



The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



Collective Worship Policy

Scope:	Federation		
Date Adopted:	Spring 2024		
This Review:	n/a		
Next Review:	Spring 2025		Annually, or when regulations change.
Approved:	EHT		Curriculum Committee
	Governor	M. Dann	



The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools



'With God all things are possible'

'Where there is love, there is God'

The Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will give every child the best possible education because each individual is uniquely created and precious to God. As a Catholic community, guided by the Holy Spirit, we will follow the example of Jesus Christ in all aspects of daily life.

With the help of God's love, the Federation of St Elphege's and Regina Coeli Catholic Schools will seek to develop the whole child. Each child is uniquely created and precious to God and it is the Federation's mission, guided by the Holy Spirit, to nurture each child's spiritual, moral and academic growth.

Inspired by the teachings of Christ we will...

- Develop our children's faith, spirituality and joy in the love of God
- Educate our children to the highest standards thus realising their own potential
- Instil in our children the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed and take pride in their achievements recognising we each have special gifts and talents
- Encourage everyone to be more than they thought possible, in a secure and loving environment
- Promote a caring community where we will all behave well. We will be dignified in our actions, demonstrating good manners, tolerance, kindness and generosity to ourselves and others
- Prepare our children today to become tomorrow's responsible and independent individuals equipped to face life's challenges
- Ensure our Federation is a happy, safe and welcoming place where we all enjoy learning, work hard, support one another and do our best
- Create an active partnership of love, joy and high expectations between children, parents, carers, staff, governors, parishes and the wider community

Inclusion statement

The school community will ensure that ALL children irrespective of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender (including those who identify as transgender), sexual orientation, ability, special educational need, disability, faith or religion, age, culture, socio-economic or home background will have equal access to the breadth of this policy.

The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter and the school will endeavour to promote their individuality. Children with learning disabilities and gifted and talented children will be allowed to express themselves according to their ability. Work will be differentiated to meet their needs and achievements will be celebrated.

This Policy will be implemented through on going consultation with all members of the school community and developments in law or statutory guidance.

Introduction

To ensure that the Lord Jesus Christ is at the centre of a Catholic school, prayer and liturgy must be at the heart of its community life. They are essential to the school's Catholic life and mission.

The Catholic school is well aware that the community that it forms must be constantly nourished and compared with the sources from which the reason for its existence derives: the saving word of God in Sacred Scripture, in Tradition, and above all in liturgical and sacramental Tradition, enlightened by the Magisterium of the Church.

The community of a Catholic school will generally be inclusive of people who are not Catholics or Christians. This context provides Catholic schools with a unique opportunity to present, in an authentic way, our tradition of Catholic prayer and liturgy, while at the same time providing a welcoming environment for all pupils and staff. In order to respond to this most fruitfully, we are called to understand the tradition of the Catholic faith and maintain an approach that respects the integrity of all members of the school community.

(The Prayer & Liturgy Directory 2023 - "To love You more dearly")

FAITH Values

The work of our Federation is underpinned by our FAITH Values. We are committed to developing a community where our schools will be places of excellence. We will provide outstanding opportunities for all members of the community to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Gospel values whilst serving as witnesses to Christ. We will develop our schools to ensure learning opportunities and outcomes are based on first class teaching and leadership. As a community, we seek to ensure that these values are lived-out in all aspects of our lives.

Family - we seek to act fairly and responsibly in our relationships to ensure all are welcomed, nurtured and successful.

Aspiration - to provide the highest standards of teaching and learning so all in the schools' communities excel.

Inclusiveness - we believe that all are created in the image of God and therefore we will respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person, promoting equality and celebrating diversity.

Tolerance - to develop schools where there is true understanding of culture, respect for difference and special care for those most in need.

Harmony - to develop the schools as faith communities where the Gospel values of truth, honesty, forgiveness and reconciliation are lived.

Collective worship

Collective Worship is, by definition, the central part of this faith community. It is a regular feature of the school and takes the form of whole school worship, year groups, classes and groups within classes. It occurs both inside classrooms each day, and outside at assemblies, before mealtimes and at the end of the day. However, prayer and worship can happen at impromptu moments in the classroom and in our lovely surroundings. Assemblies are held weekly and led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, focussing on the theme of that week's learning in the Come and See scheme of work.

Each week a different class leads their key stage in a Celebration of the Word (formally liturgy) assembly created by the children in the class with a focus on the Sunday's gospel. Our parish priests lead Mass for the whole school, the key stage or a year group depending on the liturgical time of year.

St Elphege's

In the months of October and May, the schools observe the Rosary and the infant school celebrate the May Procession Mass. The infant school meet each morning to pray the Rosary led by members of the Senior Leadership Team and the EYFS and KS1 class teachers. The junior classes pray the Rosary in the classroom led by the class teacher. Parents are invited to join their children for this act of worship. The schools also celebrate St Elphege's feast day in April with Mass and activities for the community to join in together.

Regina Coeli

In the months of October and May, the school observe the Rosary. The infant school meet each morning to pray the Rosary led by members of the Senior Leadership Team and the EYFS and KS1 class teachers. The junior classes pray the Rosary in the classroom led by the class teacher. Parents are invited to join their children for this act of worship. The schools also celebrate their respective feast days with Mass and activities for the community to join in together. Mary Our Mother's Feast Day is celebrated in the summer term with a Mass and picnic.

Aims of Collective Worship

Collective worship lies at the heart of the Federation. It specifically aims to:

- provide opportunities for the development of a personal relationship with God;
- assist in the development of every child's spirituality;
- familiarise each child with traditional forms of prayer used in the Catholic Church;
- provide good liturgical experience;
- introduce a variety of formal and informal prayer settings and forms;
- enable each child to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, His personality and His teaching;
- assist each child in developing a social and individual moral consciousness;
- and enable each child to experience a sense of loyalty and belonging to a worshipping Christian faith community.

Mass

The whole school celebrates Mass on holy days of obligation and also for other festivals. In the junior schools, a year group prepares the Mass on a rota basis and parents are invited to attend. The infant school celebrates Mass together at special points in the liturgical calendar.

The end of the year is celebrated in all schools at a Leaver's Mass for Y2 and Y6 pupils. The children gather at either St. Elphege's Church or St. Dominic's Church and celebrate Harvest Mass in October, the Carol Service in December and the end of year celebration Mass in July.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

Catholic social teaching (CST) is rooted in Scripture, formed by the wisdom of Church leaders, and influenced by grassroots movements. It is our moral compass, guiding us on how to live out our faith in the world.

Catholic Social Teaching is intertwined throughout the 'Come and See' scheme of work. Children are regularly exposed to the CST principles in lessons and Collective Worship and asked how they can promote them to make a better and fairer world.

The seven principles of CST

- Dignity
- Solidarity
- The common good
- The option for the poor
- Peace
- Creation and Environment
- The dignity of work and participation

Our faith calls us to love God and to love our neighbours in every situation, especially our sisters and brothers living in poverty. Following in the footsteps of Christ, we hope to make present in our unjust and broken world, the justice, love and peace of God.

Modern Catholic social teaching is said to have originated in 1891 with the encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*. Since then, a wealth of teaching continue to give new life to the Scriptures and shape the Church's response to our modern world. From these Catholic social teaching documents and encyclicals we derive core principles.

Dignity

We believe every human person is made in the image and likeness of God. This is a gift that we all share as fellow human beings; we are all infinitely loved by our Creator.

God is present in every human person, regardless of religion, culture, nationality, orientation or economic standing. Each one of us is unique and beautiful. We are called to treat every person and every creature with loving respect.

Solidarity

Solidarity arises when we remember that we belong to each other. We reflect on this in a special way at Mass. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “The Eucharist commits us to the poor. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognise Christ in the poorest.”

The Common Good

The common good means that the fruits of the earth belong to everyone. No one should be excluded from the gifts of creation. Pope Paul VI spoke about this 50 years ago in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*.

Option for the poor

The option for the poor reminds us of God’s preferential love for the poorest and most vulnerable people. God’s love is universal; he does not side with oppressors, but loves the humble.

Peace

Peace is a cornerstone of our faith. Christ, the Prince of Peace, sacrificed himself with love on the cross.

Creation and environment

In the first pages of the Bible we read how God created the sun and the stars, the water and earth, and every creature. We believe Christ is the redeemer of all creation.

The dignity of work and participation

The dignity of work has been a key principle of Catholic social teaching from the very beginning.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued *Rerum Novarum* (On Capital and Labour). He shone a light on the injustice and exploitation of workers by the rich during the Industrial Revolution. He advocated for workers to join forces and fight against inhuman conditions.

Since then, Church teaching has upheld the dignity of work and participation. The human person should always come before the pursuit of profit. Workers have the right to join trade unions, to a just wage, to spend time with their families and to rest. Work is an essential part of our human dignity and everyone has the right to participate.

Focal Areas

Focal areas provide a space for reflection and may include prayers, books, candles, plants, enticing artefacts and children’s work. These are set up in each classroom, school hall and reception area as well as in corridors, the library and the Training Room. They are changed regularly to reflect changing topics and seasons with appropriate liturgical colours. The children may be involved in designing the content of the class focal areas and are encouraged to make use of the area throughout the day. Sometimes children bring additional items for the table. Often the area is used as a focus during RE lessons.

Definition of terms (Pg. 7 *The Prayer & Liturgy Directory 2023 - "To love You more dearly"*)

Prayer, celebrations of the word, and liturgy form a continuum with silent meditation at one end and a celebration of Mass on a Solemnity of the Church (e.g., Ascension of the Lord) at the other. Of course, there are areas of overlap between the categories.

Prayer:

Prayer has been traditionally described as ‘lifting up of the hearts and minds to God’, which means it involves our whole person – our head as well as our heart. This definition expresses a fundamental understanding that God is concerned and interested about what goes on in our lives; is due our expression of thanksgiving and gratitude; and responds to us when we express our needs. This basic dynamic of recognition, thanksgiving, and intercession forms the core of all prayer and liturgy.

It is wholly appropriate that communal prayer forms an essential dimension of life in a Catholic school. Staff and pupils are invited to recognise God’s action in their lives and the life of the school, and in response to express together their needs and those of the whole human family, and to offer thanks for all that is good. Communal prayer takes place, for example, at the beginning or end of the school day, in the classroom, or at a staff meeting.

Such prayer times will have a clear, simple structure. Texts used may include familiar prayers as well as prayers written for the occasion, but there is also scope for spontaneous prayers, for example, intercessions. Long-standing Catholic devotions, such as the Angelus or the Stations of the Cross during Lent, can also be suitable. Giving space for appropriate silence forms part of the prayer. 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:

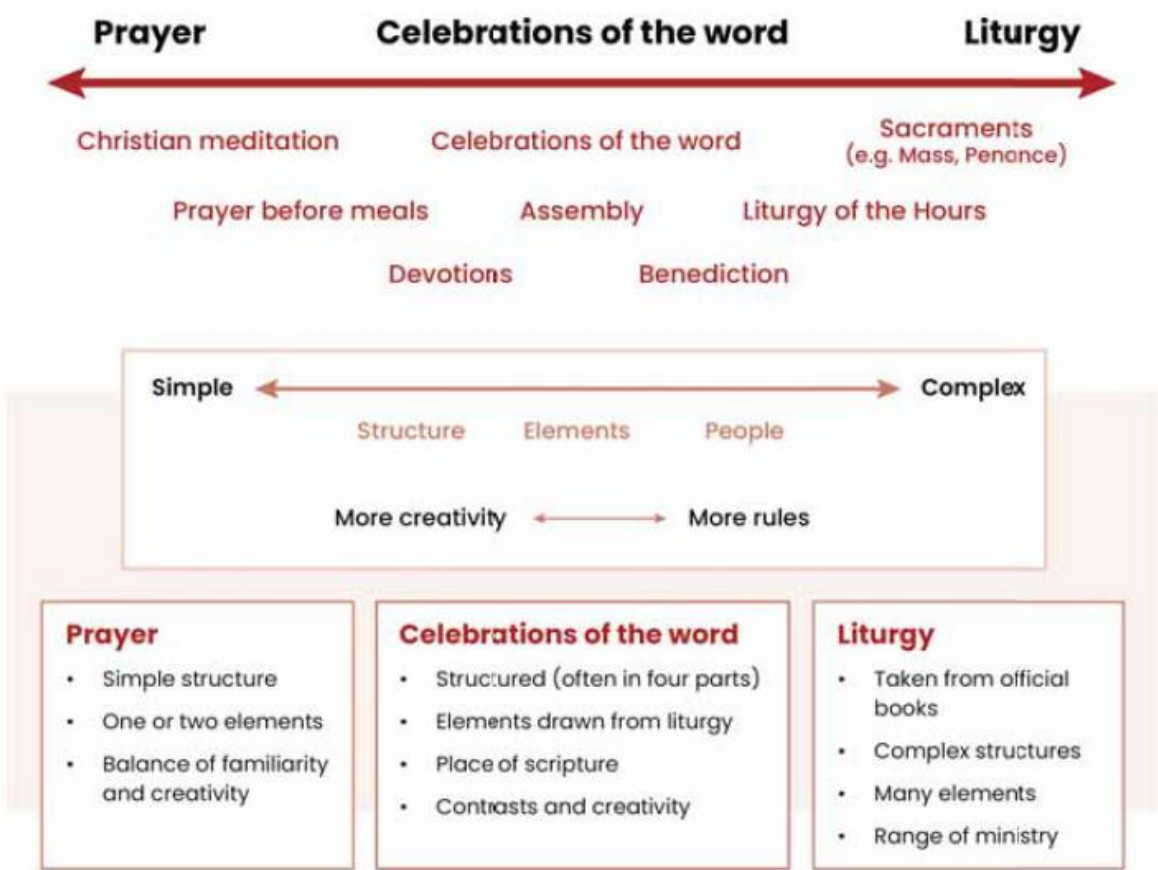
As the time allotted to prayer lengthens and the number of people involved grows, there is a corresponding need for more formal structures. The term ‘celebrations of the word’ is used in this Directory for celebrations which are created for the school community and not directly taken from the liturgical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



(Pg. 8 The Prayer & Liturgy Directory 2023 - “To love You more dearly”)

Other liturgies in school may include the celebration of parts of the Liturgy of the Hours, such as Morning Prayer, and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.