**Notes on Formulating a School Collective Worship Policy**

**Rationale and aims**

* Your introduction might include a Biblical reference or verse and link to the school vision, aims or mission statement
* Worship in school is known as ‘collective’ worship as opposed to ‘corporate’ worship. In collective worship the community gathers (or collects) and worship takes place; there is no expectation or compulsion placed on those present. What is provided is an ‘opportunity’ for the participants to take part.

**Organisation**

* Opportunities for spiritual reflection and prayer are also found across the curriculum in church schools, similarly worship should link to the work that children do in lessons. The children can present work or performances related to their work. These can easily be included within a worship structure which includes prayer and reflection.
* Patterns of worship in school can become complex, with different leaders, groupings and seasons. Worship needs to take account of the pattern of school life too so it might focus on particular learning or specific activity such as charity support activities. In all cases the central pattern needs to be the quality and variety of experience for the participants. Just having different leaders will not necessarily create differing experiences.
* Leadership should be distinguished from presentation. It is the nature of the experience (and its impact) that determines the quality of the worship. The leader might include a presentation of a story or image etc. as an ‘engagement’ but this is not in itself worship.
* It might be appropriate for the vicar or someone else from the church to be named as a visiting leader, as indeed an ‘open the book’ group could be named in the policy.
* Visitors (including clergy) need to be very carefully briefed as to what the worship entails. In all acts of worship the school should retain overall control. It may be appropriate to provide short notes for visitors.

**Content and resources**

Planning worship has two main dimensions:

* Worship needs to be planned through the year to take account of the pattern. This will include identification of themes (values), Bible stories and readings, songs and prayers
* Individual acts of worship also need to have a ‘plan’. In Church this is commonly referred to as the ‘liturgy’; careful attention to the liturgies used in school will ensure that an appropriate range of experiences is offered throughout the year. ([www.worshipworkshop.org.uk](http://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk) has a map of worship to help create worship plans but the [www.imaginor.co.uk](http://www.imaginor.co.uk) site has a simple 4 part structure which is useful).

The policy only needs to make a relatively brief mention of planning – the detailed aspects of planning are an operational matter for the school, but an example of this can be added in an appendix.

The range of activities suitable for worship is limited only by imagination. The policy should just indicate that the school will seek to increase impact through a range of activities such as:

* Lighting a candle
* Reading the Bible/ telling a Bible story
* Songs/ music to listen to
* Pictures/multimedia presentations on screen
* Reflection
* Prayer

When considering prayer, schools should take account of the community served by the school. For example, prayers addressed to Jesus may cause difficulties for members of certain faith communities. There is no generic solution in these circumstances; a sensitive dialogue will be needed to ensure that worship retains its important central role in school life. It is important that children are “invited” to pray or reflect and assumptions about the participation of all present are not made.

**Evaluation Monitoring and Review**

The monitoring of worship needs to include a variety of approaches that include adult and children’s evaluation so that the impact of the experiences can be effectively ascertained.

**Withdrawal**

The legal aspects are important and form part of the context of school life. Schools should consider that a number of requests for withdrawal might indicate a need to review and amend the collective worship policy.

**Planning a Programme of Collective Worship (these details could be as an appendix)**

This is best done by a small team, with input from the local church if possible. Evaluations from pupils, staff and others, collated often by a link governor should be taken into account.

1. Block out whole year and plan in…

1. values / themes
2. festivals
3. significant dates

2. Decide on a pattern, remembering to consider;

1. timings
2. groupings
3. venues

3. Identify worship leaders – regular & occasional

1. head teacher
2. other teaching staff
3. non-teaching staff
4. incumbent
5. other church representatives
6. pupils
7. other visitors

4. Identify approaches to be used, including the use of multimedia for;

1. story telling
2. drama
3. bible stories
4. singing
5. prayers
6. formal
7. informal
8. dance
9. music
10. puppets
11. pictures
12. film

5. Identify resources to be used, such as;

1. Roots and Fruits (Jumping Fish)
2. SEAL (A Teacher’s Dozen/ 12 Baskets)
3. Open the Book
4. other paper resources
5. web based materials eg [www.imaginor.co.uk](http://www.imaginor.co.uk) [www.barnabasinschools.org.uk](http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk)

6. Link to curriculum planning and implementation

1. RE; using the opportunity the reinforce Christian values across the curriculum
2. wider curriculum; charity events such as Sport Relief etc

7. Advertise collective worship planning;

1. on school’s website
2. on the school’s newsletter
3. at church on notice sheets etc

8. Record, monitor & evaluate provision

1. nominate a foundation governor with this responsibility
2. key member of staff has the co-ordinator role
3. get feedback from pupils/ staff/ parents/ others
4. formulate appropriate mechanisms and put them in place
5. report findings to governors
6. use information as an aid to planning next cycle
7. feed into school development planning

Incorporate all of this into a collective worship policy. Make sure that the vision for your school is reflected fully in your policy.