environment to enable stillness, prayer and reflection.
- Help pupils to develop an awareness of their community and the spirit of helping others.

4. Organisation and planning

The school will implement collective worship in line with advice given by the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Every pupil will participate in the act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn in line with the Right to withdraw section of this policy.

Worship will be of a broadly Christian character; however, there will be influences from other religions found in the local community.

The headteacher is responsible for creating the agenda for collective worship in discussion with the governing board.

The act of worship will be held for **20 minutes** **daily** in the **school hall**.

The content of all acts of collective worship will be considered to ensure suitability and relevance to pupils of all ages and backgrounds.

The headteacher will establish a timetable for collective worship to make sure progression from each session is carried on to the next, as well as to ensure that learning is practically applied by pupils to their lives inside and outside of school.

The school may invite visitors or guest speakers to speak during collective worship, in accordance with the timetabled theme.

Guest speakers will be required to adhere to the school's Guest Speaker Policy and Guest Speaker Risk Assessment during their visit.

5. Implementation

The school will promote rich and meaningful experiences of collective worship that are appropriate to pupils' needs, ages and interests by:

- Presenting displays that promote and enhance spiritual ideas and thoughts.
- Encouraging pupils to reflect and contemplate on their thoughts, feelings and beliefs.
- Using artefacts, secular stories, resources, music, art, drama, and guest speakers to engage pupils' interest.
- Involving pupils in different experiences of worship, e.g. silence, prayer, rituals and shared or written prayers.

The school will take into account pupils of different ages and abilities when delivering the collective worship programme.

The school will arrange for learning mentors to assist pupils with SEND if the need arises, in accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

6. Right to withdraw

Parents will have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship and will not be required to provide a reason for doing so.

Parents will be encouraged to discuss their decision with the **headteacher** following a request of withdrawal in terms of:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the pupil taking part in.
- The practical implications of their withdrawal.
- Whether the parent will require notice in advance of such worship, and if so, what period of notice is preferred.

Alternative arrangements will be put in place for pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship.

Alternative arrangements may involve religious worship relevant to their particular faith or denomination provided that:

- The effect of the alternative provision would not replace the denominational collective worship with that of the statutory, non-denominational worship.
- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school.

The alternative arrangements will be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum.

7. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an **annual** basis by the headteacher in agreement with the governing board.

This policy will be evaluated in accordance with feedback from questionnaires and class discussions.

Any changes made to this policy and the collective worship programme will be communicated to all members of staff.

The scheduled review date for this policy is **January 2027**.