

Pennington C of E Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

September 2025

Inclusive † **Invitational** † **Inspiring**

1. Background: Collective Worship Legislation and Guidance

All maintained schools must provide daily Collective Worship for all registered pupils and promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development.

In community schools, Collective Worship must be ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’.¹

In Church schools, the requirement is instead to reflect the Anglican status of the school as expressed in its trust deed. This means that every act of Collective Worship at Pennington Church of England School is distinctively Christian.

Best practice in delivering Collective Worship² requires it to be:

- **Inclusive:** so that is accessible and meaningful to all, whatever their faith or none.
- **Invitational:** so that there is no compulsion to ‘do anything’ just a warm offer to be present and engage with integrity.
- **Inspiring:** so that it motivates pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and wider community’s behaviour and actions.

2. Collective Worship and Vision:

Collective Worship is a special time of each day at Pennington School. It is the time when we gather together, pause and reflect as a whole school. On Monday we meet as a whole school, on Tuesday we worship with music and on Friday to celebrate together. On a Wednesday we gather together as a class/classes to look at world news. On Thursdays KS 1 children worship together and KS2 meet in the hall for worship.

Collective Worship is an expression of our Vision and contributes significantly to the flourishing of all. It offers pupils the chance to share and celebrate one another and how we can develop and work together ‘God gave us each different gifts, together we can do great things’. This develops the opportunity for children to flourish in togetherness, friendship, celebrating and valuing one another in all our differences and the opportunity to develop and grow in learning and play. It enables pupils and adults to develop spiritually, emotionally and socially, asking, reflecting on and answering big questions about meaning and our responsibilities as part of a global community including, *‘Who am I?’ ‘Why am I here’ ‘How then shall I live?’*

2. Invitational Worship and Spiritual Development:

Our word ‘Worship’ comes from an Old English word meaning to acknowledge or attribute worth. If we choose to worship, we are acknowledging how and why God is worthy of praise and thanks. It is a personal experience which depends on an individual’s attitude. Worship which is directed by, or insisted upon, by someone else is not, in fact, worship.

At our school, worship is **invitational**. All are **offered** the chance to worship daily, including through prayer and through song. Collective Worship does not pre-suppose shared beliefs or convictions. It does not seek a uniform response from pupils or adults.

Through our Religious Education (RE) curriculum, our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum and encouraging children to take a breath... take a moment whether that be in collective worship, RE or any other time in the school day and beyond. This allows children, staff and wider school community time for thought, personal response, asking big questions and responding, feeling, wondering and sensing all the world has to offer. We support pupils in developing their own personal convictions. Our school offers pupils a safe space in which to explore their feelings, thoughts and beliefs.

Every day, all members of our school community are taken to the threshold of worship. Whether or not to cross it is for the **individual to decide**.

3. How Collective Worship is made special:

We take the time to make our Collective Worship time special every day by:

- Creating an atmosphere which is conducive to worship. The candle song is usually played as children enter the hall (it asks for peace around the world) and the candle has already been lit. This creates a calm and quiet atmosphere
- Timetabling Collective Worship at a suitable time so it is not disrupted by other activities occurring on the school site. Collective worship at Pennington occurs at the end of the day when we can all gather together to reflect upon the day together.
- Ensuring every member of the school family is able to be present. Pupils at this school are not withdrawn from Collective Worship for interventions or 'catch-up' time.
- **Choosing themes and content which are appropriate to our school context, reflect our vision and are pitched appropriately for those present.**
- **Inspiring** each member of our school community to reflect on their own behaviours and how they might make a change for their own sake or for the sake of others. Allowing children and staff to flourish and develop spiritually.

4. Aims of Collective Worship:

We aim to make every act of Collective Worship meaningful, engaging and relevant to those present, whether they **choose to** worship or not. As a Church of England school, our worship is predominantly Christian in nature.

However, at this school, we ensure that **everyone, whatever their faith or none, can take part with integrity**. For example, a Bible story illustrating Jesus' teachings (on loving one another, on caring for the vulnerable, on generosity or any other theme) will regularly be shared. The message of that Christian story is unpacked and made relevant to everyone in attendance so that **all** may be **inspired** by it.

Collective Worship sessions offer rich opportunities for teaching and encouraging reflection. At this school, we have the following aims for acts of Collective Worship:

- To offer pupil-centred sessions which either reflect pupils' experiences or appropriately expand and broaden them (content).
- To provide variety (in terms of content, the ways in which pupils are encouraged to interact, the use of music etc) to appeal to the preferences of **as many pupils as possible**.
- To afford pupils and adults space to **reflect on the spiritual, acknowledging the capacity of our pupils to seek meaning beyond the material and physical**.
- To allow time to respond to social and moral issues and the questions which relate to life as a global citizen.
- To provoke in those present a sense of **meaning, wonder, joy and celebration or thanksgiving**.
- To enable pupils and adults to explore the use of **silence for stillness reflection, meditation, exploring inner thoughts and feelings and, as appropriate, prayer**.
- To **heighten pupils' awareness of questions relating to the ultimate mysteries of life and to explore the responses that have been made to these questions by people of faith**.
- To develop an understanding of how the teachings of Jesus and the Bible are relevant to each of us, **whatever our personal convictions**.
- To provide **opportunities for pupils and staff to explore and celebrate the Christian values on which the school is based**.

- To enable the school community to explore a range of forms of worship and recognise the rich traditions of the Anglican church (locally, nationally and around the world) and in the Cumbrian context, those of our Methodist, Salvation Army and United Reformed Church Ecumenical Partners.
- To develop an understanding of the Christian belief in a God of three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

5. Use of Music

The use of music at Pennington School is very important. We use music which reflects our school’s vision. Music plays an important part in developing our pupils as **respectful and loving global citizens, and in helping them develop spiritually**. We introduce our pupils to a diverse range of musical styles and genres to help them find the music which is most helpful to them for reflection or worship. We also represent (through video) a diverse make-up of cultures and backgrounds to help our pupils to make sense of the rich global musical community and how music is used in worship across the globe.

Music is chosen carefully to avoid asking pupils to declare a faith in God they may not have. Some of our music contains elements which are confessional (they declare a faith in God or desire to worship). However, where such songs are used, we explain what the lyrics mean to Christians in order that pupils (and staff) may decide, for themselves, whether to sing them. We take the time to explain that some songs, sung by Christians, involve the artists singing to God. However, the words of such songs lend themselves to our school family choosing to sing to whomever they wish – God, a family member, a friend. Often the lyrics are displayed on the screen at the front of the hall and children can choose whether to sing or listen.

Some worship songs used are great for music-based learning opportunities (regardless of whether the lyrics are reflective of pupils’ beliefs) and, as such, have great worth as a teaching tool. An example is, *Our God is a Great Big God*. Whether or not pupils agree with the sentiment of the lyrics, they can benefit greatly from the opportunity for teaching rhythm (semi-breve, minim, crochet, quaver). By using worship songs for more than just their lyrics, they are made **invitational** and relevant to all.

6. Organisation

An act of Collective Worship takes place daily¹ and usually lasts between 15-30 minutes.

The whole school shares collective worship in the hall three times per week this includes; headteacher or clergy led worship (which will often be linked to the schools chosen Christian value for half term, a world issue or event in the Christian or world calendar), a celebration worship **rejoicing in our different gifts and sharing our wonderful achievements both in and outside of school** and a singing worship including reflection and prayer. Two collective worships per week are shared in individual classes or the joining of two classes together to share Picture News and pupil-lead worship with the Whoosh Bible/Niscu Eden.

We have regular OPAL play assemblies and link them to God’s world and taking care of our environment. Again we include opportunity for taking a breath and taking a moment and also include prayers.

Day	Time	Nature of Worship	Leader
Monday	2.45	Whole School: Often Christian Value	Headteacher / Clergy
Tuesday	2.45	Whole School Music/Singing	Music Subject Lead
Wednesday	2.45	Class collective worship -Picture News	Class Teachers
Thursday	2.45	Class collective worship- pupil lead using Whoosh Bible classes rotate leading this (KS2 – in the hall) Niscu Eden (KS1- classrooms or other location)	Class Teachers/ Pupils
Friday	2.45	Whole school celebration- Special Mention	Headteacher and Pupils

Visitors play an important part in the life of our school and contribute to acts of worship. We invite members of charitable and local organisations who offer their expertise to the school eg; Air ambulance, Lindsay Hampshire-Landing on your Paws (compassion understanding and respect for all living things), Our local PCSO.

Collective worship may occur at different times with visitors, e.g. Rev Madi from Ulverston Parish Church (who visits once a half term) or Rev Grace (the local Methodist minister) Emma Taplin, Open the Book who visits approx every month.

At Harvest Festival time, Christmas, Easter and to say 'goodbye' to our Year 6 Leavers, the whole school, and our family and community, visits the church for an act of worship led jointly by the pupils and often with a church representative or foundation governor. We decorate the church for special occasions such as Christmas and take part in the community services by collecting for the local foodbank for Harvest and our choir sings hymns in the Christmas Carol service.

7. Content

We follow a values-based yearly plan for Collective Worship, focussing on one of our core Christian values each half term. Our school values are; Resilience, Compassion, Honesty, Forgiveness, Patience, Thankfulness, Love, Respect and Hope. The order changes on a cycle and links to celebrations and special times or reflects the Christian calendar or local and international events throughout the year where possible. Sometimes it is relevant to use a theme or base collective worship on personal experiences and situations which have arisen in school to nurture children.

However, planning always includes:

- an explanation of how the current value helps us to live out our vision
- links to the Church year
- relevant Bible stories
- reference to relevant world faiths/festivals/celebrations occurring
- relevant links with PSHE, SMSC and British Values or any other part of the school curriculum
- suggestions for activities or opportunities for children's participation through role play, drama, discussion, reflection stations, singing etc
- ideas for following up whole-school worship either in Key Stages or in the classroom
- suggestions for reflection stations relevant to the theme of the half term.

Crucially, our planning also reflects the input of the pupils through pupil voice and school council meetings.

8. Training

Any leader of worship (pupil or adult) at this school has access to training to support them in their role. In particular, through training, we ensure a consistent approach to the use of **inclusive** and **invitational** language in all sessions. *Staff training takes place throughout the year in response to staff discussions, pupil voice and development; Inset training key messages.* We worked with Ruth Huston in Feb 25 to begin to explore what spirituality means at Pennington. Laura Watson delivered RE training to ensure teaching includes the three lenses in Oct 25. Diocesan conference is attended annually by Headteacher and RE lead.

9. Visitors

Visitors play an important part in the life of our school and regularly contribute to acts of Collective Worship. We are very grateful to those people in our local community who give their time to lead worship in our school. Pupils benefit greatly from the varied experiences they provide.

A copy of this policy, together with planning for the current half term is shared with all visitors who lead Collective Worship.

10. Evaluation of Collective Worship

The effectiveness and impact of Collective Worship is monitored termly. Monitoring involves the whole school community. It is led by RE lead. Pupil voice based on each collective worship throughout the week is conducted

once a term. Collective worship is also discussed in each school council meeting. Staff feedback is discussed termly during staff meetings. Governors are invited to worship and church events and discussed at governors meeting.

The views of pupils are fed back to the Headteacher, governors, RE Lead and Staff and their views inform future planning.

11. Right of Withdrawal

Given the **inclusive** and **invitational** nature of our acts of Collective Worship outlined above, we hope that every parent or carer would wish their child to take part in this special part of the school day. However, parents do have the legal right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. There is no requirement to explain or give reasons for a request of withdrawal. However, if this is something you are considering for your child, you are warmly encouraged to contact the Headteacher, who will be happy to answer any questions you may have. We will, of course, supervise any pupil withdrawn from Collective Worship and keep him or her safe. However, please be aware that we are unable to provide alternative teaching.

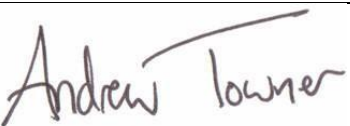
12. Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

13. References

¹ [Education Reform Act 1988, section 7\(1\); DfE Circular 1/94 \(1994\).](#)

² [Collective Worship in Church of England Schools Guidance Document: Inclusive Invitational Inspiring.](#)

Date ratified:	24 th May 2022
Signature of Chair of DBE:	
Review date:	May 2024: review to ensure consistent with the SIAMS Framework 2023
Next Review date:	May 2027