



Collective Worship

Approved by:	Standards Committee	Date: 08/07/2026
Last reviewed:	June 2026	
Next review due:	June 2027	

St Issey Church of England School

Last Updated July 2026

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Through our vision and values, Hope, Dignity, Community & Wisdom we will be strong and courageous for our school and community. Encouraging staff, parents, and the community to work collaboratively to support our children in pursuit of high standards within a happy, loving, and supportive environment, in the spirit of the school's Christian foundation.

‘Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

Policy Statement

In St Issey, worship is central to the life of the school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At St Issey, collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship, pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal

festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*¹) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.²

Church of England Guidance

Collective worship policy at St Issey draws on guidance from the Church of England³. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words, the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, “that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, is not relevant. Worship in St Issey School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The trustees of the school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

The right of withdrawal

In St Issey School there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non- religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents

¹ Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.School,

² “To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God”. William Temple (1881-1894)

³ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>

will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasion, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests, providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)

Guiding Principles

Collective worship in St Issey School aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by

Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.

- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well known Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and / or on the school website.

How Collective worship is organised

The organisation of Collective Worship should be listed here under the headings

Leadership

Teaching staff leads daily worship with the support of other staff, the Collective CREW and sometimes by a member of the clergy or local church, individual visitors or teams, e.g., Open the Book.

An information leaflet for visitors is produced by the Diocese, which outlines the expectations for how their collective worship should be organised

Planning

Worship will also take account of the major festivals of the Church year and the curriculum plan of the school year. The act of Worship will follow a recognisable format. The worship will have a clear focus and will often involve pupil participation. Elements used in the worship may include music, listening to stories, bible readings, and other relevant passages, drama, artefacts, and other materials. Opportunities for stillness, silence, and reflective prayer should be offered to think about the key thoughts and the Bible's message. All worship should end with a thought or a question for children to ponder, to encourage them to act following the worship session. Our school prayer will form a daily part of our worship (read by the Collective Crew). The act of Worship will be closed by the candle being blown out, and the person leading worship will say, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." And the pupils respond, "In the name of Christ, Amen."

Organisation

The worship should last approximately 15 mins. The collective worship team will have set up the reflective space. The act of worship will be started by lighting a candle and the person saying "The Lord is with you" and the children responding 'and also with you.' There will be songs in appropriate places, which will, whenever possible, relate to the theme of the worship. There will be a quiet time for reflection, singing, or prayer. Prayers may be taken from a variety of resources, including teachers' resources or children's work. Regular use of the Lord's Prayer, whether said or sung.

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body ensures that Collective Worship is undertaken in line with our policy. The headteacher and the senior leadership team lead and monitor collective worship in line with this policy. Clergy and church partners - lead or support collective worship. Teaching and support staff - lead and take part in collective worship. Pupils - Take part in daily acts of collective worship. Parents and carers - take part in certain collective worship events across the year. Visitors - lead or take part in Collective Worship in line with this policy

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. This includes accessing training offered through the Diocese and through the Flourishing Schools Programme.

Monitoring and evaluation

Collective Worship will be monitored by the RE Lead, Headteacher, Collective Worship Governor, and MAT.

Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.

Other Useful Documents: (can be found on the diocesan website⁴)

Date of last review: July 2026

Headteacher signed: Chris Parham

Date: July 2026

Chair of the Board signed: Pat McGovern

Date: July 2026

⁴ <https://exeter.anglican.org/schools/christian-ethos-siams/collective-worship/>