

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Contents

Mission Statement and context.....	1
Statement of requirement.....	2
Statement of Inclusion.....	3
Responsibility:.....	3
(a) Governors	3
(b) School Leaders	3
Content and Celebration.....	4
Resourcing.....	5
Training.....	5
Monitoring and Evaluation.....	5
Review.....	5
Appendix 1:.....	5
Appendix 2: A-Z of Prayer.....	5

Mission Statement and context

Our girls will change the world

- We are a Catholic community inspired by the vision of our founders and passionate about shaping a better future.
- We empower pupils with outstanding results, a love of learning and an alternative way of thinking.
- Augustinians are ethical leaders sowing joy, truth and courage.
- In this school freedom and generosity of spirit flourish. We seek a sustainable and prosperous future for all the world's communities.
- We cherish love for our neighbour, welcoming different faiths and cultures. Learning through dialogue we have hearts open to the whole world.

The past, present and future

Our school was founded in 1634 in Paris when to be Catholic meant being prepared to send your daughters across the Channel to receive a Catholic education and formation. The founders moved back to Ealing in 1911 when French laicisation laws meant that the same religious freedom was in doubt. Our founding story gives us the language of our values and our school motto Veritas or truth. The Chapel, which the nuns built, holds memories of the Chapel of St Marie de Neuilly - the school they left in Paris. The stained glass windows reveal the liturgical year and as the light pours through those windows when we gather together we are reminded of the unity we share as we move through the seasons. Prayer is in the walls of the Chapel and our school. We know that through prayer and liturgy we join together in a way which also connects us with the past and the future. Prayer and liturgy still frame our days as they did for the nuns.

As a Catholic school Christ is at the centre of our work. We are a school which welcomes children and students, parents and teachers who are Catholic as well as other Christian denominations, other faith traditions as well as those who have

no belief. We want our prayers and liturgy to be rich in opportunities for deepening an understanding of God, of transcendence, of ourselves and our world. We are preparing students for the future, to transform their world. We know that integrating prayer into all aspects of life is the best way we can equip them for that future.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18

We need a healthy capacity for silent reflection, places of refuge from the tyranny of the urgent.

Most of all, we need prayer, to hear the prompts of the Spirit and cultivate dialogue in a community that can hold us and allow us to dream.

Pope Francis, Let us Dream

Statement of requirement

Why is collective worship important in Catholic schools?

In schools with a designated religious character, like Catholic schools, collective worship is far more than a statutory requirement. It is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Collective worship is an important part of a Catholic school's distinctive ethos.

Taking part in daily collective worship helps build community cohesion by creating a consistent structure around the core values and symbols of Christianity. In Catholic schools, pupil participation and engagement in worship are important criteria in the diocesan inspection of Catholic education, not least during the daily act of collective worship. From Reception to Year 13, pupils are invited to play an active part in collective worship.

Throughout the year, Catholic school communities come together to celebrate important events in the Church's calendar, such as Lent and Advent, as well as the start and end of the academic year. Through regular prayer and worship, including Mass, the rhythm of the Church's year becomes a normal part of school life and each pupil's life.

These activities are integral to the Catholic identity and life of the school; they would take place in all Catholic schools, whether or not schools were required by statute to provide collective worship.

CES Website

Aims of the policy

Our Prayer and Liturgy Policy sets out how we aim:

- To provide opportunities for all pupils, staff, Governors and parents to come together to worship God and enrich their religious experience
 - to create and maintain a stimulating and appropriate environment where prayer can be fostered and developed fully.
 - To encourage a common ethos and shared gospel values, giving worth to God and marking Him as special.
 - To grow in liturgical understanding and development
 - To strengthen and celebrate the school community.
 - To integrate the liturgical cycle into school life and to mark this appropriately.
 - To celebrate the richness of the Catholic tradition.
 - To involve pupils in the preparation and delivery of prayer, worship and liturgy.
 - to give children opportunities to use/create their own prayer, both formal and informal
 - to teach children common Christian prayers, introduced progressively from Nursery to Upper 6.
 - To support students and staff in pursuing and developing their relationship with God.
 - To develop an openness to God - to know we are all unconditionally loved by God.
 - To develop in children the awareness of God's presence in all of creation.
 - To provide opportunities to reflect on spiritual and personal beliefs, reflecting on spiritual and moral issues.
 - To provide opportunities for faith sharing, reflection and wonder.

- To enrich the religious experience of students and staff.
- To contemplate something of the mystery of God.
- To learn reverence for themselves, others and all things
- To enable and encourage a sense of belonging and community spirit within the school, local parishes and in the wider community.
- To strengthen the links with students and staff and the parishes to which they belong.

The Chapel is at the heart of our school and provides a warm and welcoming environment for prayer, Mass, assemblies, study sessions, retreats, Stations of the Cross liturgies, Adoration, opportunities for prayerful silence, meditation, quiet reflection and the sacrament of Reconciliation. However, the whole environment is a place of worship and prayer with prayer in classrooms, in our Prayer Garden, in sung grace in the refectories, which demonstrates our knowledge that prayer is spontaneous and planned. This policy describes some of the ways in which we pray as a community, the values we instil in pupils and how we evaluate the impact of what we do.

Statement of Inclusion

St Augustine's Priory is committed promoting a respectful and inclusive environment which has full regard to those with protected characteristics to equal treatment for all pupils regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and social background including those with special educational needs and all disabilities. We aim to create a friendly, respectful, caring and protective environment in which every individual is valued and loved. We endeavour to contribute positively towards the growing autonomy, self-esteem and safety of our pupils. Our RADIO toolkit is one of the key ways in which we promote active participation in inclusion, diversity and equity. We constantly advance ways of enhancing Pupil Voice.

Inclusion Committee

We have pupil-run Inclusion Committees in the Prep and Senior school to hear from a range of pupils who work on challenging bias and discrimination to create a more inclusive school community. This is a committee where we all grow in faith and understanding of each other's faiths. Through dialogue we have adapted procedures for entering the Chapel. We ask everyone to show respect as they enter but we do not ask children of other faiths or none to make the sign of the cross or to genuflect unless they wish to. Our Chapel is our sacred space. We ask that all who enter honour that.

Faith Life Committee

The Faith Life Committee is made up of a range of staff across the whole school who make decisions about prayer and liturgy and actively promote the Faith Life of the school.

Responsibility:

(a) Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- Audits & Self reflections
- CPD
- Commitment
- Monitoring of Leadership roles and responsibilities

(b) School Leaders

The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; for ensuring that staff have appropriate induction into the Catholic life, ethos and mission of the school. Faith Life is a standing item on SLT agendas, Prep & Pre-Prep staff meetings, Head of Year meetings and Head of Department/Faculty meetings.

Content and Celebration

Assemblies

Students engage deeply with prayer and liturgy through full active and conscious participation in assemblies every Monday and Friday mornings. These are collective acts of worship using the Gather, Listen, Respond, Mission format. They are both student and staff led. Students work collaboratively, with both peers and teachers, to prepare creative and well-constructed collective acts of worship, as each form class is responsible for planning and delivering an assembly at least once in the academic year. They are also asked to evaluate their experience of planning liturgical experiences to ensure that they reflect on creative approaches and to enable the school to bring in training and formation in this area as required.

The themes of assemblies are based on the Church's Liturgical calendar, Building the Kingdom programme, and the Inclusion Alliance calendar to mark important world religion festivals and notable events.

Every assembly begins with a range of liturgical music, ranging from contemporary worship songs to more traditional hymns.

When students are not in assembly, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning they share a collective act of worship, led by the students in their form rooms. These also follow the Gather, Listen, Respond, Mission format.

Mass

We are fortunate that our local parish priest of St Benedict's Ealing Abbey celebrates Mass with us weekly. We also regularly invite priests from other parishes, the Deanery youth chaplain and other members of the Westminster hierarchy to celebrate Mass with us.

Liturgical formation for pupils and staff is important and they undertake liturgical ministries with confidence, understanding and skill. This is particularly evident in the planning of Mass. Each form plans and undertakes liturgical ministries such as reading, Gospel Acclamation, altar serving, offertory, bidding prayers, playing liturgical music and communal singing. As St Augustine said, 'singing well is praying twice', and provides much joy in our community. Immediately prior to Mass, the students engage with hymn practice. This encourages them to full, active and conscious participation.

We hold special Masses throughout the year to mark special occasions, such as the beginning and end of term and Red Wednesday.

Retreats

Each year group, from Nursery to Sixth Form, has the opportunity to participate in a developmental retreat, either offsite at the Diocese of Westminster' retreat centre SPEC or an onsite retreat, which makes use of our Chapel, prayer garden and outdoor Stations of the Cross within our 13 acres.

Staff retreats have also been introduced to help with the spiritual formation of all staff regardless of faith or religious belief.

Building the Kingdom

The school has taken part in Building the Kingdom - a national programme of curriculum design led by Sr Judith Russi which has also reflected a significant investment in the theological and liturgical development of many staff.

Prayer room for staff and students of other faiths

Our multi-faith prayer room arose from student voice and The Inclusion Committee. A dedicated room has been designated as a space for staff and students to use for prayer and reflection.

Other opportunities for prayer and liturgy

Throughout the year, there are several opportunities for the students to plan and participate in a range of liturgies to mark seasons, feasts and festivals in the Church's liturgical calendar. These make use of our outdoor Stations of the Cross, our Prayer Garden, the meadow and indeed the whole school.

Preps participate in monthly online shared collective worship with other schools from the deanery.

Parents

As Pope Francis tells us, parents are the first educators of their children. However, they may need help and support with developing the spiritual formation of their children so we work in close partnership with parents.

Parents are invited to attend Mass and are also invited to the Carol Service and Feast Day.

Resourcing

Faith Life has a distinct budget separate to the RE curriculum budget which is reflective of how important we view the Catholic life of the school.

For Staff and governors we recognise that those leading prayer and liturgy and evaluating its impact also need food for the journey. We make sure this is resourced generously. We promote and fund membership of the National School of Formation with members of staff having undertaken spiritual leadership courses.

Training

Annual INSET days are used to support the training needs of all staff working in the school. All new staff receive a comprehensive staff induction programme into the Catholic life, ethos and Mission of the school which focuses on three areas: history of our school and founders; Augustinian values and virtues; and prayer and liturgy.

As part of our commitment to ensure the continuing formation and development of our staff, we regularly put staff forward for CCRS training.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Evaluation space on the Act of Worship Toolkit planning form.
- Retreat feedback and self-reflection Google Forms
- HoY and Community and Faith Life Prefects monitor prayer corners to ensure that they are owned by forms and used as living spaces which reflect the church's Liturgical year and invite students and staff to prayer.
- Prep School evaluation forms for pupil-led Collective Worship.
- Governor Visits.

Review

This policy is reviewed every 3 years.

Appendix 1:

The Catholic Education Service sets out the importance of Collective Worship for Catholic Schools in the context of DfE guidance.

“All schools are required to offer a Christian act of collective worship every day. Parents can choose to withdraw their children up to 16, and if you're older you can choose to withdraw yourself.”

The DfE guidance can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collective-worship-in-schools>

Appendix 2: A-Z of Prayer