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Collective Worship Policy

Blue Coat CE Secondary School

Policy Date: January 2024

Review Date: January 2026

Document History

Version	Status		Date	Author	Summary Changes
V1			January 2022	Neil Phipps	Updated content re. 1. Practice & 4. Chaplaincy. General grammar amendments.
V2			January 2024	David Bedford	Altered details for prize giving in section 2.

Introduction

At Blue Coat Church of England School, our vision is “Living life in all its fullness”. We exist to equip our students to ‘live life in all its fullness’ by providing excellent education, which is distinctively Christian and inclusive of all. At the heart of this education are the values of Care, Hard Work, Respect, Integrity and Servanthood, working Together for the good of all individuals, the school and wider communities. The conviction that we are created and sustained by God for living together in families and communities is at the root of our dedication to educating for life together.

Guiding Principles

At Blue Coat Church of England School and Music College we are guided by our Core ‘CHRIST’ Values: Care, Hard Work, Respect, Integrity, Servanthood and Togetherness. As well as these, we aim to promote Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural growth in a wide-ranging and thoughtful way by providing opportunities in the curriculum and during tutor times for reflection, discussion and worship.

At Blue Coat we believe that Collective Worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in the life of the school. Our caring ethos and our vision ‘Living Life in All Its Fullness’ reflect this, and we are committed to the development of the whole child academically, socially and spiritually. This is demonstrated in our approach to Collective Worship and we ensure that we have set times in the school day and calendar year to facilitate this. We recognise that although we are a Church of England School, our pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and traditions, including those of other faiths or none, and so our approach to Collective Worship across the year allows pupils to develop a reflective approach to life and apply these principles to their own backgrounds as appropriate.

It is a legal requirement that the school provides a daily act of worship for all pupils. The regulations are set out in The Education Act 1944 as amended by the Education Reform Act 1988. The Act states that collective worship organised by the school is to be ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.’ For those acts that are broadly Christian, the main emphasis should be on the broad traditions of Christian belief. The Education Reform Act 1988: Religious Education and Collective Worship (para. 34)

As a Church of England School, our worship is of a Christian character and built upon the beliefs and practices of the Anglican tradition. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents which draw together the distinctively Christian nature of our school:

- Church of England Vision for Education 2016
- RE Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools 2019
- Valuing All God’s Children 2017
- SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools) Evaluation Schedule 2018

1. Aims

- a) Collective Worship takes the form of many different expressions within school. Worship is central to the life of the school and makes an important contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and adults.

- b) Collective Worship is seen as being part of the total educational experience of pupils.
- c) Collective Worship at Blue Coat is intended to provide a caring and supportive environment for pupils and adults to:
- Reflect on the 'big questions of life'
 - Learn more of the teachings and expression of the Christian Church
 - Have opportunity to explore their own beliefs and respond accordingly
 - Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals, and of others within the school and wider community
 - Gain and grow in understanding the feelings of others
 - Gain knowledge and skills in order to express themselves appropriately
 - Deepen their sense of wonder of the world
 - Respond to a wide variety of religious and spiritual stimuli
 - Acknowledge diversity and difference
 - Promote co-operative school values
 - Celebrate achievements and give thanks
 - Reflect our Anglican foundation

2. Practice

At Blue Coat, our daily Collective Worship consists of a weekly Assembly (typically consisting of a Biblical message, reading, prayer and reflection), a dedicated 'Worship Works' tutorial provided by the School Chaplain, and three structured tutor sessions. Each day there is some form of reflection which typically consists of a Bible verse or moral teaching which can be used to stimulate thought and discussion. Additionally, tutor sessions address contemporary topics relevant to that week, allowing pupils to reflect on issues such as diversity, spiritual/moral questions and their place in the wider community. There is also the opportunity in tutor time to quietly reflect, read and celebrate achievements and house business.

As a Church of England School, we recognise the importance of the Anglican tradition and this acts as a guide to our worship, largely finding expression in the cycle of the Anglican liturgical year, and this is reflected in the themes of worship each half term. In addition, the worship calendar reflects other cultural and social dates, such as Black History Month, Remembrance Day or International Women's Day, and these are used as a starting point for worship when appropriate.

In recognition of our wide pupil demographic and in respect of those of other faiths, there will be times such as during PSHE and the taught RE curriculum when the shared values and heritage of other faiths will also be explored in order to celebrate diversity and encourage dialogue and understanding. This in no way diminishes our Christian foundation nor our openness to express our Christian beliefs in worship.

To reflect the Church of England's firm commitment to ecumenism, and to reflect the diversity of backgrounds from which our pupils come to the school, the expression of Christian Worship is diverse. This means that we actively seek out partner churches from diverse theological, social and ethnic backgrounds. When inviting visitors to the school to lead worship we aim to also reflect this diversity from the broader mainstream Christian traditions.

Communion Services take place at certain times during the year. These take place both off and on site in House or year groups and provide pupils with the opportunity to participate in the act of Communion. These are co-ordinated by the Chaplain and Senior Leader who oversees worship. These take place in local partner Church of England churches and also those of other traditions, such as the Methodist tradition or Assemblies of God. Where a Communion service is not led in the Anglican tradition, the person presiding will be properly authorised within their own denomination to take the Holy Communion service, and this is all made clear to those in attendance. This will also be with the approval of the Vicar of Holy Trinity as our Foundation Clergy Governor.

Pupils and staff who normally receive Holy Communion in their own church tradition are welcome to receive it in these services when invited to do so. Other pupils and staff are encouraged to receive a prayer of blessing.

Blue Coat gathers as a whole school at key points during the year. These usually take place at Coventry Cathedral and are customarily at Christmas and Easter. The Christmas Service traditionally is a more formal service involving the choir, formal readings and carols, and the Easter service allows for a wider expression of worship and celebration and follows no set format. At both, the aim is to provide the whole school community with the opportunity to experience Collective Worship in a setting which is of great significance to the city and the school.

In addition to these organised services, the Christian life of the school is also reflected in various other opportunities for Collective Worship, such as:

- The Commemoration Service at Holy Trinity Church which involves the whole of Year 7 and is a formal occasion to remember the founding of the school.
- The Celebration of Blue Coat and the Annual Prize Giving.
- Visiting speakers, mission groups and worship bands who put on special assemblies and concerts for pupils.

3. Content

- a) Pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in the worship life of the school. There are opportunities for pupils to become part of a worship band, join one of the groups running out of the Chaplaincy, or participate in services through readings or performances.
- b) All staff, including support staff, are encouraged to participate fully in the worship life of the school. As a Church of England School, it is an expectation that staff will participate in worship at a level which is relevant for themselves and sympathetic to the ethos of the school. There is no obligation on staff to lead prayers or worship if they are not comfortable with this, and in these cases pupils or the Chaplain can be utilised to support. It is however necessary for all staff to facilitate the directed worship activities.
- c) Collective Worship reflects the diversity of the school and the age of the participants; this is reflected in the variety of media and resources used and modern songs and Bible translations favoured for the majority (although not all) of the time.
- d) Worship must include some sense of peace, silence, reflection, prayer and biblical basis to allow pupils and staff to apply to their own lives.

- e) Acts of Collective Worship are invitational and parents / carers have a right to withdraw their children if they wish; however, it is reasonable for people to be encouraged to participate as per the traditions of any act of worship.
- f) We welcome a range of faith traditions to the school and recognise that this enhances the educational experience for all. We also acknowledge that many parents from other faiths send their children to Blue Coat precisely because of the importance of the spiritual life of the school, as well as the track record of academic excellence. There is therefore an expectation that all pupils attend these acts of Collective Worship as they are an integral part of our school Value of Togetherness. However, parents / carers have the right to withdraw full participation from acts of worship. In practice this does not mean withdrawal from the tutor programme or from assemblies as these have a wider purpose than solely Christian Worship. Where a parent / carer actively wishes their child to not attend services of worship such as those at the Cathedral, the school has an obligation to provide a suitable educational experience for that child during that time. This, however, would only be considered after the parent has had a meeting with the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher overseeing worship and this must be requested in writing. We have a strong tradition of inclusivity at Blue Coat and whilst we respect parental / carer wishes it is also important for pupils to feel valued and part of the wider school community.

4. Chaplaincy

- a) Blue Coat recognises the importance of having a Chaplain who has a huge contribution to the daily worship life of the school. Therefore, the Chaplaincy post has a Genuine Occupational Requirement that the Chaplain must be a Christian, and in good standing with their Christian Church. The school employs a Chaplain whose role is to support pupils and staff with their spiritual and emotional wellbeing and promote opportunities for worship and reflection. The Chaplain has a role central to the institution of the Anglican Church with the expectation that policy and practice be scrutinized in line with the Anglican foundation of the school and that the Chaplain be engaged in strategic conversations with the Headteacher, other key senior staff, foundation clergy and governors to input into the distinctive Christian character of the school at both strategic and operational levels.
- b) The Chaplain's responsibilities include being in charge of the Chaplaincy, from which run daily groups including small groups, open worship and prayer times, mentoring and informal counselling.
- c) The Chaplain leads the school's operational approach to Collective Worship and co-ordinates visitors involved in worship including mission teams, Gap Year students and outside speakers.
- d) In addition, the Chaplain represents the school leaders at networking events locally, regionally and nationally. Alongside the relevant Senior Leaders, the Chaplain is responsible for developing key church partnerships which reflect the Anglican foundation of the school and also the diverse demographic of the school community. These church partners, approved by the Headteacher and the Foundation Clergy Governor, are regularly invited into the school to support the delivery of Collective Worship and the work of the Chaplaincy.
- e) The Chaplain also supports staff through prayer, counselling and pastoral care, and leads acts of staff worship such as communions at key points in the school calendar.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

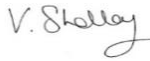
- a) It is the overall responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure acts of Collective Worship are effective, fit for purpose and conducted according to school policy.
- b) It is the responsibility of the Chaplain, Head of House and those delivering the weekly assembly that a relevant act of Collective Worship is included in the theme of the week. This means that there is a requirement for some form of prayer, reflection and reading to take place as well as a moral or foundational message. However, within this framework there is plenty of flexibility for the act of Collective Worship to be presented in a format which is most appropriate and engaging for the participants, using a range of techniques and media or visual aids. Assemblies are intended to be an essential opportunity for all pupils to hear the same message which broadens their horizons and reflects on the nature of faith and humanity whilst also reinforcing the culture and ethos of the school.
- c) It is the responsibility of the form tutor or staff delivering tutor time to ensure that a daily act of worship takes place. This will most often take the form of some sort of quiet, reflection or prayer, but may also be of other means according to the topic being addressed in that session. During dedicated 'Worship Works' time it is imperative that all members of the school community participate appropriately and that all tutors facilitate the material fully. It is not acceptable to regularly remove pupils from assembly or Worship Works without exceptional circumstances.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Members of the Senior Leadership Team are required to monitor the delivery of Collective Worship on a half termly basis and ensure consistency.

Reviewed by: David Bedford January 2024
Next Review Date: January 2026
Approved by Governors: February 2024

Signed:



Victoria Shelley
Headteacher



Charlotte Marten
Chair of Governors