SAINT MARY’S CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY

Mr. J O’Connor – Head Teacher

Prayer & Liturgy Policy

(Collective Worship)

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| Approved by: Joseph O’Connor Date: July 2024 |
| Review Date: September 2025  |

*Policy for Prayer & Liturgy*

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT IS**

**“WE VALUE ALL IN THE NAME OF**

**JESUS THE CHRIST”**

We Believe:

Everyone has the right to have their dignity respected, their worth valued and to become fully human and fully alive. (These rights are rooted in the belief that we are created in the image and likeness of God.)

We Hope:

Our hope is that all who come into contact with our school will be inspired to:

Grow spiritually, act justly, think critically and creatively, work collaboratively, as life-long learners, confident in the knowledge of God’s love for them.

We are Committed to:

We are committed, through the Catholic Dimension of our school:

* to develop the children’s spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical well-being;
* to treat all people with justice, respect and equality, as Children of God;
* to encourage, as Children of God, a spirit of community and cooperation based on Gospel Values, embracing Forgiveness and Reconciliation in all our relationships.

**‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.’ (Matthew 18:20)**

**This scripture provides the starting point for understanding prayer and liturgy within a Catholic school.**

**Whenever we come together to pray or to celebrate the Sacraments or to hear the scriptures, Christ is present — and actively so.**

**Introduction**

**Understanding Prayer and Liturgy** (From the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory, September 2022)

*In any school there will be a range of prayer and liturgy: classroom prayer, meditation,*

*assemblies, devotions, special services for times in the school year, celebrations of Mass and*

*the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each form of prayer and liturgy will have its own character*

*dependent on the circumstances, size and age of the group, the place of celebration and its*

*content.*

***Definition of Terms***

*Prayer, Liturgical Prayer, 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.*

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 *Taken from the Prayer and Liturgy Directory*

At St Mary’s, Prayer and Liturgy is integral to developing the children’s relationship with Christ. Gospel values are embedded in all that we do with Christ at the centre. Prayer and Liturgy is central to our Catholic ethos and we expect all staff to lead and model good practice in prayer. It provides an opportunity for all to reflect on God’s word and to celebrate and respond to the beliefs and attitudes, which characterise Christian life.

We strive to provide a rich variety of prayer and assemblies, which will deepen the pupil’s sense of belonging to the faith community of our school and to the wider church. Children take an active role in planning, leading and evaluating Prayer and Liturgy. We believe worship remembers and celebrates God’s work in our lives. It celebrates his presence amongst us today and allows children and staff the opportunity to be joined with Him. In our school, Prayer and Liturgy takes many forms including prayer, song, assemblies, meditation and liturgies. We strive to provide many opportunities for the children to develop their relationship with God. Children are encouraged to meditate and reflect deeply on the Gospel Values and carefully consider how these will impact on their lives and the lives of others.

**The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy**

We believe that Christian Prayer and Liturgy in a Catholic school names and celebrates God’s presence in our lives. It 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.

***‘The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.’ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005***

**Legal Requirements**

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of Prayer and Liturgy for all pupils. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that Prayer and Liturgy and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear. As part of this, we also take our duty of Safeguarding very seriously and we understand that personal prayer and reflection may subsequently lead to a disclosure which would activate our well-established safeguarding procedures.

The act of Prayer and Liturgy is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. As a rule, acts of Prayer and Liturgy will take place on the school premises, or Church.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from ‘Collective Worship’. However, given the importance of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to ‘timetabled slots’ but may take place in a variety of contexts other that those which are specifically structured, within Come and See RE curriculum.

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

We endorse the belief that Prayer and Liturgy 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.

Prayer and Liturgy 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 Prayer and Liturgy**

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

* To contemplate the mystery of God
* To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
* To explore personal beliefs
* To respond to and to celebrate life
* To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
* To develop a common ethos and shared values
* To enrich religious experience
* To grow in liturgical understanding and development
* To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
* To reinforce positive attitudes
* To participate fully
* To take time out ‘to wonder at’, ‘to come to terms with’ and ‘to give worth to.’

**Principles**

All Acts of Prayer and Liturgy in this school will:

* Give glory and honour to God.
* Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character.
* Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.

In order to do this, celebrations will:

* be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience.
* be short and appropriately paced.
* be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

**The Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer and Liturgy.**

Prayer and Liturgy is planned;

* following a structure with reference to the Church’s seasons, ‘Come and See’, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of Prayer and Liturgy.
* involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies.
* 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.
* Opportunities for children to listen, reflect and be prayerful.

**Recording**

Prayer and Liturgy is recorded:

* on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
* planning proforma for class Prayer and Liturgy
* Class collective Worship floor books- collections of pupils’ contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**.

Prayer and liturgy is monitored using prayer and liturgy monitoring form.

At least once a year the school’s provision of Prayer and Liturgy will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading Prayer and Liturgy.

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the school’s CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).

**Resources**

Each class has an RE box with artefacts and fabrics suitable for all seasons of the liturgical year, a set of resources to support child led Prayer and Liturgy-(Let us pray) and age appropriate Bibles. Other resources are available in the RE library- Collection of RE reference books on a variety of topics.

**The learning environment.**

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of our learning environment'.

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

**Prayer and Liturgical Retreats.**

During special times, such as, Advent and Lent, the Chapel will be open for voluntary prayer and worship. In addition, we have set aside days for retreat/mission days. Y6 attend a Retreat at The Briars in July along with Y6 from our sister school, St Joseph’s.

**Eucharist.**

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and are celebrated by children for EYFS-Y6. These are generally celebrated in our parish church which is located next door to the school. Eucharistic Adoration is held in the chapel throughout the year.

**Prayer and Liturgy Lead.**

The headteacher, Mr. J O’Connor is the prayer and liturgy lead at St Mary’s. (See Appendix 1)

**Policy Monitoring and Review**

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy lead and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors annually. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

Appendix 1

The Role of the lead for Prayer and Liturgy

* Formulating a written policy for prayer and liturgy
* Ensuring that there is a development plan for prayer and liturgy included in the school development plan
* Ensuring that prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
* Ensuring that prayer and liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the ‘Directory for Masses with Children’
* Organising themes for prayer times
* Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to prayer and liturgy including withdrawal from Collective Worship
* Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

**Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating**

* Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
* Observing Acts of Prayer and Liturgy and providing feedback
* Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in prayer and liturgy

# Communication

* Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of prayer and liturgy
* Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
* Acting as consultant to colleagues
* Encouraging positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy
* Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding prayer and liturgy
* Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
* Liaison with the school chaplain
* Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

# Professional development/Ongoing formation

* Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for prayer and liturgy
* Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
* Keeping up to date by personal reading

# Resources

* Evaluating existing resources
* Developing the resources available for prayer and liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
* Budgeting efficiently

*[Consideration should be given to the establishment of a planning group, which might include, the coordinator, the headteacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors and school chaplain. It would be part of the role of the Lead to leadthis group.]*