



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Date of last review	09.2024	Date of next review	09.2024
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Type of policy	School Level Policy	Approval	Governance Committee

Rationale

At St. Joseph's, prayer and liturgy is viewed as an integral and important part of school life. Through this and the general ethos of the school we seek to promote our mission statement.

At St Joseph's ...

We love God by putting Jesus at the centre of all that we do.

We live out the teachings of the Gospels through our thoughts, liturgy, worship and prayer.

Our Catholic social teaching mission guides us on how to live out our faith in the world.

We love learning by using our God given gifts and talents.

We are confident, resilient, collaborative and independent life-long learners.

As enthusiastic successful learners, we are ready for all the opportunities ahead.

We love life by enjoying and sharing a safe school.

We are a nurturing family who are a united and caring community, that enables all to flourish.

We know that each one of us is accepted as unique and special; created in God's image. This is all done in partnership with our Parish Community.

The Nature of Worship

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, thanks and praise to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into a relationship made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is a time where we come together to share our love of God and celebrate our achievements (and sometimes failures) together.

At St. Joseph's, a variety of opportunities for worship are provided, including individual prayer, group prayer in both formal and informal styles and settings, and the celebration of the Eucharist which is the centre of worship for the Catholic community. The worship of the school is based on promoting Catholic Christian values. As such, the

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contributions of staff, pupils, Parish Priest and other visitors are valued highly. Opportunities for worship are linked with Feast Days and with the liturgical seasons of Advent, Lent, Christmastide and Easter.

Legislative Framework

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement – it is an integral part of school life and central to its Catholic tradition. In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’, we normally base our prayer and liturgy on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church. However, while most acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect the traditions of other religions that are represented in the wider community. The act of worship is not designated curriculum time and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.

Right of withdrawal

We expect all children to attend prayer and liturgy but observe the right of parents to withdraw their child(ren) from collective worship. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. However, given its importance in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents are made aware of the fact that worship and living and teaching our faith can never be confined to ‘timetabled slots’, but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured. The Headteacher will keep a record of all children who have been withdrawn from prayer and liturgy.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

We hold the belief that Collective Worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- those who form part of the worshipping community in our parish
- those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church
- those from other Christian denominations – or none
- those from other faith backgrounds Worship is a spiritual and educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Aims and purpose

The aims and purpose of collective worship at St. Joseph’s are:

- to provide an opportunity for children to worship God;

- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos, with shared values, and to reinforce positive attitudes;
- to teach children how to worship.

Principles

All acts of worship in this school will:

- give glory to God
- be a quality educational activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character, including aspects of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole person
- give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds
- At an age appropriate level, pupils lead prayer and liturgy. Children are taught, how to organise liturgy through gather, listen, respond/reflect and mission/go forth. Spontaneous prayer is encouraged. Liturgies and celebrations are kept simple and include a range of experiences in various groupings.

How prayer and liturgy is organised at St. Joseph's

Prayer and liturgy is conducted in a dignified, reverent and respectful way. We regard it as a special time, and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful, to listen carefully to the teachings, and to participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, and candles or other objects, to focus the attention of the children. Prayer and liturgy should last approximately 15 minutes.

On Monday the Headteacher leads whole school prayer and liturgy, exploring the gospel values linked to the school's mission statement and Catholic Social Teaching (CST) principles. Children are encouraged to reflect on how they can live out these values, in school, at home and in the wider community.

On Tuesday there is Key Stage prayer and liturgy. Themes reflect liturgical seasons, Saints days, CST and stories from the Old and New Testament.

On Wednesday we have class prayer and liturgy which uses Ten:Ten resources. Parents and carers have logins for Ten:Ten so developing further the links between school, the Church and home.

On Thursday there is whole school prayer and liturgy.

On Friday there is whole school celebration assembly led by KS2.

Visits and visitors

As part of curriculum, we encourage appropriate visits for the children in order for them to have first-hand experiences and gain greater knowledge of other faiths. Visitors to the school are welcomed and enabled to share their experiences and knowledge – their role is to educate, not to evangelise.

Prayer and Reflection

Prayer and liturgy always include a time of prayer and/or reflection. A range of prayers are used including the Lord's Prayer, traditional Catholic prayers, prayers written by the children including spontaneous prayer. They are introduced in an appropriate manner with a short time of quiet. Prayers are said in class at lunch time – KS1 say grace and KS2 say The Angelus. Prayers are also said at the start and at the end of the day. There is a progression of prayer across the school with each year group having a prayer booklet building the knowledge of the previous year's prayers. The classes have a prayer book and a home/school prayer book.

Contribution to community cohesion

Through the opportunities provided for RE, prayer and liturgy in our school, children develop a distinctive and vital contribution to social cohesion in our society. This is grounded in their respect for all people as made in the image and likeness of God, and shaped by respect which is such an integral part of the Catholic Church's understanding of its role and mission in the world.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring the policy and practice of prayer and liturgy is the role of the named school governor.