

Collective Worship Policy

St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy



"Happy together in God's family,
we love, grow and learn."

Approved by:	Aoibheann Kelly-Edwards	Date: November 2021
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The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors to share this commitment.

Mission Statement

The graphic consists of a large blue header box with the text 'Happy together in God's family,' in white. Below this is a light blue box with black text explaining the mission. At the bottom are three vertical boxes, each with a blue header and a light blue body. The first box is titled 'we love,' and contains text about caring for each other. The second is titled 'grow' and contains text about physical, faith, and relationship growth. The third is titled 'and learn.' and contains text about learning about oneself and the community.

Happy together in God's family,

Happy together in God's family because we enjoy life and we are working together with family, friends, staff and the parish to make St. Mary's best place to learn and grow into responsible people of God.

we love,

We love because we care for each other, we are gentle and help each other, we respect each other, we forgive each other and work for the common good of all

grow

We grow physically, in our faith, in our attitudes and relationships and in our understanding.

We want to make the most of all our God given talents.

and learn.

We learn about ourselves, relationships and our faith.

We learn the skills and knowledge that we will need to take a full active part in our community.

The Nature of Collective Worship

We believe that Christian 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.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups). We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

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.

As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school's premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church.

In St. Mary's, as with any Voluntary Aided school, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship. However, given the importance of Collective Worship in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents are made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our St. Mary's

We endorse the belief that Collective Worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those whom form part of the worshipping community in church.
- Those for whom St. Mary's may be their first and only experience of church.
- Those from other Christian traditions – or no faith tradition.
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Worship in St. Mary's is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of St. Mary's life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Collective Worship

We believe that Collective Worship in our St. Mary's aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

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

Principles

All Acts of Worship in St. Mary's will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the St. Mary's and its Catholic character
- Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church. In order to do this, celebrations will:
 - be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
 - be short and appropriately paced (children's attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life i.e. 5-6 minutes for Key Stage 1 and 7-10 minutes for Key Stage 2);
 - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Collective Worship Organisation

Daily Acts of Worship vary in size, grouping and location. Our school's weekly organisation follows a similar pattern which is supplemented and adapted according to the Church's and St. Mary's' liturgical life and current local and world issues and news.

Monday: Whole school worship in the main hall led by a member of the senior leadership team. The focus of the worship is the gospel from the previous Sunday and the introduction of the weekly mission statement.

Tuesday: Class Worship using "Virtues to Live By" Acts of Worship resources as recommended by the Diocese of Leeds.

Wednesday: Key Stage Worship in Key Stage halls led by a teacher from relevant Key Stage. The focus of the worship is either current RE topics, Pray Together resources, relevant parables or CAFOD resources.

Thursday: Depending on the age of the children, this is either teacher led using the Pray Together book, or Pupil Led Class Worship in classrooms focusing on our virtue for the week or a theme chosen by the children in response to a need they have identified themselves. There is a progression in pupil involvement and preparation of class worship based on the Pupil Led Progression Document.

Friday: Mark 10 Mission Worship provided by the diocese. This is watched in classrooms via YouTube.

In addition to the above, Y2-Y6 celebrate Collective Worship with other schools in the trust over Zoom every half term.

The Planning, Content & Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship
- with reference to St. Mary's aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the St. Mary's and the wider community
- to develop in pupil's skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship

There is a progression in St. Mary's in children's contribution in planning and preparing for worship as detailed in the Pupil Led Progression document.

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded:

- on a liturgical planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources following format for Christian worship at all levels. Key Stage acts of worship are recorded in files held by Key Stage leaders (Each class teacher holds a record of acts of worship by their class). SLT workshops are recorded in files held by RE lead.

Monitoring & Evaluation

At least once a year the St. Mary's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

Resources

A number of resources are available to support acts of worship:

- each class has an acts of worship box
- there is a budget for resources available to each class
- a number of resources to support collective worship are stored in the resource area.

Each year there is an audit of resources throughout school.

Eucharist

Eucharist celebration in St. Mary's is a special part of our worship and is celebrated either as an individual class or as a whole school, as appropriate. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharist celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for children to participate will be maximised. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to 'The Welcome Table. Planning Masses with Children' which contains the complete text of the Church's 'Directory for Masses with Children' as a basis for our practice.

We believe that children are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach. Children's understanding of the mass is developed as they progress through the school. In Key Stage One children are introduced to simple responses for use in the mass. This is developed in Key Stage Two where a greater understanding of the parts of the mass is encouraged.

Typically, masses are celebrated:

- As a whole school in church with the parish on days of Holy Days of obligation
- As a whole school at the beginning of the school year
- As a whole school with parents / carers at the end of each term

Whole school masses are planned by the collective worship co-ordinator in close consultation with the parish priest. Parishioners and families are always encouraged and welcomed into school to share our masses. Class masses are planned by the class teacher with the support of the Collective Worship Co-ordinator.

At various stages in the school year, we also celebrate themed 'Family Masses' on a Sunday in Church. This helps strengthen the relationship between our school and our parish.

Non Eucharistic Services

A whole school service for Ash Wednesday is held in school with the children given the opportunity to receive ashes. Children are given the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation during Advent and Lent.

Prayer in the Classroom

Prayer in the classroom is an essential part of the spiritual growth and development of the children. Children join together at the start and end of each day for a time of prayer and reflection. Each classroom has a quality prayer focal point.

The Co-ordinator for Collective Worship

The role of the designated co-ordinator is included in Appendix 1.

Monitoring & Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole St. Mary's staff and Governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role. The next review will take place September 2024.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship:

General

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship which may at times form part of the St. Mary's development plan
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that Collective Worship takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the Governors and Headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing on occasions, an Act of Collective Worship
- Informing the head teacher of standards and developments in Collective Worship

Communication

- Communicating to members to the St. Mary's community the significance and content of Acts of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with the Governors and Headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Collective Worship
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of St. Mary's policy regarding Collective Worship
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre

Professional development / ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Collective Worship including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting effectively

Appendix 2

Diocesan Statement on Collective Worship

It is the responsibility of every Catholic school to provide for all its members a vital experience of liturgy, worship and prayer which:

- names and celebrates God present and active in authentic human experience
- to assist pupils in developing their relationship with God, creation, and the community of the Church
- to witness to the community and the wider world

In order to ensure that the Collective Worship experienced within the school is a relevant, meaningful and positive contribution to the religious, spiritual and moral development of all members of the community.

Collective worship in our school will be:

- properly planned
- adequately resourced
- recorded
- monitored
- evaluated