



St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School

Prepare the way of the Lord

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Rationale:

Prayer and Liturgy is vital to the spiritual life of St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School. We recognise its impact on the spiritual, moral and social development of our pupils and value it as a part of our distinctive ethos.

All staff, under the guidance of the Chaplain and the Senior Leadership Team, actively plan, lead and deliver prayer & liturgy throughout the academic year.

We recognise that daily Prayer & Liturgy (Collective Worship) is a statutory requirement in all schools, but that in schools with a designated religious character, prayer and liturgy it is far more than a statutory requirement; it is crucial to the spiritual life of the school.


Our Mission Statement '*Prepare the Way of the Lord*' forms the foundation of the spiritual life of the school and how we do this through our ACTIONS is explored and lived out in the prayer and liturgy offered to all pupils and staff.

Review Arrangements

To be reviewed every three years.

Approved at FGB Meeting: 5 December 2023

Signed:  Chair of Governors

Signed:  Headteacher

SECTION 1: Principles of The Prayer and Liturgy Policy

1. Christ is at the centre of everything we do. Opportunities for prayer and worship therefore is **the** top priority.
2. Every effort will be made to give pupils positive experiences based on sound educational, pastoral and liturgical principles.
3. Prayer and Liturgy will prepare pupils for the liturgical life of the Church.
4. Prayer and Liturgy will consider, as far as possible, the age, aptitudes and backgrounds of the pupils.
5. Eucharistic celebrations will highlight a special occasion, Holy Day of Obligation, or important season in the liturgical year.

SECTION 2: Implementation

2.1 Intended Impact

All prayer and liturgy should:

- Give glory and praise to God.
 - Be structured as per the school's guidelines to ensure a quality experience for all participants.
 - Be kept to the point.
 - Be clear in their liturgical focus and varied in their delivery.
 - Be open to all staff and students.
 - With regards to year group collective worship, use the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday to ensure that students hear the Word of God in liturgical order.
- 2.2 Each year group will have one assembly each week known as 'Collective Worship' and on other days worship will be held in form rooms using a resource known as 'Thought for the Week'.
- 2.3 Collective worship takes place according to the published collective worship rota and is planned and delivered by a different member of staff, department or form each week.
- 2.4 Individual Form groups may also come to the Chapel for a special prayer during registration time on a rota basis after the Christmas Term.

SECTION 3: Liturgy

3.1 The Celebration of Mass

Various opportunities to celebrate mass both in school and in the local parish of St Oswald's are given throughout the year.

Students participate by:-

- Proclaiming the readings and joining in with the responses at mass.
- Choosing the readings (sometimes) and theme for the mass (depending on liturgical feast or season).
- Playing music and singing.
- Writing and praying bidding prayers.
- Writing and leading post-communion reflections where appropriate.
- Bringing up the offertory.
- Operating a projector and sound/lighting equipment to aid prayer.
- Welcoming guests to the school or church if applicable and handing out booklets.
- Assisting the priest and deacon during the reception of Holy Communion.

- Specially commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist assist with ministering Holy Communion.

3.2 Holy Days

Although few Holy Days now fall on a school day, when they do, school masses should be celebrated immediately if a priest is available. Staff, students and parents are invited to attend.

In the event of a priest being unavailable to say mass, a service will be delivered by the School Chaplain and the 'Faith in Action' pupils. During services, opportunities are sought to enhance the liturgy in a way not always possible in mass – for example, reflective music/videos, using sign language to aid in various prayers, dramatization, etc.

When Ash Wednesday falls during term time, school will hold 5 services for each of our year groups, but no mass is held due to the priest's schedule. However, ashes will be blessed by the parish priest beforehand and distributed to all year groups and staff members by staff and student Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist who have received special training beforehand.

3.3 Masses for other occasions

The school will provide many other occasions to celebrate mass throughout the school year. Examples of Holy Days of Obligation and other opportunities are:-

- Staff mass on INSET days.
- Y11 'Welcome Mass' at St Oswald's Church held at beginning of final year. Parents and family are invited.
- Y7 'Mass of Welcome' at St Oswald's Church held once all the Y7 retreat days have taken place. Parents and family are invited. Preparations for mass take place during the Y7 retreat programme and in form time.
- Mass for 'All Saints Day' in the school hall.
- Lenten masses for all year groups (3 masses total) at St Oswald's Church. No parents are invited due to the church capacity (filled with students).
- Y11 'Leavers' Mass' at St Oswald's Church. Parents and family are invited.
- SS Peter and Paul whole school mass held outside on the school field, if the weather is appropriate or in the sports hall. Governors and alumni are invited to attend.
- Confirmation masses for Y8 pupils being confirmed held at various feeder parishes.

3.4 Services

Throughout the year, services are held at appropriate times to aid the spiritual and prayer-life of the school. Examples are:-

- Remembrance Day service is held at the front of school with a 2-minute silence, prayers delivered by staff and students, poppy wreaths laid at the foot of the cross by form representatives with hand-written poppies made by every member of the school community.
- Advent services in the school hall for all year groups with opportunities for carols to be sung and advent readings to be heard.
- Christmas Carol Service is held at St Oswald's Church in the lead up to Christmas with parents and community members invited, as well as all staff and students.
- Ash Wednesday services for all year groups with distribution of ashes.
- Reconciliation Service is held during Lent with opportunities to go to confession.
- Stations of the Cross services held on the 'avenue' outside St Oswald's Church during RE classes.
- Y7 services on the theme of 'friendship' (these traditionally were class masses but due to unavailability of the priest these are now Eucharistic Services).

3.5 The Sacrament of Reconciliation

During Lent a 'Service of Reconciliation' is held after school which is open to all staff, students, parents and parishioners. In addition to this service, local priests from the feeder parishes are on hand for sacramental reconciliation in the school chapel and appropriate spaces.

Further opportunities to receive the sacrament will be explored where appropriate and as often as possible.

3.6 Collective Worship Assemblies

Collective worship takes place in the main hall once per week for each year group and attached staff. For staff members not attached to a year group who wish to attend collective worship, cover will be provided for that staff member when appropriate to enable them to participate.

The theme for collective worship is taken from the previous Sunday's Gospel reading and is structured according to the school policy on how to plan, lead and deliver collective worship (a separate document). This document can be found on the school's shared 'One Drive' and is distributed to staff electronically at various points throughout the year. Additional training is provided in QFT briefings and INSET days. All collective worship follows the same structure, ie *Gather, Listen, Respond, Send Forth*.

The collective worship rota is distributed to all staff in advance and includes the full bible reference, a highlighted quote from that scripture, a breakdown of the theme for staff to use as a starting point, the place in the liturgical calendar and is colour coded to show liturgical colour.

Collective worship is the sole purpose of the assembly and should last between 10-15 minutes. Directors of Learning (DoL) have a responsibility to prepare students in the hall in an appropriate way for prayer by ensuring a silent, respectful atmosphere is held. DoL's where appropriate should link and summarise worship before any other essential notices are given at the end of assembly time. However, if essential information needs to be given to the year group that might not be appropriate to take place after worship, then an additional assembly should be arranged on a different day so as not to take away from prayerful purpose of assembly time.

Reward assemblies are carried out in extended assembly time once per term as these link to our school Mission Statement strands – ACTIONS. However, rewards assemblies are additional to planned worship on the rota and should not be done 'instead' of.

3.7 Thought for the Week on non-assembly days

Students have an entitlement to collective worship every day, but it does not need to be delivered through assemblies every day. On non-assembly days it is the responsibility of the form tutor to ensure that the form participate in their "*Thought for the Week*" prayer during form time. The tutor should introduce the prayer time and ready the students appropriately for the time of prayer. Students pray the opening and closing prayers collectively; the reflections are led by a combination of form tutor and pupils.

"*Thought for the Week*" is provided weekly by the chaplain who emails out a copy on Monday morning. In addition, the DoL's attach the prayer to the appropriate year team's One Note. The "*Thought for the Week*" archive is stored on the shared One Drive.

Where appropriate, several times throughout the year members of the Faith in Action team plan, write and distribute the "*Thought for the Week*" prayer. The chaplain assists the students with their planning and can guide where necessary.

“*Thought for the Week*” themes are varied and offer students an opportunity to think about key issues and themes throughout the year such as:-

- The Mission Statement
- Anti-bullying
- Climate change
- Catholic social teaching principles
- Gospel values
- CAFOD fast days
- Remembrance Day
- Youth Sunday
- Saints’ feast days
- Topical current world events

The “*Thought for the Week*” may differ in its look and structure during Lent and Advent so that students can take part in CAFOD Advent and Lent calendars.

One of the benefits of the “*Thought for the Week*” is that the concerns of life and of the world are brought to God regularly and students are encouraged to pray to God about any concerns of the world. Through this daily prayer, students are made aware that prayer is a very normal response to any need. This will nourish the faith and prayer life of students and their relationship with God.

During “*Thought for the Week*”, students will be reminded regularly of their value and importance in campaigning, standing in solidarity with those in need and putting faith into action.

During “*Thought for the Week*”, pupils participate in formal prayers such as the morning offering, The Glory Be, the Hail Mary and Our Father. During May, students may participate in the rosary during form and learn about the different mysteries.

There is an additional selection of formal prayers in the student and teacher planners as well as extensive prayer resources on the shared drive should form teachers wish to extend their worship time or pray for any additional intentions.

3.8 The Liturgical Year

Students experience the special feasts and seasons of the church eg: Advent, Lent, Pentecost in collective worship and through special activities in school such as morning prayer around the crib during Advent, ‘Stations of the Cross’ during Lent, the lighting of the advent wreath, rosary in October and May, seasonal hymns and prayers. All students hear the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday’s Gospel during worship in assemblies, providing the opportunity to listen to the Word of God in liturgical order.

Where appropriate, liturgical colour is used in imagery and display during worship in both form and assembly, for example purple during Advent/Lent, & red for Pentecost & feasts of martyr’s, apostles and evangelists.

Morning prayer follows the liturgical cycle of the church including the celebration of feasts and solemnities.

3.9 Morning Prayer and other opportunities for Prayer

Morning prayer is held daily in the school chapel, apart from during Advent and Lent when it is held in the foyer of the school around the crib/advent wreath or the Lenten display.

On Mondays and Fridays, prayer will begin at 8:20am to accommodate the staff briefing and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, prayer will begin at 8:25am to maximise the number of students and staff being in school and available to attend.

Morning prayer should be inspired by the official Morning Prayer of the Church (Lauds) and pupils should be regularly reminded that we are praying in solidarity with our Catholic brothers and sisters across the world.

The exception to Lauds should be during October and May when the rosary is prayed daily and during Lent when the Stations of the Cross are reflected on and during Advent when special daily reflections are used.

Other opportunities for prayer will be sought wherever possible and appropriate for staff and students. Some examples of other opportunities already offered are:-

- All Souls Day liturgy in morning prayer in the school chapel
- Exposition, benediction, and the Angelus for all Y7 pupils during their retreat days
- Stations of the Cross in school and at church
- Holy hours in the school chapel or main hall during special weeks
- The rosary during October and May
- Staff prayers during every briefing (Monday and Friday)
- Staff evening prayers during Advent and Lent
- Spirituality lessons take the place of a normal RE lesson no more than once per half term.

The purpose of these lessons is to build on the students' knowledge and understanding of their own spirituality and beliefs by focusing on three main areas:-

- Relationships with each other and with God
- Service for those in need
- Mediations on the person of Christ and the beauty of creation

During lessons there are times for prayer, silent contemplation and collective worship. Often there are prayer focuses for the whole group to reflect on together.

SECTION 4: Provision & Monitoring of Prayer and Liturgy

4.1 The Chapel

The name of the school chapel is the 'Cenacle', – meaning 'the upper room'. In the Gospels, the upper room is where Jesus met with his friends to talk, to share meals together and to relax. In the same way, students should be encouraged to use our school's 'upper room' as a place to meet, to talk, to relax, to share the eucharistic meal. By spending time together in this way, the chaplain is able to accompany many of our pupils quietly on their school journeys and walk with them through the difficult moments of their school career in much the same way that Jesus taught his disciples to; with love, compassion and quiet care.

The chapel does not have reservation for the Blessed Sacrament and so therefore has more of a chaplaincy feel, however the permanent fixture of the Altar along with paschal candle, pews and stained-glass windows gives the room a sense of holiness and spirituality.

The school chapel is open to everyone for quiet prayer and reflection. It is situated prominently at the front of school and can be accessed by all at all times of the day.

Resources for personal prayer & reflection are available to all in the chapel. Resources for the planning, leading and delivery of prayer and liturgy can also be found in the chapel and in the RE department.

The chapel is a place of worship for all. Students and staff of other faiths are more than welcome to use the space for prayer and reflection. Our Muslim students and staff currently use the space on Friday lunchtime for the jum'ah (Friday noon prayers)

4.2 The Shared Drive

The chaplain will provide appropriate resources and training for staff on how to plan, lead and deliver prayer and liturgy. All resources will be stored centrally on the shared drive for all staff to access.

In addition to this, historical prayer and liturgy will be stored on the shared drive (however, some were lost due to the cyber-attack). These can be used as inspiration and guidance but must not be re-produced.

4.3 Monitoring

Monitoring of prayer and liturgy includes observations of collective worship.

Thought for the Week monitoring will be undertaken by the chaplain, SLT & DoLs regularly. The chaplain will keep a regular written record of collective worship and ask other staff and students to help monitor regularly. A further document on the shared drive will be used by Chaplain and DoLs to monitor *Thought for the Week*.

Monitoring aims to ensure key elements of prayer and liturgy are being met (such as the structure, liturgical cycle, consistency etc) it does not aim to criticise the prayer itself as prayer is a distinctly personal experience.

Feedback will be provided if appropriate/requested.

Termly reports on prayer and liturgy and chaplaincy are provided to the governing body for scrutiny.

Additionally, a termly Chaplaincy and Catholic Ethos Improvement Plan (CHIP) is produced by the chaplain and scrutinised by Line Management, SLT RE lead and the Headteacher.

The governing body and the RE lead are welcomed and encouraged to observe prayer and liturgy throughout the year at a time of their choosing as well as being invited to attend specific events.