



CARLISLE  
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Guidance for religious or faith visitors taking  
part in Collective Worship or Religious  
Education lessons in Carlisle Diocese CE  
Schools

## Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to visit and contribute to the life of our school. We are very grateful that you are willing to share your beliefs and practices with children and staff in our school and are looking forward to learning together. We hope you enjoy your visit and that your learning, as well as the children's, is enhanced. We hope you find this guidance helpful in further understanding the context of a Church of England school.

Our vision for education 'embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of all children and young people.' (CEE0, 2016:2) Our desire is for all children and adults to experience "life in all its' fullness." (John 10:10) Four theological concepts: wisdom, hope, community and dignity run through the Church of England vision for education. The vision 'is hospitable to diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief, and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings.' (CEE0, 2016:2) Church of England schools are inclusive, in that they are there for those of the Christian faith, those of other faiths and those of no faith.

We recognise the vital contribution to learning, representatives of religious communities can make when visiting schools. Encounters with people of faith help support pupils' understanding and knowledge of the faith and why it is important to those who practice it. Therefore, the Board of Education encourages visits from individuals of the major world religions, including specifically representatives from mainstream Christian, Jewish, Islam, Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

## Code of Conduct

Religious visitors taking part in the life of the school should:

- Be familiar with the school's distinctive Christian vision, values and ethos
- Plan their involvement in the curriculum in light of the above
- Be willing to respect and value the beliefs of pupils and adults in the school
- Be willing to share their own experiences, beliefs and insights

## Collective Worship

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school community and in line with the school's trust deed **must be** Christian in nature, generally within the Anglican tradition, whilst being welcoming of other mainstream Christian traditions. Therefore content, however delivered, should reflect this. Prayers, acts of worship or faith stories shared during Collective Worship should reflect the Christian faith.

## Religious Education (RE)

In Church of England schools RE involves exploration of the beliefs and practices within Christianity and other major world faiths as detailed within the Statement of Entitlement

(CEE0, 2019) and reflected within the school's individual RE policy. It is therefore appropriate that visitors contribute to the curriculum to aid children's knowledge and understanding. Prior to you contributing to the RE curriculum the teacher/RE lead/Head teacher should discuss what they wish you to cover during the lesson and how this will fit into the RE topic the children are studying. Visitors should be open to teachers' suggestions and make any adjustments to your input as requested. The school should supply you with a copy of its' RE policy.

Lesson contributions should:

- Reflect directly RE programmes of study
- Take account of the differing needs of pupils
- Demonstrate engaging teaching and learning methods that involve pupils actively
- Make use of methods of communication appropriate for the age groups concerned
- Encourage pupils to respect others' beliefs
- Include insights into the visitor's beliefs and practices.

**Please note:** We recognise that by being involved in demonstration children are not taking part in actual religious practice or prayer. However, where demonstration of religious practices involve children, visitors must be sensitive to the fact that not all children (and their families) may want to be involved in this way. For example, some families would object, on religious grounds, to children dressing up in religious traditional dress or being involved in simulations of ritual practices. It is also not appropriate for children to be involved in prayers from faiths other than the Christian religion. The school will have made parents aware of the visit and the school's expectations.

### Concluding thoughts

A Church of England school is a 'hospitable community that seeks to embody an ethos of living well together.' (CEE0, 2016:11) We want visitors to feel welcomed into the school community, even if it is for a short period of time. Adults and children alike are valued and encouraged to 'live life to the full.' (John 10:10) We hope you enjoy your visit and feel blessed by the opportunity to share your beliefs and faith practices with children and adults in the school community. We wish to formally thank you for the contribution you have made to children's knowledge and understanding as a result of your visit.

### Further Information and Advice

- Church of England Education Office, (2016) *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*
- Church of England Education Office (2019) *Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement*  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/RE%20Statement%20of%20Entitlement%20for%20Church%20Schools.pdf>

- NATRE (2007) *Religious Believers Visiting Schools: Guidance and a Code of Conduct*  
<https://www.retoday.org.uk/media/display/rbvs.pdf>