



St Mary's College Policy for Collective Worship

Approved by the Governors of the Curriculum Teaching and Learning Committee

April 2012

Mission Statement

“Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbour as you love yourself” (Mk 12:30-31)

St. Mary's R.C. Sports College exists to help parents and carers to educate young people spiritually, morally, physically and academically as well as possible.

We aim to be a truly Christian community, where our relationships are built on encouragement, concern, respect, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Our religious life is rooted in the faith, practice and moral teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

Each person in our community is specially valued and has an important part to play in making sure that we live out our mission.

The Nature of Collective Worship.

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 a relationship with Him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.¹

¹ It is important to be clear about our use of terminology when dealing with the whole area of 'Collective Worship' in schools. 'Collective Worship' is a term used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase we use readily in a Catholic context. 'Prayer' and 'Liturgy' are terms more commonly used in our context and are explored in greater depth in the guidelines.

Legal Requirements.

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils.² (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 with notices 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 should be 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.

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 whom 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 or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Collective Worship.

We believe that Collective Worship in our school aims to provide opportunities 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

² 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 need to be 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.

- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- 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 to an appropriate size wherever possible to help to personalise the experience;
 - be of appropriate length & pace
 - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

The organisation of Collective Worship

Most acts of Collective worship take place in assembly

Assemblies are

- A gathering together of the community or sub section of the community
 - A Whole Year Group
 - A Half Year Group
 - A House
 - A Form Group
- A 'collective act of worship' – they should therefore include prayer and reflection and ideally symbols and signs e.g. A crucifix, an icon, a candle etc.
- An opportunity for Spiritual Development – which can be enhanced with the use of music, poetry, art etc.
- An opportunity for pupils to express themselves spiritually in drama, dance, song etc.
- A time when pupils can share their talents to enhance the Spiritual experiences of others
- Vitally important ways for our community to root each day in Prayer – In Class Assemblies this is perhaps more challenging, but the sign of the cross and the morning offering are a good way to do this. More variety can be helpful however, and giving a prayer e.g. the Lord's Prayer a theme from current world events, or the intentions of members of the class, can be powerful.

In addition, Services of Reconciliation are provided for all pupils and Sixth Form students through the work of the R.E. Department and the Chaplaincy team

The celebration of the Eucharist

A special 'Founders' Day' Mass for all the school is celebrated on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and a whole school Mass (open air when possible) is celebrated on the feast of Ss Peter and Paul and also on the final day of the school year.

Mass is celebrated in the College Chapel each Tuesday and Thursday lunchtime during the week.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
 - to develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At least once a year the school'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 range of resources are available in each Year team and through the Chaplaincy to support collective worship. The main hall, social areas and the Chapel are all well suited to liturgy and worship

Retreats & Reflection Days and further opportunities

- There is an annual day of Reflection for all pupils in all years
- Various residential retreats are offered throughout the year
- An annual Youth Pilgrimage to Lourdes is held during the Summer term
- The college provides the opportunity for young people to attend the annual Diocesan Youth Service gatherings of 'Springboard' and Youth Sunday

- All students attend the annual Carol Service in the Marist Church
- Opportunities for organised prayer and reflection are provided at other times by the Chaplaincy team following the rhythm of the Liturgical Year as follows:

- Church Unity in January
- Morning prayer during Advent and Lent
- Student led lunchtime prayer during Lent
- The Rosary in May/October
- Prayer for the dead in November

The Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for children to participate will be maximised.

Opportunities for Staff

- All Staff meetings begin in prayer
- The beginnings of Morning 'briefings' are led on a rota by many different members of staff who share personal prayer and reflection with the gathered group
- The training day at the beginning of the academic year begins with the celebration of the Eucharist or an alternative appropriate Liturgy
- All staff are invited to the annual Deanery Education Mass

The Co-ordinator for Collective Worship

The Headteacher will delegate responsibility for the organisation of Collective worship to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will ensure that Pastoral Assistant Heads, other Senior staff, Heads of Year & the Chaplaincy co-ordinator provide regular, high quality Collective worship at all key stages

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

For Approval April 2012

Next Review Date Summer 2014.