St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School

**Prayer and Liturgy Policy**

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Reviewed: October 2023

Recommission Date: October 2026

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 such as us, prayer and liturgy is far more than a statutory requirement; it is crucial to the spiritual life of the school.

Our School 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.

**Section 1** **Principles of The Prayer and Liturgy Policy**

1. Christ is at the centre of everything we do in St Edmund Arrowsmith. 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 take into account, 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**

* 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
  + Use the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday so as to ensure students hear the Word of God in liturgical order.

Each year group will have one assembly each week known as ‘Collective Worship Assembly’ and on other days worship will be held in form rooms using a resource known as ‘Thought for the Week’.

Collective Worship Assemblies take place according to the published Collective Worship Rota and is planned and delivered by a different member of staff, department or form each week.

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
  + Sometimes choosing the readings 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 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 after school in the Main Hall 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 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 to hold 5 services for each of our year groups – no Mass is held due to priest availability. However, ashes to be blessed by parish priest beforehand and distributed to all year groups and staff members by staff and student Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist who have had special training beforehand.

**3.3** **Masses for other occasions**

We 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 invited
  + Y7 Mass of Welcome at St Oswald’s Church held once all Y7 Retreat Days have taken place. Parents and family invited. Preparations for Mass take place during Y7 Retreat programme and in form time.
  + Mass for All Saints Day in the school Hall
  + Lenten Masses for all year groups (three Masses total) at St Oswald’s Church. No parents invited due to church capacity being filled with students.
  + Y11 Leavers Mass at St Oswald’s Church. Parents and family invited.
  + SS Peter and Paul Whole School Mass held outside on the school field if weather appropriate or in Sports Hall. Governors and Alumni 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 held on the front school field with 2 minutes 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 held at St Oswald’s Church nearer to Christmas with parents and community invited as well as all staff and students.
  + Ash Wednesday Services for all year groups with distribution of ashes.
  + Reconciliation Service 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 priest are now Eucharistic Services).

**3.5** **The Sacrament of Reconciliation**

During Lent a service of Reconciliation is held after school 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.

**3.6 Collective Worship Assemblies**

Collective Worship Assemblies take place in the Main Hall once per week for each year group and attached staff.

For any staff members not attached to a year group who wish to attend Collective Worship Assembly, cover will be provided for that staff member when appropriate to enable them to participate.

The theme for Collective Worship Assemblies are taken from the previous Sunday’s Gospel reading and are structured according to the school policy on how to Plan, Lead and Deliver Collective Worship. This document can be found on the shared One Drive and is distributed to staff electronically at various points throughout the year and additional training is given in QFT briefings & INSET days. All Collective Worship Assemblies follow the same structure; 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 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. If behaviour needs addressing or any essential information needs to be given to the year group, an additional assembly should be arranged at a different day so as not to take away from prayerful purpose of assembly time. Rewards assembly’s however are done in extended assembly time once per term as these link to our school Mission Statement strands ACTIONS. But 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 need not be delivered through assemblies every day. On non-assembly days it is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to ensure 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 collectively the opening and closing prayers. The reflections are led by a combination of form tutor and pupil.

Thought for the Week is provided weekly by the Chaplain who emails out a copy on Monday morning. DOL’s attach the prayer to the appropriate year team One Note in addition. All Thought for the Weeks are also stored on the shared One Drive.

Where appropriate, members of the Faith in Action team plan, write and distribute the Thought for the Week prayer. The Chaplain aids them in 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; our school Mission Statement, anti-bullying, Climate Change, Catholic Social Teaching principles, Gospel Values, CAFOD Fast Days, Remembrance Day, Youth Sunday, Saints Feast Days, Current events and crisis’.

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

One of the benefits of 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, pupils participate in formal prayers such as the Morning Offering, Glory Be, Hail Mary, Our Farther. During May, forms participate in the Rosary and learn about the different Mysteries.

There is also an additional selection of formal prayers in the Student and Teacher planners and there is an 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 e.g. Advent, Lent, Pentecost in Collective Worship Assemblies and through special activities in school such as Morning Prayer around the Crib during Lent, Stations of the Cross, 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 so as to hear the Word of God in liturgical order.

Where appropriate, liturgical colour is used in imagery & display during worship in both form and assembly, for example purple during Advent/Lent, & Red for Pentecost & Feasts of Martyr’s, Apostles & Evangelists.

**3.8 Morning Prayer**

Morning Prayer is held daily in the school Chapel apart from during Advent and Lent where it is held in the Foyer of School around the Crib/Advent Wreath or the Lenten Display.

On Mondays & Friday prayer begins at 8:20am to accommodate staff briefings and on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday prayer begins at 8:25 to maximise on 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 out Catholic brothers and sisters across the world.

The exception to Lauds should be during October & 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.

**3.9 Other Opportunities for Prayer**

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 school chapel
  + Exposition, Benediction & 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 & May
  + Staff prayers during every briefing (Mon & Fri)
  + 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’ and ‘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 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 ‘upper room’ as a place to meet, to talk, to relax, to share the eucharistic meal, and also to share our lunch meals together during lunch and break time. By spending time together in this way, the chaplain is able to accompany many of our pupils quietly on their school journeys and walks 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. Resources for the planning, leading and delivery of Prayer and Liturgy can also be found in the chapel and in the RE department.

**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 that haven’t been 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 acts of worship, including Thought for the Week and discussions with those who lead worship, discussions or written feedback from those who experience worship. Monitoring is regularly undertaken by the Chaplain, The Head of RE, Directors Of Learning and other members of the Senior Leadership Team. Students and other members of staff present are also asked for feedback where appropriate.

Monitoring logs are kept by the school Chaplain and available on the shared One Drive.

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 lead and the Headteacher.

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

**Review Arrangements**

To be reviewed every three years.

Signed by S Westhead, Chair of Governors:

Date:

Signed by M Dumican, Headteacher

Date: