

Prayer & Liturgy Policy

St. John's Catholic Comprehensive School



**Excellence for All
Service to Others
Inspired by Christ**

Policy approved and ratified by the Governing Body

Owner: Mr. B. Smith

Quality Assured: Mr. M Barron

Date: January 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026

1. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

‘The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.’

(Marcus Stock (2012), *Christ at the Centre*, Catholic Truth Society, 23.)

At St John’s, Prayer life is central to all that we do. “Just as Our Lord Jesus Christ is at the heart of all our prayer and liturgy, so too he is at the centre of every Catholic school. His Gospel is the reference point for its ethos and values; he offers the definitive example of the educator.”

(Prayer and Liturgy Directory 1.1)

2. Statement of requirement

St John’s Catholic Comprehensive School as a Catholic school, provides an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all students, and staff, in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church.

The school recognises and respects that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children up to the age of 16 from prayer and liturgy.

The school’s provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil students’ entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music/hymns with which students in the school will be familiar.

Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school, this means that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

3. Responsibility

(a) Governance

The governors, as guardians of St John’s Catholic Comprehensive School’s life and mission, have a responsibility to ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator)
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

(b) Headteacher

The Headteacher, as the spiritual leader of St John’s Catholic Comprehensive School’s Catholic community, ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
- those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

(c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

The Prayer and Liturgy coordinator (Lay Chaplain) ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is an Annual Plan of Provision for prayer and liturgy across the school year which identifies liturgical seasons and key celebrations, as well as opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments
- there is daily planned prayer for all students, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- students are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation
- resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and students
- induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- monitoring of prayer and liturgy, undertaken by a range of school leaders, is reported to the Director of Catholic Life & RE, Headteacher and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- there is collaboration with local clergy and parishes
- liaison with the Diocesan Education Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

A range of prayer and liturgy will be provided at St John's, including, but not limited to, provision of digital weekly prayer resources to be used in morning tutor time, weekly assemblies for each Year Group, and whole school assemblies.

Whole School Masses are planned on the school calendar at appropriate points such as holy days (e.g. Epiphany) and end of the year. Year group and/or Key Stage Masses also take place throughout the school year – e.g. Yr11 and Yr13 Leavers' Mass.

Celebration of the word will be celebrated at key times such as Advent and Lent.

Celebrations of Reconciliation will occur twice a year in Advent and in Lent, with the option for the Sacrament available on request throughout the year.

Details of all provisions can be found in the School Calendar, and the Liturgical school calendar which incorporates the Annual Plan of Provision (APP).

5. Our school context

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy.

Prayer, reflections and gospel readings, linking to themes of Catholic Social Teaching, are expected to be said in form time and/or assemblies. A weekly prayer/reflections Power Point resource is emailed to all staff by the Director of Catholic Life & RE. This is produced in liaison with the school Chaplain. The weekly prayer resource is also promoted in staff briefing on a Monday morning.

The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. A crucifix should be on display in all teaching classrooms. The Chapel, as the dedicated space for prayer and liturgy, will be furnished and maintained as such, and will reflect the Church's liturgical season. The school

chapel is open daily at lunch and break times for students to have the opportunity to participate in personal prayers and reflections.

Staff training and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered on a regular basis and all are invited to come forward for a blessing or to receive Holy Communion. Masses and Celebrations of the Word are organised and led by the Chaplain, who works collaboratively with other relevant staff (e.g. school choir, school band) to ensure the high quality of liturgy delivered.

A range of assemblies in school are delivered by Year Leaders, SLT, Chaplain and by students. All Assemblies should include time for prayer and reflection; and may also include readings from Scripture. Whole school assemblies will be used to mark formal events such as Remembrance, and Holocaust Memorial Day, and will include reflections which link to themes in Catholic Social Teaching.

Students actively Participate in the Ministry of the Word and in the Ministry of Music in both Mass and Celebrations of the Word.

Reconciliation is offered twice a Year in Advent and in Lent, and is supported by clergy from our local parish at St John's in Gravesend. Students will attend a Reconciliation assembly led by our Chaplain and/or clergy. Students have the opportunity to sign up for the sacrament on that day.

The Chaplain and Subject Leader for Music meet regularly to review music and to ensure it is in keeping with the Prayer & Liturgy Directory. Music is chosen to reflect the Liturgical season. Students take an active role in both the choir (singing) and band (playing instruments.)

6. Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. Dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy will be furnished and maintained as such, and updated to reflect the Church's liturgical season. Staff training and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

7. Training and formation

All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development at least once a year, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, and at least annually, via the use of an MS Forms survey, and involve all key stakeholders: students, parents, staff, and governors.

Monitoring of form time and assemblies for prayers will be undertaken by the Director of Catholic Life & RE, the Chaplain, and other key leaders across the school on a regular basis. This may involve dropping into form group classes, speaking with form tutors & year leaders, and speaking with samples of students from different year groups.

All whole school liturgies and celebrations of the word are reviewed and evaluated after each event. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

9. Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.

There is virtue in variety and also great scope for creativity: varying the focus and the format according to the liturgical year reinforces the essential Catholic focus of the school while providing opportunities for pupil engagement.



Celebrations of the word As the time allotted to prayer lengthens and the number of people involved grows, there is a corresponding need for more formal structures. The term ‘celebrations of the word’ is used in this Directory for celebrations which are created for the school community and not directly taken from the liturgical books of the Church.

These celebrations will take many forms, but the common element is the proclamation of scripture. These include assemblies, carol services, and other gatherings of all or part of the school community for special times and occasions. They may draw upon elements of the liturgy, such as its texts, symbols, and gestures, which help to reinforce their Catholic nature, but the various elements may be used with greater creative freedom than in the liturgy itself.



Liturgy The most familiar forms of the liturgy celebrated in school are the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The liturgical books, such as the Roman Missal and the Lectionary, set out the structure to be followed, the words to be spoken, the gestures to be performed, and the symbols to be used when celebrating a liturgy. The possibility for some creativity and adaptation remains but they have to be exercised within the parameters authorised by the liturgical books.

