



The distinction between Collective Worship and Religious Education

This document is intended for all schools and trusts within the Diocese of Leicester

The school standards and framework Act (1998) outlines that Collective Worship (CW) is a legal requirement for all pupils within England and Wales, unless their parents utilise their legal right to withdraw them from this daily activity. More details of this legal requirement can be seen [HERE](#).

The Department for Education states that Religious Education (RE) is compulsory for all pupils up to the age of 18 as part of the basic curriculum that schools should deliver, unless parents utilise their legal right to withdraw from this legal requirement. More details of this legal requirement can be seen [HERE](#).

The planning and delivery of CW should be separate to RE and the two should not be conflated as they are serving distinct purposes within school.

Purpose of Collective Worship

Guidance for the planning and delivery of CW in a Church of England school has been outlined by the Church of England and can be seen [HERE](#).

The primary purpose of CW is not to gain knowledge and learn information, though of course this may happen. Instead, it is to carve out time daily to come together as a school community and worship. What this means and looks like will differ from school to school as all school contexts are unique. However, within a Church of England School, it should be distinctively Christian and offer the invitational opportunity to explore God and the person of Jesus Christ. This could include reflection, singing, prayer and exploring passages from the Bible.

CW may take place within the school building or at another location such as the local Church. Where CW takes place outside of the school building, teachers and leaders should ensure they have planned the Collective Worship thoroughly with any Church leaders and/or external providers. This could include ensuring that all people delivering CW have access to the Leicester DBE guidance on CW that can be seen [HERE](#) and that they have had access to training on the purpose and intent of CW which can be viewed [HERE](#). Teachers and leaders should liaise with Churches and/or external providers on the content of any Collective Worship that they may be leading and carry out visits to the Church beforehand to evaluate the appropriateness of the space for the aged pupils who are visiting the Church or other places of worship.

Purpose of Religious Education

The Church of England's statement of entitlement for RE outlines the main purpose and aim for RE within a Church of England School and can be seen [HERE](#).

The main purpose of RE is for pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of a range of Religious and non-religious worldviews. It is an academic subject and should be given a profile, provision and priority within school that reflects this. At least 50% of the curriculum time within a Church of England school should be on the teaching and learning of Christianity and the remaining time should be on other religious and non-religious worldviews. At least 5% of total curriculum time should be spent on RE, which equates to roughly 1 hour per week. The RE Ofsted research review which can be seen [HERE](#) outlines the importance of frequent RE teaching over 'RE days' or enrichment days, as pupils are less likely to gain the knowledge and understanding they need from infrequent exposure to quality RE teaching.

Due to the distinct purposes outlined above, any delivery of CW cannot be included within the curriculum time of RE. Likewise, the daily offer of CW should not be carried out in the allocated time for a Religious Education lesson. For example, if a teacher was teaching about the Eucharist within RE and wanted to show this practically within class, this would not be an example of daily worship as it is done for the purpose of teaching and learning within an RE lesson.

Schools are reminded to keep RE and CW policies separate on their website to ensure the two are not conflated by any stakeholders.