



Ranelagh School

Collective Worship Policy

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Ranelagh School vision

Though we are many, we are one body.

[Eucharistic Prayer, Common Worship]

Following the ministry of Jesus, we empower all to use their gifts in faithful service. We inspire and encourage each individual to develop and nurture unique skills, interests and talents, in order that they can flourish. Our school is a unifying heartbeat, enabling everyone to feel welcomed and valued as members of our community.

Introduction

At Ranelagh School, collective worship is central to our distinctive character as a Church of England school and a key expression of our Christian vision. Rooted in the Eucharistic declaration, **“Though we are many, we are one body”** [Common Worship], our vision shapes every aspect of school life. Collective worship is therefore not an isolated activity but a daily expression of this vision in action, enabling our commitment to be a unifying heartbeat within a diverse and inclusive community.

Following the ministry of Jesus, collective worship provides opportunities for all members of the school community to gather in reflection, prayer, celebration and spiritual growth. Through worship, we affirm that each person is uniquely created in the image of God, known and loved by Him, and gifted with talents to be used in faithful service. It enables students and staff to explore Christian faith, values and theology, while also encouraging reflection on personal beliefs, values and responsibilities.

In line with the Church of England’s expectation that worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring, collective worship at Ranelagh is designed to enable meaningful engagement for all members of the community, regardless of faith background, belief, or prior experience of worship. Our school draws students from over forty primary schools and a wide diversity of religious, cultural and philosophical backgrounds, and worship provides a shared space in which all are welcomed, valued and respected as members of one school family. In our worship we aim to reiterate our school vision, which is rooted in the example of Jesus’ ministry – we are all one body, part of one church; we are all known and welcome and our unique skills and attributes are valued.

Collective worship is a key means by which our Christian vision is made visible and understood. It enables engagement with biblical teaching, Christian theology and the person of Jesus Christ, while also encouraging critical reflection on life’s deepest questions of meaning, identity and purpose, including those identified within the Church of England’s [Vision for Education](#):

Who am I?

Why am I here?

What do I desire?

How then shall I live?

Worship makes a significant contribution to spiritual development by enabling pupils and staff to reflect, respond and grow in their understanding of themselves, others and the wider world. It nurtures wisdom, hope, community and dignity, and supports the development of spiritually aware individuals who are able to reflect on values, meaning and purpose in their lives.

In addition, collective worship supports the development of courageous advocacy by encouraging members of the school community to reflect on injustice, inequality and human flourishing, and to consider how they might respond in ways that are rooted in compassion, justice and service. In this way, worship contributes to forming individuals who are confident in living out their faith or personal convictions with integrity and responsibility.

We recognise that engagement with worship will vary across our community. For some, it will be a reflective and exploratory experience; for others, it will be an expression of an established Christian faith. For all, collective worship is integral to the life of the school and to our commitment to educating for life in all its fullness, enabling every member of our community to flourish and fulfil their God-given potential.

Legal framework

By law, collective worship must:

- Be provided for every student 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 background and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Parents/carers have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship without a requirement to state reasons: any parents or carers wishing to do so should contact the Headteacher who will facilitate this. Students in the sixth form have the right to be excused from attendance at collective worship if they request so.

Invitational, Inclusive and Inspirational

In planning our worship, we abide by the three principles outlined in the Church of England Guidance *Inclusive, Invitational, Inspiring*.

Inclusive

In our determination to ensure that all members of our community feel welcomed and valued, the Christian notion of hospitality underpins our worship. Many students and staff at Ranelagh will have different experiences of faith and world views, and all will be at different stages of their spiritual journeys. There is space to think and ask questions; to participate and stand back. It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Through their Christian character, our acts of collective worship will:

- Have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe
- Recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, lifestyles and faiths which exist in our school and local community
- Draw upon issues and experiences which are relevant to students
- Embrace a variety of styles of worship including music, silence, story, prayer, reflection
- Include appropriate references to and elements of other faiths and secular worldviews

- Give opportunities for members of the community to participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading, presentation and evaluation of worship
- Include opportunities to celebrate the academic, social, personal and wider achievements of members of the school community

Invitational

Members of the school community can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. Everyone is warmly invited, but never compelled to participate. Worship provides the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different denominations, faiths and world views to be present and to engage with integrity. Prayer is always accompanied by the option to reflect.

By Warm Fires I mean a vibrant and attractive sense of our Christian identity, and by Open Doors I mean a real welcome to anyone and everyone to gather round the fire.

We need to combine good strong roots, a robust sense of church and school alike as Christian or “in Christ” with a very open door, always inviting but never forcing, leaving room for questioning, doubt, disagreement, journeying and just looking.

(David Thomson, Bishop of Huntingdon, cited in [The Fruit of the Spirit](#))

Acts of collective worship will:

- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all students and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- Provide opportunities to worship God
- Provide students with opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of their lives through music, images and words
- Provide a sense of occasion that is separate from the rest of the school day
- Nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in everyone through working for social justice and encouraging students to consider the needs of others through charitable service and courageous advocacy
- Foster an appreciation of the natural world and our shared responsibilities for maintaining it
- Develop clear partnerships between worship in school and the wider community

Prayer is a vital part of our worship and is introduced with a form of words that invites members of the community to participate. Our prayers are addressed to God, reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Those who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

Inspiring

Worship has the capacity to be formational and transformational: it enables participants to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It can motivate action and encourage reflection on individuals’ own and the wider community’s behaviour and actions. As a result of our collective worship programme, we encourage students to become courageous advocates of causes.

Our acts of collective worship provide wider opportunities to:

- Promote wide ownership of our theologically-rooted Christian vision
- Assist participants to have increased awareness and to reflect upon fundamental issues about

life

- Develop understanding of the Christian faith and Anglican practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical context
- Encounter and explore Jesus' teachings and the trinitarian nature of Christian faith
- Celebrate Christian festivals and seasons and significant national/international events
- Support the community to respond to celebrations and challenges
- Support the community to seek ways of working together for the good of all
- Nurture spiritual growth by developing learners' understanding of the Christian faith and Anglican practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical content
- Help students and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world
- Consider moral issues such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation
- Give opportunities to reflect on and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity
- Enhance social understanding

The purpose of our collective worship

The purpose of collective worship provides students and staff opportunities to:

- Worship God on their own terms
- Promote participants' thinking beyond the time given to worship itself
- Experience prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- Grow in understanding of and participation in prayer
- Create a reflective approach to life including the exploration of big questions
- Develop as a community centred on our clear and distinctive Christian vision
- Experience a variety of styles of worship
- Celebrate Christian seasons and festivals
- Celebrate the achievements of members of our community
- Participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship

Worships reflects aspects of the curriculum and is designed to:

- Nurture spiritual growth
- Enable participants to consider moral questions in a Christian context
- Enhance social understanding and encourage responses to issues through social advocacy
- Give participants the chance to explore beliefs drawn from their own cultural heritage
- Reflect the teachings of Jesus and a trinitarian theology

Students and adults of all faiths and worldviews are welcome to worship which is an expression of our distinctive Christian vision. Our school is a community that celebrates religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and encourages dialogue and understanding. We believe that we can all learn from each other and that Collective Worship is an educational entitlement for all. In worship, we create the opportunity to explore the place of faith in people's lives, and in the communities where we live. This worship occurs at various times of day and with a mixture of grouping of students. Through regular acts of worship our school has the opportunity of offering thanksgiving and praise to God through a range of liturgical patterns.

Collective worship will:

- be acceptable to the whole community, staff and children

- include a variety of elements at different times
- involve the students at an age-appropriate level
- have a dedicated focus which signifies what is being reflected upon
- provide a dedicated opportunity for students to reflect on the input

Acts of worship often include ritual aspects of enabling worship:

- Stories and readings
- Songs, hymns and music
- Prayer, meditations
- Silence
- Sacred/secular readings

The pattern of collective worship at Ranelagh

Collective worship takes place in the mornings in a variety of groupings in the school hall, other large spaces, classrooms and in Church. We follow the seasons of the Church year and, within this, significant festivals and other special days are observed. These include Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day and Easter. Other important days in the calendar such as Remembrance and the Leavers' Service also feature in collective worship.

On Mondays and Fridays, we gather together as a school in two sittings. During the rest of the week, we gather as tutor groups, year groups or key stages.

Planning collective worship

Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience. Worship is planned on a termly basis, with an overarching theme or question, unpacked on a weekly basis by themes and weekly Biblical readings that give a vehicle for exploration of the theme. The themes of worship are chosen to both express and explore our school vision and the way in which this vision is experienced in school.

Leaders, including students, plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the theme. Throughout their time at our school, students will encounter a wide variety of activities alongside elements of worship such as prayer and song. There is a weekly opportunity to share and reflect upon Bible readings and sung worship is a feature of both our Holy Communion services and collective worship.

Leading worship

Worship has a variety of leaders from both within school and from the local church community. Students are given opportunities to lead worship throughout the year. Worship is also led by members of staff including senior leaders, Heads of Year, tutors and the school chaplain. Members of the local clergy are regularly invited into the school and lead worship for Communion services and end of term services, being given guidance on our worship policy.

Termly Holy Communion services are held at Holy Trinity Church in Bracknell and these are attended on a voluntary basis. Twice a year the Eucharist is also celebrated in our Sanctuary, located in the school hall. The first of these services is held in the Autumn Term for students in Year 7 and their families. It is organised to coincide with the relevant elements of the RE curriculum; it also provides an opportunity to welcome new students to the school and introduce them to the Common Worship

order of Anglican worship. The second of these services is held on Founder's Day in July; this is an opportunity for members of the school community, past and present, to give thanks for the life and work of the school.

Prayer is a vital part of our worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to God reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Students and adults who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

The role of the Governing Board

- Governors are aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to Collective Worship, and take account of the policy and guidelines of the Diocese
- Governors take account of the legal requirements, school Trust Deed and guidelines issued by the Diocese
- Governors are actively involved and familiar with all documentation regarding Collective Worship issued on their behalf and are actively involved in the process of Collective Worship development within the school
- Governors ensure that Collective Worship is appropriately reviewed as part of the School Development Plan
- Governors are aware of the requirement under SIAMS for the inspection of Collective Worship