WOODCHURCH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Collective Worship Policy

Inclusive • Invitational • Rooted in our Christian vision

COMPASSION • KINDNESS • HUMILITY • GENTLENESS • PATIENCE • FORGIVENESS

Policy status	Working draft for review and approval by the Local Academy Committee
Policy lead	Deputy Headteacher – Freddie Stott
Approved by	LGC
Review date	October 2027, or earlier if guidance or school arrangements change

This policy explains the purpose, planning, delivery, participation and evaluation of collective worship at Woodchurch CE Primary School.

1. Our school and Christian vision

Woodchurch CE Primary School is a Church of England primary academy within Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT). Collective worship is a central part of the school's Christian character and shared life. It brings pupils and adults together to encounter Christian belief and practice, reflect on important questions and consider how the school's vision can be lived out.

Our Christian vision is rooted in Colossians 3:12–13:

> *"God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So always do these things: show compassion to others; be kind, humble, gentle and patient. Do not be angry with each other, but forgive each other."*
>
> **Colossians 3:12–13**

The vision begins with the belief that every person is chosen, valued and loved by God. It calls our community to practise compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness. These values shape the themes, stories, prayers, songs and actions explored in worship. Our school expectations—to be respectful, ambitious and proud—support this shared commitment.

Staff and pupils have agreed Woodchurch's THRIVE values: Trust, Hard-work, Resilience, Inspire, Valued and Enjoys school. They support reflection on wellbeing, relationships and school life, complementing but remaining distinct from the six Christian values in the vision.

Worship at Woodchurch is Christian in character and open to pupils and adults of all faiths and none. It is planned to be inclusive, invitational and inspiring: pupils are invited to engage, question, reflect and respond, while their own beliefs and backgrounds are treated with respect.

2. Purpose and aims

Collective worship provides a distinct opportunity for the school community to gather. It is not a lesson in Religious Education, a general assembly or a time for routine notices. Through worship, the school seeks to:

- provide opportunities to encounter Christian teaching, the Bible, the life and example of Jesus, and the beliefs and practices of the Church;
- explore the school's Christian vision and values, connecting them to pupils' relationships, choices and responsibilities;
- create space for prayer, stillness, reflection, gratitude, celebration, lament and hope;
- develop pupils' understanding of the Christian faith and of how faith can shape personal and community life;
- encourage compassion, service, forgiveness, respect and concern for the local and global community;
- bring the school community together and recognise significant events, seasons and achievements;
- support spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and help pupils consider meaning, identity and the common good.

3. Legal and trust framework

As a Church of England academy, Woodchurch provides a daily act of collective worship in accordance with its academy funding agreement and Christian designation. Worship is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character and is appropriate to pupils' ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds. The school has regard to current Department for Education guidance and relevant Chester Diocese and CDAT guidance.

CDAT's Scheme of Delegation sets out responsibilities for church school distinctiveness. The Headteacher leads by example, ensures that good-quality collective worship takes place daily, ensures suitable worship and RE policies are in place, and works with the Trust and Diocese to develop the school's Christian distinctiveness. The Local Academy Committee (LAC, referred to as the Local Governance Committee or LGC in the Scheme) supports and challenges the Headteacher and reviews the quality of worship and the suitability of the policy. The Scheme also identifies Trust-level monitoring and support, including preparation for SIAMS.

This policy should be read alongside the CDAT Scheme of Delegation, the school's Religious Education Policy, Christian vision, safeguarding procedures, educational visits policy and complaints policy.

4. Principles and character of worship

- Worship is clearly identifiable as worship and gives pupils a meaningful opportunity to encounter the Christian faith.
- It is invitational: pupils may join in with prayer, singing or spoken responses, or take part through listening and quiet reflection. No pupil is compelled to pray, make a statement of belief or disclose personal convictions.
- It is inclusive and respectful of pupils and adults of different faiths and of no faith. Christian worship is not diluted, while alternative perspectives and questions are welcomed with care.
- It is age-appropriate, accessible and attentive to pupils' SEND, communication needs, sensory needs and lived experiences.
- It is planned, purposeful and varied, with appropriate space for participation and response as well as listening.
- It is rooted in Christian teaching and values, while making connections to contemporary life, the local community and the wider world.
- It is separate from curriculum RE. A visit, assembly notice or general school meeting does not count as worship unless it is intentionally planned and delivered as an act of worship.

5. Organisation and pattern

Collective worship takes place every school day. The usual time is 2:50pm, although the rota may specify a different time for a particular day or event. Worship is organised through a termly or half-termly rota and may take place with the whole school, a phase, a class or a pupil group, depending on the purpose and practical arrangements. Whole-school worship is commonly held in the hall; other sessions may be led in classrooms or group settings.

The rota provides a balanced range of leadership, styles and experiences. The Autumn 2 2026 plan includes Roots and Fruits, Come and Praise singing, Picture News, Bible stories and Thrive sessions. It names staff leaders and indicates when groups meet in the hall. The rota is reviewed and updated as the school's needs and calendar change.

Approach	Purpose and use
Roots and Fruits	Explore a Christian value through a Bible story, reflection and practical response. The Autumn 2 2026 plan focuses on kindness.
Come and Praise	Use songs and hymns to celebrate, learn Christian language and respond together.
Bible stories	Encounter biblical narratives and consider their meaning and relevance for pupils today.
Picture News	Use age-appropriate current and global issues to prompt reflection on responsibility, compassion, justice and the common good, with a Christian lens where appropriate.
THRIVE / reflection	Reflect on the staff- and pupil-agreed values—Trust, Hard-work, Resilience, Inspire, Valued and Enjoys school—and on wellbeing, relationships and school life. THRIVE values complement but are distinct from the Christian values. A THRIVE session is worship only when it is planned with a clear Christian worship purpose.
Seasonal and special worship	Mark significant points in the Christian year, school life and local community, including services, festivals and celebrations.

A two-year cycle of Christian values provides continuity across the programme, with a value focus each half term. The six values named in Woodchurch's vision are its central anchors; wider Christian values and themes may extend pupils' understanding. Worship may also respond sensitively to local, national or global events. Leaders use judgement to adapt planned material when an event or issue makes the planned theme inappropriate.

6. Content and structure of an act of worship

A worship session may include some or all of the following, selected to suit its purpose and pupils:

- a clear invitation to gather and a calm, purposeful beginning;
- a Bible reading, Christian story, song, image, object, testimony or carefully selected stimulus;
- a short explanation that gives pupils enough context to understand the Christian teaching or theme;
- questions, drama, music, discussion, pupil contribution or another active response;

- a period of quiet, reflection or prayer, with an invitation rather than pressure to participate;
- a practical response or action that connects the theme to school, community or wider-world life;
- a clear ending that maintains the sense of occasion.

Prayer is an important part of Christian worship. Prayers may be spoken by the leader, shared responsively, or offered as a quiet invitation. Leaders explain that pupils may join in, listen respectfully or reflect silently. Prayer is not used to test, reward or compel a pupil's belief.

7. Leadership, pupil participation and visitors

7.1 Leadership and responsibilities

- The Headteacher is accountable for ensuring daily, good-quality worship and that this policy is implemented. The Headteacher may delegate day-to-day coordination, planning and monitoring to a named worship lead.
- The worship lead coordinates the rota, supports staff and visitors, helps ensure a broad and coherent programme, maintains planning and evaluation records, and identifies development needs.
- All staff who lead worship prepare appropriately, communicate the Christian focus clearly, make participation accessible and follow safeguarding expectations.
- The Local Academy Committee provides support and challenge, reviews worship quality and policy, and helps sustain links with the local church and parish. This is consistent with the LGC responsibilities in CDAT's Scheme of Delegation.
- CDAT and Chester Diocese provide support and challenge as appropriate. The Scheme of Delegation gives the Trust a monitoring role in church school distinctiveness and SIAMS preparation.

7.2 Pupils and the Christian Ethos Group

Pupils are encouraged to contribute to worship through readings, prayers, music, drama, questions, reflection and practical actions. Participation is supported and voluntary; pupils are not required to speak about their personal beliefs. The Christian Ethos Group gives pupil representatives, with governor and community support, a forum to discuss how the vision and its values are understood and lived out. Pupil voice informs the planning and evaluation of worship.

7.3 Visitors and church links

Visitors may include the vicar and other representatives of Holy Cross Church, foundation governors, parishioners and suitable community or Christian organisations. They are briefed about the school's vision, the purpose and age range of the session, inclusion, safeguarding and the invitational nature of worship. Staff retain responsibility for pupils and for ensuring that the session is appropriate.

The school's links with Holy Cross Church support worship and the school's Christian foundation. Whole-school visits take place during the year for festivals and services, and pupils learn about the church's role in the community. The school may also welcome church and community contributors into school. Visits and contributions are planned, risk-assessed and safeguarded in line with school procedures.

8. Inclusion, accessibility and sensitive issues

Worship is planned so that all pupils can participate meaningfully. Leaders consider language, pace, length, sensory environment, seating, movement, communication and opportunities for quiet participation. Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with SEND, disability or other access needs. Where appropriate, visual supports, objects, signing, familiar routines and alternative response options are used.

Worship may address difficult or sensitive issues, including loss, conflict, injustice or tragedy. Leaders use age-appropriate materials, avoid graphic or distressing content, and follow safeguarding procedures if a pupil becomes distressed or shares a concern. Staff do not present worship as a substitute for pastoral, therapeutic or safeguarding support.

Staff avoid stereotypes and do not expect any pupil or adult to speak on behalf of a religion or community. Questions are welcomed and answered honestly; where an answer is uncertain, leaders acknowledge this and seek accurate information.

9. Parents' right to withdraw

Parents and carers have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from all or part of collective worship. A request should be made to the Headteacher, who will discuss the arrangements and ensure that the pupil is appropriately supervised during worship. The school will respect the request and will not require the pupil to participate in the act of worship. A parent or carer may withdraw a request at any time.

The separate right of pupils aged 16 or over to withdraw themselves is not currently applicable at Woodchurch, which is a primary school. Withdrawal from worship is separate from withdrawal from Religious Education, as set out in the RE Policy.

10. Evaluation and impact

Evaluation focuses on whether worship is purposeful, Christian in character, inclusive, invitational and connected to the school's vision. It is intended to improve provision and deepen pupils' experience, rather than to measure personal belief. Evaluation may draw on:

- the worship rota, plans, themes and range of leaders and approaches;
- periodic observation by the Headteacher, worship lead and governors, in line with the Scheme of Delegation and school procedures;
- pupil voice, including discussions with the Christian Ethos Group and pupils from different year groups;
- feedback from staff, visitors, parents and church partners where appropriate;
- examples of pupil participation, reflection and understanding of the vision and values;
- review of whether worship is accessible to pupils with different needs and backgrounds and whether agreed actions have been completed.

Leaders use this information to recognise strengths, identify improvements and adjust future planning. Governors support and challenge leaders on the quality of worship and the policy's implementation. Evaluation informs the school's Christian distinctiveness self-evaluation and preparation for SIAMS.

11. Complaints and review

Any concern about collective worship should first be raised with the Headteacher. If it is not resolved, it may be taken forward through the school's Complaints Policy and CDAT procedures.

The Headteacher and worship lead will review this policy annually, or earlier if statutory guidance, the academy funding agreement, the CDAT Scheme of Delegation or school practice changes. The Local Academy Committee will approve the school-specific policy in accordance with CDAT's Scheme of Delegation. The Headteacher will ensure that the current approved policy is published and communicated as required.

Related documents and guidance

- CDAT Scheme of Delegation (approved 29 September 2025; confirm current version and review status) and the academy funding agreement;
- Woodchurch CE Primary School Religious Education Policy, Christian vision, complaints, safeguarding and educational visits policies;
- Department for Education guidance on RE and collective worship in academies and schools; Academies Act 2010; Church of England guidance on collective worship.