



# Worship Policy

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| Leadership Lead:         | Mr G Sonuga, Deputy Headteacher |
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***This policy has been written and implemented in accordance with the School's dedication to its Christian values. These are underpinned in the Stopfordian ethos and the message and example of Jesus Christ.***

## **Our School Vision Statement**

### **Believe Strive Succeed**

Our vision is to provide an outstanding, inclusive and aspirational education for local children. We believe that everyone in our community is capable of achieving beyond their expectations by living each day in all its fullness, spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and morally. We are underpinned by deep rooted values of respect, consideration, loyalty, responsibility and success.

*1 Corinthians 12:12 'the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body'*

## **The Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

In Bishop Stopford's School 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 Bishop Stopford's School 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*) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

### **Church of England Guidance**

Collective worship policy at Bishop Stopford's School draws on guidance from the Church of England<sup>1</sup>. 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

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collectiveworship>

ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

### **The right of withdrawal**

In Bishop Stopford's School there are a number 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 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 occasions, 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.)*

### **The Trust Deed**

The relevant section of the Trust Deed of the School states the following, and this forms the basis of our policy:

*"2(1) The worship and religious instruction at the School shall be in accordance with the doctrines and practice of the Church of England.*

*(2) The Bishop for the time being of the Diocese of London shall have the exclusive power of deciding whether the character of the worship and of the religious instruction given in the School is or is not in accordance with the provisions of this Deed."*

## **Background**

Bishop Stopford's school is a Church of England Secondary school based in the London Borough of Enfield. The school ethos focuses on achievement within a Christian family. The religious aspect of the school is evident in all aspects of the life of the school. The school is part of the Anglican Communion and the intake reflects backgrounds of the world wide Christian family. The aim of Collective Worship is reflect the diversity within this family while also focussing on the teachings of Jesus' teachings and his commandment of Love.

The School Chaplaincy duties are carried out by the Assistant Head Teacher

## **Guiding Principles**

Collective worship in Bishop Stopford's 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 the pupils and staff the opportunity to worship God; ● experience a variety of styles of worship; ● celebrate:
  - Christian festivals;
  - school values; ○ achievements;
- grow in understanding of and participation in prayer;
- develop a reflective approach to life and reflect on Christian values
- develop as a community based in Christian values;
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading, presentation and evaluation of worship; ● feel safe and affirmed.

## **Non-Eucharistic worship**

- Morning Worship and Assembly in the School Hall on Monday to Friday for all Year groups (7-13)
- Daily Prayer and focus occurs each day in addition to Assembly and Pause For Thought programme
- 'Pause for Thought Programme' to support class room based worship in forms
- Occasional services: Founders' Day, Speech Day, Carol Service etc...

## **Eucharistic worship**

- In October and February at the end of each half term each Year group attends a Eucharist in the main hall
- At Easter, the Eucharist takes place at the nearby St. James' Church for all year groups. ● The Worship Team provide worship throughout the serving of Communion
- Students participate in the delivery of prayers and bible readings during Eucharist

## **Comments on the pattern of non-Eucharistic worship**

- Daily assembly is structured – beginning with the lighting of the candle by students and the prayer for all Stopfordians led by the Lay Chaplain. There is also a bible reflection before the delivery of the assembly and a closing prayer.
  - Prayers of intercessions are led by students,
  - The Prayer for all Stopfordians and lighting of a candle by studentsThe school prayer said out loud as a school community.
- This act of worship is hosted by the Lay Chaplain and led by a member of the Staff and students.
- Pupils deliver assembly to their Year groups in rotation during the year.
- Daily assembly is also interlinked with the school's Strive for Five ethos and vision
- The Weekly Worship rota is published at the start of the academic year.
- This includes a clear theme for each act of Worship linked to the Stopfordian Ethos and Form Time Programme, Key British Values, the Church lectionary and a suggested prayer for the worship leader to use.
- The theme is also replicated in the weekly *Pause for Thought* programme; thus ensuring a consistency of approach throughout the school community.

## **Pause for Thought**

- The whole school follows a specially designed series of themes that reflect the life of our community and leads the school through the Liturgical Year.
- Each week the theme is visited in Assembly and is underpinned by the various activities offered through the programme to be celebrated by Forms in Tutor time.
- The themes are varied and use scripture, poetry, relevant quotations, newspaper articles, photographs, etc...as well as the opportunity to reflect upon a piece of art or to engage with a simple stilling exercises.
- A presentation is written weekly and provided as a PowerPoint by the Lay Chaplain.
- The chapel is available during break times to staff and student reflection and private prayer.

## **Comments on the pattern of Eucharistic worship**

- The Eucharist plays an important role in the worshipping life of the School.
- The school welcomes clergy from the local churches into celebrate the sacrament and preach for the services.
- At each celebration, students and staff take a full and active part in the celebration of the Eucharist, either as readers, intercessors, musicians, servers or as Eucharistic Ministers.
- The timings and the structure for these celebrations are reviewed regularly to ensure that worship is both accessible and appropriate.

## Comments on the occasional services

- There is an informal 'Service of Welcome' for the parents and Students of the New Year 7 held early in September
- School Speech Day is celebrated in January with a Guest of Honour as our Speaker.
- A Carol Service is held in December.
- Our Founders' Day Service, is held in late June or early July in the School Hall, and is attended by the students of Year 7, all the staff, as well as governors, parents and special guests.
- An ordained member of the Church of England is invited as 'Guest of Honour' and preaches the sermon.
- The Gideon Society visits the School each year to distribute copies of the New Testament to the students of Year 7.

*All occasional services are reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and the Lay Chaplain as they arise throughout the course of the year.*

## The Future

- Encourage the role of local parochial clergy as partners in the mission and witness of the school community
- Develop the more Pupils and Teaching Staff as providers of Collective Worship through Inset training
- To develop a Christian Union as part of the extracurricular provision including the Youth Alpha Course
- To develop the opportunities for Islamic pupils to meet for Friday prayers and pupils of other faiths to have prayer/worship times.

### A legal note

By law, Collective Worship must:

- be provided for every child every day;
- reflect the school's Trust Deed

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship. In the first instance we ask parents who may wish to exercise this right to visit school to speak with the Headteacher.