



Collective Worship Policy

St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School

‘One body in Christ’



Policy last reviewed:	March 2022
Policy due for renewal:	March 2023

Trust Mission Statement

Excellence Together: We strive to work, as a family of Catholic schools, to secure outstanding outcomes for all our students.

Uniqueness: We recognise all of our students as being made in God's image. By learning in a community founded on Gospel values, we ensure that they are prepared for their lives ahead.

Education for All: We ensure that our students, of all abilities and backgrounds, are supported to achieve their very best.

Rationale

Collective 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

Aims

It is the policy of the school to help children grow in their Faith and is based on the teaching and traditions of the Catholic Church. We aim to encourage all children in our care to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer. Our schools are worshipping communities.

Collective Worship in Bedford Catholic Schools aim to provide opportunities for all children and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Collective Worship

Collective Worship in our schools is practised in various ways:

- whole school acts of Worship
- year group or key stage acts of Worship
- classroom prayers throughout the school day
- Celebrations of the Eucharist

Leading Worship

Any member of staff in school may be asked to take part in or to plan and lead collective worship. Children are taught and encouraged to plan and lead collective worship appropriate to their age.

Planning and Content of Worship

Collective worship is planned following the structure of the liturgical seasons of the Church's year, the RE programme, feast days and other significant dates e.g. School feast day, harvest family fast day. A variety of prayer styles are used appropriate to the age, stage of development and the occasion. Parents and parishioners are invited to participate in some celebrations

Prayer

Helping children to pray is a fostering of a relationship with God. We support children on their journey in faith. Children are given experience of personal and communal prayer by being encouraged to speak in their own way to God and by being introduced gradually to formal words for prayer at the appropriate level.

We celebrate our relationship with God throughout the school day therefore prayer cannot be confined to acts of collective worship. Throughout the RE programme and time with the class teacher, prayer builds upon the children's natural spontaneous expressions of joy, wonder, awe, concern, thanks, sorrow, sadness, anger, fear and disappointment evoked through their growing awareness of themselves, others and the world around them. We are aware of children's need for expression through speech, song, movement, art, writing and silence. We are aware of the importance of giving the children a focus for prayer in each classroom and whenever acts of worship are held.

Prayer Tables

Prayer tables are clearly visible and accessible within some areas of our schools. Liturgical colours are used for any cloth or drape, e.g. purple during Advent and Lent, white / gold at Christmas, white / gold at Easter, red at Pentecost and green for ordinary time. Prayer tables often include something which reflects the topic e.g. baptismal candle, advent wreath, palm cross during Lent and / or other appropriate objects eg. a cross, crucifix or statue. They may also contain a candle and a bible or religious storybook, open at a relevant page.

Staff Prayer

Staff pray together at meetings and briefings. Governors pray together before their meetings. Thus offering the whole enterprise into the hands of God. It is an expectation in all schools that teaching and classroom support staff are present at and participate in all acts of collective worship to ensure that they are fully part of the school worship community and can actively support students in their prayer and faith journeys.

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily act of worship offered for all children.

Our schools have a strong tradition of being fully inclusive, learning respect for the faith and beliefs of all in our schools.

Collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. In our schools they usually form part of the same gathering. 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. Responsibility for Collective Worship lies with the Directors of the Trust, the Executive Principal and Head Teachers.

All parents/carers have a right to withdraw from collective worship.

CES Guidance - <http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/religious-education/item/1003584-collective-worship>

Policy Monitoring and Review

Both Staff and Governors have agreed this policy. It is reviewed by the Staff and Governors every two years.