



# St John's First School

## Collective Worship Policy

April 2026

**Let us love one another, for love comes from God.** 1 John 4:7

### Policy Statement

At St John's First School, the daily act of collective worship is viewed as an integral and important part of school life as we promote our school values of friendship, courage and respect.

It is a time where we come together to share our love of God and celebrate our achievements together. The worship of the school is based on promoting the Christian, British and school values which permeate the ethos of the school. As such, the contributions of staff, pupils, church clergy and other visitors are valued highly.

### Values Education

We blend Christian teaching and Values Education in order to create opportunities for children to develop physically, emotionally, personally, socially, mentally and intelligently so that their self-esteem and well-being is sound and supported by ever growing emotional intelligence; leading to an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as young citizens. The systematic introduction of a common values vocabulary allows children to access moral and ethical thought.

### Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement stated in the 1988 Education Reform Act 6 (1) and 9 (3), which states the need for each child to attend a daily act of worship either as a whole school, class or group. Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship either partially or wholly. Any parents wishing to do so should contact the Headteacher. Staff also have the right to withdraw from leading and taking part in worship.

### Collective Worship at St John's First School is expected to:

- Be inspirational and inclusive. It should engage all learners and they should be able to talk about the impact it makes on their relationships and on life in the school.
- Regularly provide opportunities for pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world through the teachings of Jesus and the Bible, and develop understanding of the Trinity and relate these to the school's core Christian values.

- Provide an opportunity for children to worship God and celebrate each unique individual made in the image of God.
- Enable children to explore their own beliefs, allow reflection and response to fundamental questions of life and those things that are of concern and value to all.
- Encourage participation and response with opportunities to celebrate and give thanks for different achievements and special occasions including festivals.
- Provide members of the school community with the opportunity to praise and reach out to God, experience stillness and quiet, respond to Christian language and symbolism and experience a variety of forms of prayer and meditation, to experience and understand the cycle of the church year.
- Develop in children a sense of community spirit, promote a common ethos, with shared values, and to reinforce positive attitudes.
- Contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children and foster a concern for the needs of others.
- Help children begin to understand the nature and purpose of worship providing a foundation for a mature understanding and practice of worship in the future.
- Help learners learn to think beyond themselves, by developing an awareness of issues in the wider world, and encourage them to be active and engaged in advocating concerns of justice, peace, care of creation and concern for the poor.
- Provide foundations for making wise decisions in the conduct of relationships and life choice

### Organisation

We hold a daily act of collective worship each morning, usually led by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or a member of the teaching staff. This can be a whole-school, key stage or as a class. A representative from St John's church or other representatives from different local churches leads worship once a week with the whole school, usually in the church. In addition there are special services throughout the year including Harvest, Christmas and Easter. There are special class acts of worship led by the children during the spring and summer terms to which their parents are invited. Year 4, who transfer to middle schools at the end of the year, lead a special leavers' service at the end of the summer term. Parents, Local school committee members and members of the school and Trust community are welcome to attend.

We conduct Collective Worship in an engaging and respectful way. We tell children that it is a time for calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be questioning and thoughtful, to listen carefully to the teachings, and to participate in responses, prayer and song. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, and sometimes candles or other visual stimuli, to focus the attention of the children.

Our current worship schedule is as follows:

Monday - Whole school worship led by the Headteacher

Tuesday - Worship through song

Wednesday - Class worship which includes further opportunities to discuss and reflect upon Monday's whole school worship.

Thursday - Church Worship

Friday - Celebration worship

### Planning of Collective Worship

We take the themes of our Collective Worship from the values and traditions of the Christian faith, and we observe the festivals and mark the events of the Christian calendar. We plan on a half term basis using either Values for Life, a Diocesan resource, to promote the teaching of Christian values or Roots and Fruits, a values based collective worship resource. The 'Heartsmart' resources are also used to supplement and support the school PSHE programme. The Worship leader discusses with the church the termly themes and provides a timetable, usually based around the identified value.

Our Celebration worship on a Friday reflects the achievements and learning of the children. Teachers choose two children to receive a 'Sparkle Certificate' each week which is linked to our Christian values and school charter. Celebration worship provides an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school and also plays an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued, unique and special.

### Prayer and Reflection

Collective worship always includes a time of prayer and/or reflection. A range of prayers are used including the Lord's Prayer, prayers written by the children and others. They are often linked to the content of the worship. They are introduced in an appropriate manner with a short time of quiet. At the beginning of the whole school worship led by the Headteacher, a time of reflection and quiet is encouraged alongside an image of a candle that is displayed with the prayer in the hall (where it has been written beforehand).

### Visits and Visitors

As part of the curriculum, St John's First School ensures that appropriate visits are made available for the children in order for them to have first-hand experiences and gain a greater understanding of various places of worship.

Visitors to the school are welcomed and enabled to share their experiences and knowledge – their role is to educate, not to evangelise. St. John's church is our most valuable and frequently used resource, with the whole school attending and contributing towards annual Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Leavers' Services. Visits to Wimborne Minster for events such as 'Experience Easter' are also very important to us.

### Equal Opportunities

All pupils, regardless of academic ability, age, gender and ethnic origin, have access to a wide range of appropriate activities to support their understanding of R.E. At each Key Stage, the teacher will draw from other religions as appropriate to acknowledge and celebrate the religious beliefs of the children within the class.

Reviewed: April 2026

Reviewed by Local School Committee:

To be reviewed: April 2028