



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

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Contents

Prayer and Liturgy Policy.....	1
1. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy	4
2. Statement of requirement	4
3. Responsibility	5
(a) Governance.....	5
(b) Headteacher	5
(c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator	5
4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision	6
(a) Daily	6
(b) Weekly	6
(c) Mass	6
(d) Celebrations of the Word	7
(e) Sacraments	7
(f) Involvement of families and wider community	7
5. Resourcing.....	8
6. Training and formation	8
7. Monitoring and evaluation	8
8. Review	8

As a Roman Catholic School – Mount St Joseph strives to be a community of learners, believers and friends. Our ethos is underpinned by the gospel values of serving others, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness. As a community of learners, believers and friends, we are committed to the spiritual, moral, educational and social development of all our community.

1. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

*‘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.’
(Marcus Stock (2012), Christ at the Centre, Catholic Truth Society, 23.)*

2. Statement of requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils, including those in the sixth form (Section 70, 1988 Education Act) that is in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20; 70 Instrument of Government, clause 2).

Academies in England are required by their funding agreement and Articles of Association to comply with similar requirements (The Mainstream Academy and Free School: Supplemental Funding Agreement, December 2020; Model Articles for Catholic Academies, February 2019).

The law requires all maintained schools to recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children up to the age of 16 from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1A)). Sixth-form pupils can choose to withdraw themselves from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1B)). The school’s provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil pupils’ entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which pupils in the school will be familiar. Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school, this means that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

While the school is unapologetically Catholic in its identity and liturgical life, all acts of prayer and liturgy are inclusive and accessible to pupils of other faiths or none. Pupils are encouraged to participate respectfully and meaningfully in accordance with their own beliefs. The school fosters a culture of welcome, respect, and shared spiritual reflection, recognising the diversity of our community.

3. Responsibility

(a) Governance

The governors, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission, have a responsibility to ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- there is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator)
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

(b) Headteacher

The headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
- those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

(c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- there is an Annual Plan of Provision for prayer and liturgy across the school year which identifies liturgical seasons and key celebrations, as well as opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments
- there is daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- pupils are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation
- resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and pupils

- induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the headteacher and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- there is collaboration with local clergy and parishes
- liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.
- work alongside the school's person in charge of the Catholic Life of the School, parish priests and school pastoral team to support the spiritual formation of pupils and staff through planned liturgical opportunities and pastoral care.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

(a) Daily

Students engage deeply with prayer and liturgy through full active and conscious participation in assemblies twice a week. One assembly per week has an extended prayer focus and is known as the House Prayer Assembly. These are collective acts of worship using the Gather, Listen, Respond, Go Forth 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 PDT group 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.

All acts of collective worship are rooted in Scripture, with Gospel readings or other appropriate Biblical passages forming the central message. Staff and students are encouraged to reflect on how the Word of God applies to their own lives and to respond through prayer, action, or music.

The themes of assemblies are based on the Church's Liturgical calendar, every assembly begins with a range of liturgical music, ranging from contemporary worship songs to more traditional hymns.

When students are not in assembly, they share a collective act of worship, led by the PDT group in their rooms. These also follow the Gather, Listen, Respond, Go Forth format.

(b) Weekly

Each week a reflection will be provided for both staff and students. Staff will have an opportunity to reflect together each Friday morning in the chapel. Students will be provided a reflection prepared by the GIFT team with support from the prayer and liturgy coordinator.

(c) Mass

Each year group will be provided the opportunity for a whole year celebration of Mass once in each academic year:

- Y7 Welcome Mass
- St Joseph's Day Mass
- Y8 and 10 Christmas Mass
- Y9 Lent/Easter Mass
- Y11 Leavers' Mass

Alongside this there will be a termly Mass offered that is open to all staff and students.

For staff at school, there will be an opportunity to celebrate mass at the end of the Christmas term as well as the end of the summer term.

(d) Celebrations of the Word

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.

The school participates in wider diocesan liturgical events such as youth pilgrimages, Partnerships with local parishes and schools are strong, with clergy regularly invited to celebrate Mass, hear Confessions, and offer input into the spiritual life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to take part in parish life through altar serving, music ministry, and youth groups where available.

(e) Sacraments

As a Catholic school, Mount St Joseph recognises the importance of the Sacraments in the spiritual life of each individual. While the school does not directly prepare students for the Sacraments of Initiation, we work closely with our local parishes to support students on their sacramental journey, particularly those preparing for Confirmation in their home parish.

Opportunities to encounter the Sacraments are offered throughout the year, including:

- **The Sacrament of Reconciliation** – reconciliation is offered during Advent and Lent in collaboration with local clergy for staff and students to receive, non-Catholics also are provided the opportunity to attend the communal service of reconciliation.
- **The Sacrament of Confirmation** – preparation classes are provided in school in conjunction with the local parish open to all students wishing to receive confirmation.
- **The Sacrament of Eucharist** – Throughout the year opportunities are provided for all students and staff to receive Eucharist. Each year group has a calendared Mass in the year with termly voluntary Masses offered.
- Opportunities are taken during form time, RE lessons and assemblies to deepen understanding of the meaning, importance, and practice of the Sacraments in Catholic life.

Where pupils express an interest in becoming Catholic or completing other Sacraments, pastoral staff and chaplaincy work in partnership with parishes to support their faith journey.

(f) Involvement of families and wider community

The school recognises that prayer and liturgy are most meaningful when rooted in the wider life of faith that extends beyond the classroom. We actively seek to strengthen the vital partnership

between home, parish, and school by encouraging families to share in prayer and worship, both at key celebrations and in daily life. All daily collective worship provided in school is made available on the school website alongside via X. Links with local parishes are fostered through regular communication, invitations to clergy and parish representatives to lead or support liturgies, and participation in parish sacramental life. In addition, we encourage students to engage with the wider community through charitable works, social outreach, and shared acts of worship, ensuring that the faith we celebrate in school is lived out in the service of others.

5. Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. Dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy will be furnished and maintained as such, and updated to reflect the Church's liturgical season. Staff training and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

6. Training and formation

All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development at least once a year, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, and at least annually, and involve all key stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, clergy, and governors. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

8. Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.