

## ENGLISH MARTYRS' CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY



Approved by:	Gemma Ellis	Date: 2024
Last reviewed on:	September 2024	
Next review due by:	January 2026	

English Martyrs' is a caring, Catholic school community, where everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. Here individuals are helped to achieve their full potential, through a child centred curriculum, which develops independent learning. This guiding philosophy stems from our mission statement.

### Introduction

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school 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. The law requires the act of worship be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' and under recent

Government instruction (Nov, 2014). We aim to include opportunities in Collective Worship for students to explore and learn about British Values and other faiths.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher.

### **The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of Our School**

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

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church
- Those for who school may be their first and only experience of church
- Those from other Christian traditions, or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds
- It will be an educational activity and religious experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain
- We will continue to foster and deepen the children's personal relationship with God our Father daily in prayer. We do this by helping them become aware of God's Presence in their lives and of His love for them by leading them to respond to Him in a manner suited to their age. This may be in one of the following ways:
  - o Prayer of silence
  - o Spontaneous prayer
  - o Praying through gesture or action
  - o Formal prayer

Prayer will not be confined to an act of worship. Children are encouraged to pray in the morning, at lunchtime and in the evening with other opportunities for reflection made available to all. Staff and Governors' meetings will also start with a time of prayer and all those present will be invited to share in whatever way they feel comfortable. Worship in this school is much more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. All new teaching staff to the school are trained on how to deliver collective worship.

### **The Aims of Collective Worship**

We believe that Collective Worship in our school 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 that are part of the Catholic tradition



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- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out to 'wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to'

### Principles

All acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity fundamental to the life of the school 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 personalise the experience
  - Be short and appropriately paced
  - Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

### Collective Worship Timetable

In order to achieve the above, Collective Worship is organised as follows:

**Monday** – Whole school introduction to the 'Word of the Week', delivered by members of the SLT/Chaplain.

**Tuesday** – Whole school Celebration of the Word. Delivered by pupils from across the school. The planning, teaching and delivery of this Celebration of the Word is supported by the school chaplain, a pastoral lead or member of the SLT.

**Wednesday and Thursday** – Classroom based collective worships; prayers, scripture stories, celebrations form the main aspect of these worships. One of these days is to be a planned Celebration of the Word.

**Friday** – Whole school Celebration of the Word – These include class celebrations, other faiths and national days of significance, for example Harvest Festival.

### Planning

*All Collective Worship planning is informed by 'Planning and Celebrating Prayer and Liturgy with Young People: A practical and pastoral expression of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory for Nottingham Diocese', the Nottingham Diocese's response to 'To Love You More Dearly: The Prayer and Liturgy Directory for Catholic Schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales'.*

Collective Worship in this school is planned following a structure with reference to the seasons of the church, significant (and liturgical) dates and the curriculum. Acts of Worship will be rooted in scripture; it will feature prominently, and connect directly with the theme.

It will relate to the school community in the light of the school's aims and mission. There will be flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community for example, charitable events, worldwide issues/events etc. We will aim to teach children the skills to enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship.

Children and adults will have numerous opportunities to use the planning format before delivering their Act of Worship. All plans for whole school celebrations to be completed and given to the RE SLT.



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Other plans, created by children, are to be kept in by the teacher and placed in their own Collective Worship folder.

### **Delivery**

An Act of Worship will always begin and end with the Sign of the Cross to remind students and staff that Christ is at the centre of our faith community and that we are in the presence of God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

In all Acts of Worship, it is important that an appropriate atmosphere representative of the liturgical season is established. Notices and announcements will all be given out before the Act of Worship begins and where possible the students will be dismissed in a prayerful and meaningful way to carry the spirit of the experience into their day.

Acts of Worship will be delivered with reverence and respect for the spiritual and liturgical content and, if appropriate, for the sacred spaces in which they are celebrated. Use of the altar/ focus is encouraged as a focal point.

### **Evaluation and Development**

Where possible, Acts of Worship will be evaluated, either informally through discussion and comment or using a liturgy evaluation sheet. These will be collated regularly in the School Evidence Folder.

Once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of pupils and whether it truly reflects the aims and mission of the school.

The style and nature of our Acts of Worship will continually be open to the needs of the community and be open to incorporating new ideas and experiences, whilst always staying true to our Catholic ethos.

### **Resources**

There are many resources available for planning Collective Worship.

Resources are available in the collective worship trolley, which is kept in the Light Room, and within each teacher's classroom. Resources in the Collective Worship trolley include: books, prayers, candles, cloths, crosses, praying hands, pebbles etc. Our RE SLT, with support from the Trust Lead Lay Chaplain, lead staff meetings, delivering new ideas, allowing access to the excellent resources.

Members from our Chaplaincy team are involved in monitoring and managing the Collective Worship trolley and we aim to update these resources as regularly as possible.

### **Mass and Class Liturgical Prayer**

Eucharistic celebrations form a very important part of our Collective Worship. Opportunities for children to plan and participate are maximised and parents and other members of the school and Parish communities are encouraged to attend. The dates of Whole school or House masses are published as part of the whole-school calendar at the beginning of the academic year.

The celebrations will take the following forms:



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- Whole school Masses, ensuring we celebrate Holy Days of Obligation when they occur during the school year.
- House Mass - prepared by the children and teachers for the children and parents. These masses are smaller than the whole school and give the children the opportunity to gather in their houses to worship, learn about their house Saint and pray for their school, family, friends etc.
- Whole school Celebration of the Word
- Class Celebration of the Word are held at least once a week. Celebration of the Word is prepared by the children and celebrated in their own class.
- Children will be encouraged to participate in school-lead Sunday masses

Collective worship celebrates and shows the very best of our faith and offers a tangible articulation of God's love for all regardless of our differences, cultures, or beliefs.



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