

# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY



**HARTFORD**  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
**HIGH SCHOOL**

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| <b>Ratified by Governing Board:</b> October 2026<br><b>Next Due for Review:</b> Autumn Term 2027 |
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## Our Theologically Rooted Vision:

The vision for Hartford Church of England High School is that we will provide an exceptional, inclusive and aspirational education rooted in a shared set of Christian values that radiate the love and truth of Jesus. We will nurture, embrace and promote the God-given talents of our students both within and beyond the classroom. Growing in wisdom, our children will develop into thankful young people who will make a substantial contribution to the world. As a flourishing community, we will bring out the best in one another on a daily basis by being Happy, Achieving, Ready and Together.

*And whatever we do, whether in word or deed, we do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

*(Vision based on Paul's Letter to the Colossians Ch3, v11b -17)*

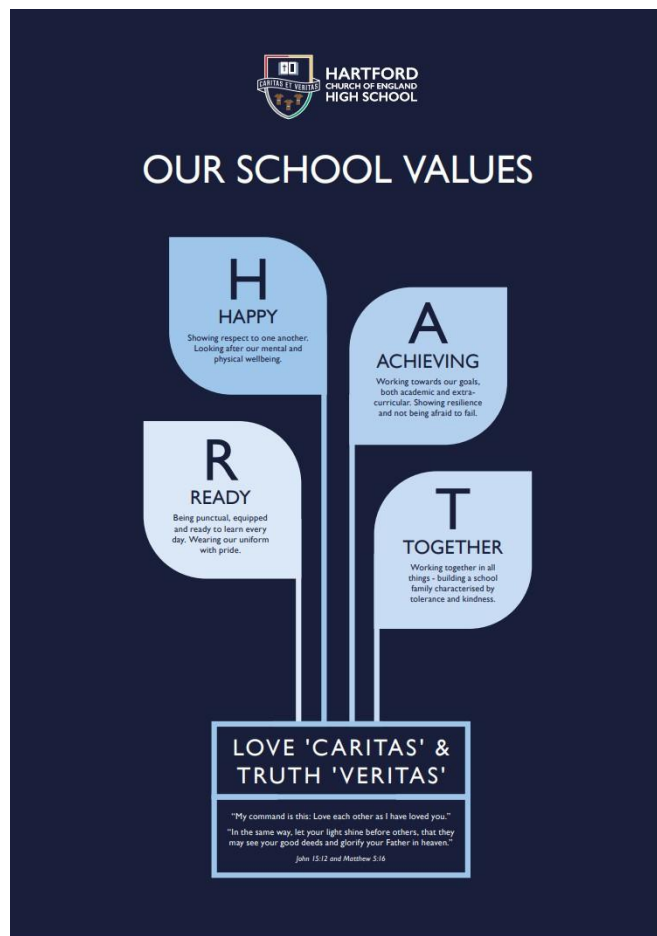
Everything we do at Hartford Church of England High School as students, staff, Governors and wider stakeholders, centres on the core values of our school:

**Happy:** Showing respect to one another. Looking after our mental and physical wellbeing.

**Achieving:** Working towards our goals, both academic and extra-curricular. Showing resilience and not being afraid to fail.

**Ready:** Being punctual, equipped and ready to learn every day. Wearing our uniform with pride.

**Together:** Working together in all things - building a school family characterised by tolerance and kindness.



Equally, the educational offer at Hartford Church of England High School is based on the Church of England's four key principles for education:

- Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills
- Educating for hope and aspiration
- Educating for community and living well together
- Educating for dignity and respect

The Collective Worship Policy at Hartford Church of England High School fully embodies our theologically rooted vision, our values and the key principles for education set out by the Church of England.

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# 1. Legal Framework

The law requires that all students in every maintained school take part in a daily act of collective worship.<sup>1</sup> In a Church of England school, the Governing Board makes arrangements for collective worship in consultation with the Headteacher.<sup>2</sup>

In a Church of England school, collective worship will be clearly Christian and in accordance with the “tenets and practices” of the Church of England.<sup>3</sup> This act of worship may take place in different groups and settings<sup>4</sup>, including, on special occasions, away from school premises<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. Introduction: What is Worship?

The love and truth of Jesus Christ are the foundation of our Church of England school, started in 2012 and expressed in our motto, “Caritas et Veritas” (“love and truth”). As a Church of England school, we seek to serve our whole community by being both distinctively Christian and universally inclusive. Our motto captures both of these aspirations:

- Love and truth are *distinctively Christian* because they are characteristic of the God of the Bible who is the object of Christian worship: in the Old Testament, God is described as “abounding in love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34.6), and in the New Testament, Jesus Christ is revealed as “full of grace and truth” (John 1.14).
- Love and truth are *universally inclusive* because they underpin and nourish the core HART values of our school, as we aspire to be Happy, Achieving, Ready and Together.

In our collective worship, we seek to model and embed these two aspirations. In particular, we are committed to the vision for collective worship as “Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring”.<sup>6</sup> We share the ambition for collective worship set out in the Church of England Vision for Education<sup>7</sup>:

“We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way which enhances their lives. ... The Church of England is ... a liturgical tradition, and encountering its worship is essential to understanding it and the God in whom we believe. ... Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this.”

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<sup>1</sup> “Every ... pupil in attendance at a ... voluntary school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship.” (School Standards and Framework Act 1998 [SSFA], Sec. 70 [1])

<sup>2</sup> “... the arrangements for the required collective worship shall be made ... by the governing body after consulting the headteacher.” (SSFA, Sch.20 [2(4(b))])

<sup>3</sup> This is set out in the SSFA, Sch. 20 [5(b)] and in accordance with our own Instrument of Government (“Recognising its Christian foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church at parish and diocesan level. ... It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers all its pupils”, Para. 10)

The “tenets” of the Church of England are set out in Canon A5: “The doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal.” (Canon A5: Of the doctrine of the Church of England).

<sup>4</sup> “The arrangements for the required collective worship may, in respect of each school day, provide for a single act of worship for all pupils or for separate acts of worship for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups.” (SSFA, Sch. 20 [1(6)])

<sup>5</sup> “If the governing body of a ... voluntary school are of the opinion that it is desirable that any act of collective worship ... should, on a special occasion, take place elsewhere than on the school premises, they may, after consultation with the headteacher, make such arrangements for that purpose as they think appropriate.” (SSFA, Sch. 20 [2(6)])

<sup>6</sup> This is the subtitle of national Church of England Collective Worship Guidance:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/collective-worship-guidance-18052021.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The quote is from: [https://cofefoundation.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/Church\\_of\\_England\\_Vision\\_for\\_Education\\_-\\_2016\\_jdYA7EO.pdf](https://cofefoundation.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/Church_of_England_Vision_for_Education_-_2016_jdYA7EO.pdf), Page 10.

### 3. Aims of Collective Worship

The overall aim of collective worship is exactly that: an opportunity for students and staff to worship God as he has been made known in Jesus Christ. In order to do this, our collective worship will:

- Offer “an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice”. Collective worship should enable the consideration of the Christian faith and its entailments, specifically through a consistent focus on the significance of Jesus and the teaching of the Bible.
- Recognise the breadth of Christian worship, and be inclusive of those of all faiths and no faith. It must simultaneously encourage those who believe or are exploring Christian faith without ever exerting pressure to follow a particular path.
- Deepen the understanding of Christianity and its role in forming our society and culture, and in shaping our view of humanity and morality, and to enable consideration of our own developing beliefs and ethical choices in its light. In particular, collective worship enables the exploration of the connexions between our Christian heritage and British values. Among those values, tolerance is especially important in a church school in ensuring the valuing of all members of our community.
- Enable the consideration of the connexions between Christian faith and the Christian and wider communities, both locally (in the parish), regionally (in the diocese), nationally (in the Church of England, and other churches) and globally (particularly in the Anglican Communion), providing a foundation and motivation for enabling courageous advocacy, and an understanding of Christian mission.
- Unite and focus the school community at Christian Festivals (especially Christmas and Easter), moments of national significance (eg Remembrance) or moments of local significance, celebration or tragedy (eg a bereavement in the school community).
- Demonstrate how our core Christian principles underpin and empower our whole school ethos and culture (for example, by emphasising the importance of practising forgiveness and seeking reconciliation).
- Foster Christian social virtues (for example, faithfulness, compassion, thankfulness, other-person-centredness, generosity).
- Equip staff and students to lead and serve in collective worship in a variety of ways which enhance their own learning and confidence, including leading collective worship both in our school and in our Church of England feeder primary schools.
- Ensure that all have both a learning experience as well as a spiritual encounter. Our commitment to excellence in both collective worship and education are mutually reinforcing goals.
- Undergird the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education of our students.

### 4. Resources for Collective Worship

Overall responsibility for Collective Worship rests with the Deputy Headteacher for Culture and Ethos. Other key staff are the Chaplain, the Assistant Headteacher for Educational Partnerships, Heads of Families and Heads of Year. The senior and middle leadership of the school are committed to embedding our vision for collective worship.

Other adults who have a significant role are the Foundation Governors who are especially responsible for this policy, the Ministry Team at our parish church and other clergy in local churches who enable us to fulfil aspects of it, and the staff of the DBE who provide resources and guidance.

Above all, our students contribute to our collective worship in a variety of ways. Their heartfelt engagement is our daily goal, and their creative contribution is actively encouraged.

Within the school, our chapel, main assembly hall and Sports’ Hall are the key venues for our collective worship. Our close partnership with St John’s means that we are regularly welcomed into our parish church for collective worship on special occasions.

Our school prayer is the most widely known and used prayer in school, encapsulating our school’s character and foundational ethos:

*Almighty God  
Thank you for our school,  
for friendship and learning.  
Teach us to love you and to serve each other.  
Guide us in your truth and teach us wisdom.  
Give us humble hearts and honest lives.  
Show us your love and help us to practise it.  
Through the grace of Jesus Christ, your Son, Amen.*

## 5. Implementation of Collective Worship

There are numerous strands to our collective worship which combine to enable us to fulfil our legal and moral duty to provide a daily act of collective worship for all students. Our Deputy Headteacher for Culture and Ethos and our Chaplain establish the co-ordinated worship themes, based on a collective worship planner. The following strands include all students:

- *Ethos Assemblies*<sup>8</sup> are our primary large act of collective worship, and are split between Family and Year group assemblies. Students will attend ethos assemblies 5 days a fortnight. These are led by members of the school's SLT, Heads of Family, Heads of Year, the Chaplain or a member of the Ministry Team at St John's. They include time for reflection and invitational prayer.
- *Form Reflection* will take place in tutor time on the other 5 days in each student's fortnightly pattern, supported by materials prepared by the Heads of Families.
- *Family Services* involving all students take place three times a year at St John's: Christmas, Lent and an end-of-year Celebration.

There are a number of other voluntary strands of collective worship which all students are encouraged to attend if they wish:

- A weekly *chapel service* on Monday lunchtime, engaging students with teaching from the Bible in a lightly liturgical setting.
- A weekly Christian Union, which gives an informal opportunity to explore the Christian faith.
- A weekly staff *prayer meeting* before school on a Thursday.
- More formal and liturgical *twice termly voluntary services* led either by one of the Ministry Team at St John's or by clergy associated with one of our Church of England feeder primary schools.
- A schools' *Remembrance Service*, held at St John's and to which a number of local schools send representative students, and in which our students take a leading role.

In addition, typically on INSET days, a voluntary eucharist is held for staff in the school chapel and led by local clergy.

## 6. Right of Withdrawal

When a child begins their educational journey at Hartford Church of England High School, parents are fully aware of the Christian ethos of the school which permeates all aspects of our community and have consciously chosen this for their child. As in any maintained school, all students have equal opportunity to take part in Collective Worship and to benefit from the experience. However, parents have the legal right to request that their child be wholly or partly withdrawn from collective worship<sup>9</sup>. Although no reason needs to be given, this request must be

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<sup>8</sup> We continue to use the word "assembly" rather than "collective worship" because it is (a) readily understood as just one element of collective worship, (b) inclusive of all and (c) consistent with the most common New Testament word typically translated as "church" (the Greek *ekklesia*) which is more literally translated "assembly". Its ongoing use therefore does not indicate a failure to be distinctively Christian.

<sup>9</sup> "If the parent of any pupil at a ... voluntary school ... requests that he may be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship at the school, the pupil shall be so excused until the request is withdrawn." (SSFA, Sec. 71 [1A])

made in writing to the Headteacher. We strongly encourage parents to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher before writing such a letter.

## 7. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of this policy will form part of the whole school cycle of self-review. Monitoring of collective worship will be overseen by the Deputy Headteacher for Culture and Ethos.

The policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher in conjunction with the Governing Board through the Pastoral and Ethos Committee, with particular responsibility falling to the Foundation Governors.<sup>10</sup> Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

**Date approved by Governing Board:** 05/10/2026

**Applicable from:** 05/10/2026

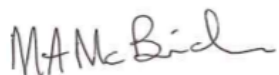
**Signed by**

**Headteacher:**



**Date:** 05/10/2026

**Chair of Governors:**



**Date:** 05/10/2026

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<sup>10</sup> Foundation Governors are specifically “expected to ... ensure that the school provides an act of collective worship for all children every day and that it is in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England.” (Foundation Governors: Appointments in the Diocese of Chester, page 8)