

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School

School Prayer and Liturgy Policy

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Introduction

Vision and Mission

"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."
JOHN 10:10

At Bishop Vaughan School, prayer and liturgy are central to our identity as a Catholic secondary school. Rooted in the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Church, our approach to prayer and liturgical celebrations nurtures the spiritual growth of our students, staff, and wider school community.

This policy outlines the principles and expectations for prayer and liturgy within our school, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful worship, reflect on their faith, and participate in the sacramental life of the Church. Through daily prayer, liturgical celebrations, and special feast days, we seek to create an environment where faith is lived and celebrated, fostering a deeper relationship with God and a commitment to Christian values.

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; instrument of Government, clause 2).

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.

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 a 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 takes 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 Archdiocesan Advisory Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with their best practice.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Daily Prayer and Liturgy

- During morning tutorial, form tutors will facilitate a daily act of collective worship. Pupils lead and actively participate in Morning Prayer using the 'Prayer Bulletin' resource created by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator.
- The quality of the Prayer Bulletin is assured by governors and the pupil Faith Council to ensure consistently high-quality opportunities for collective worship within tutorials.
- Every classroom has a Crucifix and copies of the Lord's Prayer and Hail Mary in English and Welsh to create an appropriate atmosphere for worship.
- Training and support is readily available for all members of staff, whether new to the school or not, to instil confidence in their facilitation and leadership of Morning Prayer.

Weekly Prayer and Liturgy

- Pupils will attend Year Group assembly once a week with their Head of Year and/or a member of SLT. Every assembly will have a liturgical focus and will include the daily act of collective worship.
- Every pupil has the opportunity to attend Mass each Friday morning.

Celebration of Mass

- We welcome our prospective Year 7 pupils every year with a Welcome Mass in July of Year 6. Pupils take an active role in the Mass and parents are invited to attend the celebration.
- Every year group celebrates a Welcome Mass in the first half term of the year.

- Year 11 and Year 13 pupils celebrate Leavers' Masses in May before their public examinations begin.
- As the source and summit of the Christian life, pupils have the opportunity to receive the Eucharist every Friday morning in our weekly Mass held in the school Chapel. These Masses are usually celebrated by our School Chaplain, Fr John Browne. Every tutorial in years 7-10 attend the weekly Mass at least once in the academic year with their tutor, and all pupils can attend on a voluntary basis each week.
- Staff celebrate Mass together during INSET days.

Special Liturgies

Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a variety of liturgical and devotional experiences throughout the academic year, including:

- The Stations of the Cross
- Remembrance liturgies
- The Rosary (prayed every Tuesday afternoon as part of our Junior Legion of Mary meetings)
- Ash Wednesday liturgies
- Advent and Lent special services
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Carol Services
- All whole-school celebrations are pupil-led, with the Faith Council taking an active role in the planning, delivering and evaluation of special liturgies.
- Strong links with local parishes have been established, and members of our local clergy are regular visitors to our school. For example, our School Chaplain celebrates weekly Mass and visits school for special Masses and to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation; our local parish priest visits regularly to lead the Junior Legion of Mary group; our annual Carol Services are held in our local parish Church and the Cathedral.
- Pupils are offered opportunities for retreat from Year 7 (day retreat) to Sixth Form (residential at St Cassian's).
- Pupils have regular opportunities to engage in Christian meditation, including imaginative meditation.
- The Examen is prayed every Friday afternoon throughout Advent and Lent, and at other key times during the year.
- Visual displays in school support and promote our school's Mission Statement and the special Catholic ethos.
- The Chapel is available for pupils to engage in their own private prayer.
- Our school has a digital and a physical prayer board; all prayers added to either board are offered during weekly Mass.

Staff

- Morning briefing takes place every Monday morning and always begins with a time of prayer and reflection.
- Staff meetings begin with a prayer.
- Staff are welcome to attend Mass whenever possible. They will attend with their tutorial at least once a year.
- Staff Mass, prayer and worship takes place during INSET days.
- All new staff have specialist training focused on supporting the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- All staff have access to the Prayer Bulletin on the All Staff Team. The link for this resource is shared on a weekly basis.
- Staff Voice is key in shaping the prayer and liturgy offering within school. Staff are consulted on an annual basis for their views on the resources and opportunities within school.

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 on an annual basis.

Implemented by Governors: April 2025

Next review date: February 2026

Signed by the Chair of Governors: 

Signed by the Headteacher: 