



Collective Worship Policy

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Statement of Intent

Our mission is to educate the young people entrusted to our care in the Catholic, Christian way that ensures that each one is valued and cared for and achieves the best of which he or she is capable.

The school aims to fulfil its mission in a number of ways: through the curriculum, through the pastoral system and through the many enrichment activities offered to pupils. In addition to this we seek to build up the community of St Mary's as an embodiment of the Catholic Church present in the pupils, staff, parents, governors and the wider parish communities who gather in a variety of ways and are Christ's body present in this school. One of the key ways in which we gather is for worship. Through our collective worship we pray that St Mary's School will become a truly Catholic and Christian community with Christ at its centre.

Introduction

Collective Worship in a Catholic school is concerned with the revelation of God's presence so that praise, honour and thanksgiving may be given to Him. Collective Worship should strengthen this Eucharistic community, which is called together to give witness to Jesus Christ. Collective Worship is this community's response to God, which invites us to enter

into a loving relationship with Him, made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Legal Requirements

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher. In accordance with the 1988 Education Act and the DfEE Circular 1/94, Collective Worship at St Mary's Catholic High School provides opportunities for pupils and staff to come together as a community through daily prayer in the classroom, through participation in weekly assemblies and through other liturgical celebrations including Mass. Furthermore, through Collective Worship we are able to encourage pupils and staff to reinforce positive attitudes they may have within their community. We also highlight and try to change negative attitudes within our society to encourage a common ethos and shared values amongst all.

Liturgy: Liturgy literally means 'work of the people' and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is the formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action.

Prayer: One of the early fathers of the Church described prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God or requesting of good things from God." These words of St John Damascene, now found in the catechism, illustrate why in this Catholic school we begin and end each session with a prayer.

Collective Worship: Collective Worship is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into a relationship with God, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.



The place of Collective Worship 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 this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The aims of Collective Worship

We believe that collective worship in our school community will provide a variety of opportunities to deepen our relationships with God and develop the following:

- To contemplate the mystery of God;
- To unite our worshipping Eucharistic community;
- To develop the necessary skills of....

Reverence Contemplation Reflection Interpretation Empathy Meditation

...which enable our relationship with God to be deepened.

Full participation in our faith will allow us:

- To grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding;
- To grow in understanding of our living faith tradition;
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ;
- To examine and reflect upon our own individual faith journeys;
- To develop the skills of prayer.

Implementation

All acts of worship should:

- **Give glory and praise to God**
- **Be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants**
- **Be kept to the point (and brief wherever possible)**
- **Be clear in their liturgical focus and varied in their delivery**

Collective Worship is delivered through:-

Assembly once a week for each Year group from 08.45 – 09.00 (from September 2016):

This is always a time of prayer and worship and includes a hymn and reading as well as vocalised prayers led by the teacher or visitor as well as shared prayer, including a set prayer. This time of prayer always begins with 'the sign of the cross' The school chaplain and RE Curriculum Leader devise a termly rota which involves a variety of people in delivering the collective worship, including Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers, Learning Managers, Form Tutors and pupils. It will include priests at key times, especially Advent and Lent and other ministers of religion as appropriate and other visitors. The themes follow the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church in England and Wales and other appropriate celebrations e.g. Holocaust Memorial Day.

- **Form Prayer, on a daily basis, led by the Form Tutor:** Support for this is given through a weekly sheet of suggested prayers and reflections provided by the Chaplain. There is a guidance sheet for each tutor so as to ensure that a valid and meaningful time of worship is provided for pupils. This time is crucial as it is the main time of daily reflection which pupils are entitled to. It should be of a reasonable amount of time in the 15-minute Form period (5 minutes as a minimum).
- **Short prayer to finish each day** (still in planning).



- **Whole school times of prayer and celebration. These include:** The annual Advent Carol Service at St Mary's Church, Ash Wednesday, special occasions, end of each term, annual prize-giving celebrations, Year 7 Welcome Mass, Year 11 Leavers' Mass.
- **The Eucharist:** offered to pupils and staff on a voluntary basis every Tuesday morning at St Mary's Church and on other mornings during Lent and Advent in the school chapel.
- **The Sacrament of Reconciliation:** celebrated with pupils during Advent and Lent.
- **Prayer opportunities:** offered each week in the school chapel and focus on different themes according to the calendar.
- **Advent and Holy Week liturgy:** take place as extended assemblies often with the support of Animate.
- **Staff briefing:** begins with a prayer; every third week there is a dedicated liturgy during the Friday briefing time.
- **Residentials & Retreats:** Many staff are involved in the delivery of this and this includes times of prayer, Reconciliation and Mass. Mini-retreats are offered to small groups from primary Schools.

Pattern of Collective Worship

Collective worship in our school may follow the pattern or variation of the pattern detailed as follows:

Gathering: how we come together, the setting and environment (quiet/ reflective music, lighted candles, statues, sign of the cross, focus and examination of conscience etc.)

Word: a reading from the Scriptures (or another suitable source), breaking the word, time to reflect on this and prayers to fit into the theme

Action: a ritual movement that everyone can join in with that fits with the theme (gestures such as shaking hands, holding hands, lighting a candle, prayers, responses to prayers, etc.)

Mission: the sending out from the celebration, giving the children something to hold onto from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

The Chaplain provides a more detailed sheet of guideline for Form prayers and support is available from the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Curriculum Leader for Religious Education.

Celebration of the Eur4charist

When planning a Eucharistic celebration, as for other acts of school worship, opportunities for children to participate will be maximised.

Year 7 Welcome Mass: pupils' first experience of mass in school requires planning and teaching and **explicit** instruction given prior to the celebration to ensure full participation and necessary understanding and confidence.

Voluntary Masses: Tuesday Morning throughout the year at St Mary's Church and other mornings during Lent and Advent in the school chapel.

Whole school end of term Mass: Usually held in our Parish Church with explicit planning for all pupils-particularly those in Year 7 & Year 8.

Provision for Collective Wroship on School Visits



On Residential Visits: On the Year 8 Pilgrimage, at Ampleforth with Year 10, on the London Trip with Year 11 and on the Lourdes Pilgrimage, Mass is celebrated with the entire group, involving staff and pupils in the preparation.

Eucharistic Minister training: There is a rolling programme for pupils to train as Eucharistic Ministers.

It is important for consistency of provision and to emphasise the importance of prayer, that when pupils take part in school trips, prayer takes place.

When a trip takes place during the school day/week then pupils will have opportunity to pray in the morning (as they would in Form) and in the afternoon. On a residential trip the latter prayers could be a night prayer at the end of the day. These could take place on the coach, on the street, in a hotel/conference room. The Chaplain will be available to staff taking trips in providing suitable resources for use when away. The desired outcome is that this is a normal aspect of school life and therefore a normal aspect of a school trip.

When the trip includes a weekend visit where pupils will not have the possibility of attending Sunday Mass before or after the trip, then, where possible, provision will be made for pupils to take part in a Mass. To avoid complications this will be the whole group (allowing for withdrawal at parental request cf. below). The ideal to aspire to is that this forms part of the routine of planning such a trip, much in the same way that risk assessments and safety procedures have to be in place. The experience of celebrating Mass together is a great blessing and in foreign countries a cultural as well as religious experience.

Staff training and development including resources

Training opportunities will be organised by the SLT with support from the Chaplain. These include:

- **INSET:** (once a year) dedicated to an aspect of Collective Worship (How to Pray with Your Form, Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School, Spiritual Development)
- **Training for leaders:** (Headteacher, Deputy & Assistant Headteachers, Pastoral Leaders through courses and in-house training sessions to enable these leaders to model good practice when they lead prayers in assembly or staff meetings and for them to be able pass on ideas in meetings with their tutor groups etc.
- **Regular prayer:** led by different staff as part of the normal workings of school. The Chaplain offers an exemplary model to learn from for all staff.

In addition to training a variety of support is offered especially by the school chaplain who encourages Form Tutors and Learning Managers to take groups of pupils to help prepare worship and provides materials for staff to use with their groups.

Policy monitoring & review

Governors should be aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to collective worship, taking account of the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, Education Act 1996 and the school standard framework 1998.

In St Mary's Catholic High School, it is the overall responsibility of governors, in consultation with the Headteacher, to ensure that the legal requirements are met and opportunities for quality collective worship are being delivered. Those responsible will ensure that acts of

worship are in accordance with the school's trust deed and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

This policy is monitored, in the first instance, by the Chaplain and Curriculum Leader for RE with Senior Leaders evaluating and reviewing every two years. Governors should review reports on the prayer life of the school on a termly basis. This forms part of the Headteacher's report to governors. The following will be monitored:

- Time set aside for collective worship
- Whether the observed practice is consistent with agreed policy
- Whether collective worship is resourced in terms of materials, visual aids etc.
- Staff development on collective worship and its impact
- Prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing pupils into prayer
- Impact on pupils and members of the school community
- Opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access worship and prayer
- Records of themes and teachings of the Catholic Church covered in collective worship.

Observation and monitoring records should be kept and should form part of the self-review process. Outcomes of monitoring will be communicated to staff and governors with recommendations for future action.

Right of Withdrawal

The Governors respect their rights of parents to withdraw their child from those components of Collective Worship above and beyond that which is:

- Required by law
- An integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Role of the School Chaplain

The Chaplain will be responsible for:

- Formulating a written policy
- Ensuring there is a development plan for collective worship
- Ensuring that collective worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that collective worship takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the Catholic teachings
- Organising themes for worship and providing ideas and structure for Form Prayers
- Assisting the Governors and Headteacher in carrying out their legal responsibilities with regard to collective worship.

Who is this policy for?

This policy will be communicated to:

- All members of the school community;
- Parish priests or members of pastoral areas as appropriate;
- New members of staff and will form part of their induction;
- New parents, to promote positive attitudes towards collective worship.



“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

