



St Cecilia's

R. C. High School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Reviewed on Date: June 2023

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils. At St Cecilia's there is a weekly act of worship in the form of an 'assembly' for one or two year groups and a weekly Mass for different form groups to attend. Single acts of worship, in form groups, take place each morning, and prayers are said before lunch and at the end of the school day. We acknowledge that assembly and collective worship are not the same thing but in our school the term 'assembly' is used to refer to the weekly act of collective worship.

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Head Teacher.

Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

This should be central to the life of the school and a feature of every school action and celebration. Acts of Collective Worship, therefore, should be embedded within this and should be inclusive, educational and spiritual.

Worship should be relevant to students' experience, involve them as participants and foster a sense of community within the school. Collective worship reflects the traditions of the Catholic Church, whilst taking into account the spiritual and educational needs of all who share in it.

In line with DfE/OFSTED guidance, we aim to support students with different religious beliefs in their prayer rituals. Worship should be linked to curricular activities and allow students opportunities to reflect on the educational aims of our school and should provide opportunities for individual reflection in an atmosphere conducive to the consideration of the transcendent and sense of mystery.

Ultimately, collective worship should be meaningful.

The Role of the Chaplaincy Team

The liturgical life of the school is organised and monitored by the Lay Chaplain, with support from the Head of RE and the SLT, who plan and arrange liturgies together with the local clergy, where possible.

Prayers are provided to assist form tutors in leading Collective Worship. This contains prayers and reflections related to everyday life/events and the liturgical year.

Daily events are arranged throughout Advent and Lent to support students' understanding of those liturgical seasons. The Chaplain also arranges and organises regular acts of worship or liturgical events so that our students are consistently exposed to Catholic acts of worship.

The religious and educational needs of all who share and participate in worship are also taken into consideration, when acts of collective worship are planned.

Designated staff, principally the Chaplain and SLT, are also responsible for developing a programme of retreats to be made accessible for identified year groups as well as working with Heads of Year and organising events that give students the opportunity to show service to others through acts of charity.

Daily Prayers

Prayer, worship and liturgical celebration are central to our Catholic tradition. It is of prime importance, however, that sound educational and pastoral principles determine the ways in which these are experienced in the school community'

Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Roman Catholic School, Third Ed. 1994, CES

The school day begins with prayer and ends with prayer, which is central to our life and work in this Catholic School. At St Cecilia's, we believe that our community can be made distinctive by:

- Praying with students
- Helping students to reflect on their prayers
- Encourage students to create their own prayer
- Enable students to participate in the liturgy
- Foster a quiet and prayerful environment
- Celebrate prayer and learning through assemblies
- Participate in staff prayer
- Working with the parish communities
- Inviting parents into the prayer life of the school
- Sharing with students in Eucharistic and other liturgical celebrations

- Offering students, the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during either Advent or Lent (depending on Priest availability)

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that Collective Worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Worship in our school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To consider and celebrate the values of the Gospels
- To reflect on spiritual, social and moral issues
- To encourage an understanding of religious beliefs and practices
- To explore their own beliefs
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To affirm and develop the individual
- To develop a sense of enquiry and encourage a search for human meaning
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To foster a sense of joy, awe and wonder
- To encourage an awareness of and compassion for the needs of the world community.

Principles

All acts of worship at St Cecilia's will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- Give our pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church
- Be designed to actively engage pupils and elicit responses
- Be resourced and planned
- Be flexible and able to respond to special occasions.

Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons and significant dates. Scripture will be an important focus in most acts of worship.
 - with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community.
 - to develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.
- The Deputy Headteacher will draw up the rota for 'assemblies' to ensure a variety of staff and themes as well as planning in the rota time for form assemblies.

Mass

We aim to organise the celebration of Mass once a week for all year groups organised in form groups in our dedicated newly built Chapel.

The prayers, readings, music and various liturgical presentations are organised by identified staff in conjunction with our chaplain and the chaplaincy group.

Students are also involved in the planning of Mass.

Each form group should have at least one Mass per term.

- Year 7 Students will additionally have their Welcome Mass in September
- Year 8 and 9 will have their additional Mass in celebration of St Cecilia in November
- Year 11 will have their extra Celebration Mass at the end of year 11 in May

All pupils will be involved in the annual whole school Mass in June.

School Collective Worship rota is produced each year that includes acts of collective worship organised by Senior Leaders, Heads of Year Chaplain or Form Groups.

This rota follows the liturgical calendar (which includes all the main feasts of the Church's calendar) and themes are calendared to assist those leading the respective assemblies.

Each Year Group has a Liturgical assembly each week our aim is for these assemblies to become more student-led in both planning and delivery.

Every Collective Worship Assembly, where possible, will follow the following routine:

- Students line up outside the main hall. At this point students should be prepared for the occasion and be respectful. Uniform should be checked here and any issues resolved
- The SLT member assigned for that day should be at the front of the hall ensuring students are silent and respectful
- Students enter the main hall in silence and sit in silence awaiting the rest of the year Group focusing on either the power point, listening to the music or visual focal in the hall.
- All (in line with personal beliefs) give the sign of the Sign of Cross
- St Cecilia's unique School hymn and prayer are sung/said by all pupils. This is played by either the Head of Music or pupils who can play the piano.
- Exploration of Religious Theme as indicated by the Collective Worship rota for the year

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

Heads of Year /are responsible for ensuring the delivery of Collective Worship in forms.

Curriculum Leaders are responsible for ensuring that prayers happen in their departments before lunch and at the end of the day.

A group of pupils will participate in monitoring and developing Collective Worship through meeting with the HT / Head of RE / Chaplain, observing form worship and feeding back to staff.

Training

- September INSET – works on development of staff spirituality and faith.
- ECPD – 10 week programme
- CPD as relevant to staff appraisal
- Ethos Inset
- Diocese involvement
- Induction

