



St Nicholas Church of England
Voluntary Aided Primary School
Child Okeford

Friendship · Respect · Curiosity · Community

Exploring possibilities together

With God all things are possible

Matthew 19:26

Ethos Policy

Policy adopted:	April 2017
Approval Level:	Full Governors
Last Review:	January 2023
Policy review period:	1 Year
Next Review:	January 2024

1. **Introduction**

Our core school aim is to develop happy, well rounded, confident individuals who achieve their potential as a result of a wealth of experiences. The Christian values of Love, Hope and Trust are at the centre of all the experiences we provide and permeate all we do.

2. **Ethos of St Nicholas CE VA Primary School**

Within a Christian framework we aspire to enable all children to become confident, resourceful and well educated members of society. We promote high expectations, strong self-esteem, and high achievement from staff and pupils alike. This enables the school to meet individual needs, be they educational or pastoral, and to allow each pupil to find a valued voice. We foster creativity and independence of mind, to sustain a love of learning and a life-long zest for education necessary for a successful and fulfilled future.

3. **Policy aims and purpose**

These are to:

- (i) promote and enhance the Christian ethos of the school;
- (ii) provide opportunities for the children to worship God;
- (iii) enable children to consider and reflect spiritual, social, and moral issues;
- (iv) enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- (v) encourage participation and response;
- (vi) develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- (vii) promote a Christian model of behaviour amongst the whole school community; and
- (viii) to enable children to experience the awe and wonder of the world.

4. **Anglican Foundation**

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level. Since the conduct of the school as a whole reflects the Church of England ethos, removal of pupils from Collective Worship and or Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate pupils from the religious life of the school. The worship and prayer life of the school is not limited to the legally required daily acts of worship. Opportunities will be taken to use prayer in the curriculum generally and at the end of afternoon sessions as well as graces before lunch.

5. **Definition of terms**

- (1) The school is clear in its distinction between an “Assembly” and “Collective Worship”.
- (2) For the purposes of this policy these definitions are to be used:
 - (i) “Assembly” is a time when the school gathers to hear important notices and announcements. It is a time where children can present work they have done and learning outcomes that have been achieved. Such “assembly” times are legally distinct from Collective Worship and parents' rights to withdraw their children do not apply.
 - (ii) “Collective worship” is a time where the whole school community gathers to offer praise and worship together. It is participatory, all age and has a qualitatively different feel to an assembly being a time of spiritual and Godly focus. A sense of worship will be built up using lighting, music, silence, appropriate movement into and out of worship and through the setting (including display) and the use of Christian symbols.

6. Collective Worship

- (1) The aim of Collective Worship at St Nicholas CE VA Primary School is to introduce pupils to worship in a manner appropriate to their age, drawing primarily upon the riches of the Anglican tradition. Collective Worship is at the heart of our school life and the Governors see it as an essential part of all pupils' education. As such we are concerned to resource it properly and ensure that it is of the highest standard.
- (2) St Nicholas CE VA Primary School respects the individuality and uniqueness of every pupil. It is not the school's purpose to actively evangelise, but we aim to encourage those participating in any act of worship to feel part of the Christian faith community, and to feel valued and included. Pupils may be read to or instructed or they may be asked to listen to readings or to think about and respond to a stimulus such as a work of art. Hymns, prayers, Bible stories and reflection form the core of all Collective Worship.
- (3) Collective Worship should:
 - (i) be held daily;
 - (ii) be truly worship;
 - (iii) involve the children regularly;
 - (iv) be enjoyable;
 - (v) be suitable for all abilities;
 - (vi) be age appropriate; and
 - (vii) allow time for reflection.

7. Monitoring and review

Governors are welcome at all acts of Collective Worship. Children are encouraged to reflect on Collective Worship at the School Council. The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from Collective Worship.

8. Complaints about the provision of Collective Worship

It is hoped that any complaint will be resolved informally by the Headteacher, in consultation with the Governors, and possibly with advice from the Diocese. However, if the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, then formal procedures come into play and the matter will be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese.

9. Parental and community involvement in the worshipping life of the school

- (1) Daily whole school worship includes a weekly celebration assembly to celebrate the children's success to which parents are invited.
- (2) The school has two acts of worship in church at the beginning and end of term to which parents and the wider community are invited.
- (3) The school also comes to church to celebrate major Christian festivals such as Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas and Easter and parents and the wider community are invited.
- (4) The school participates in Education Sunday.