

St Bede's Catholic College



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

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 2012:23)

It is the aim of St Bede's Catholic College to create an ethos in which the College community has the opportunity to grow together in their faith. We seek to offer an education in the practice of the faith, in prayer and worship, which puts God first.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic college 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 a relationship with God, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Sacramental aspects of the Church's liturgical life, especially the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, are intrinsically woven into our school community. We provide liturgical events which include weekly Mass and other Eucharistic liturgies such as Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and opportunities to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the season of Lent.

1.1 PRAYER AND LITURGY IN THE LASALLIAN TRADITION

Prayer and liturgy lie at the heart of the Lasallian educational mission. Rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they form communities of faith, fraternity and service. Through experiences of Scripture, silence, contemplation and sacramental life, we seek to nurture the interior lives of our students, enabling them to encounter God, recognise their own dignity and that of others, and grow as compassionate disciples, responsible citizens and people committed to the common good.

2. STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENT

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all students, 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). 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 students 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 students' entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which students 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.

DAILY WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Every day we make it our priority to give the students in our charge the opportunity to reflect and pray at the start of the day. We recognise that this is something students have a right to, and a need of, and that it is incumbent on us to make this possible. Staff will start briefing and meetings with prayer. All full college based INSET days will begin with a liturgy. Worship and the religious life of the college is a shared responsibility of all those involved within the community of St Bede's Catholic College.

PRINCIPLES OF ALL LITURGICAL WORSHIP

All Liturgical Acts of Worship in St Bede's Catholic College will:

- give glory and honour to God.
- be a quality activity, planned and organised, and suitable to the age, social and religious development of the students.
- give students a positive liturgical experience. We will achieve this by making the liturgy relevant to the lives of the students and involve them through words, music, drama, silence, reflection, listening and sharing.
- be examples of good practice, which should enable students and students to develop skills so that they can lead, organise and lead worship.

3. THE AIM OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP is to provide opportunity for all students and staff to:

- contemplate something of the mystery of God.
- develop a sense of belonging and a sense of community.
- develop an awareness of the presence of God in others and in oneself.
- reflect on spiritual and moral issues.
- explore their beliefs.
- respond to and celebrate life.
- experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit.
- develop a common ethos and shared values.
- enrich religious experience.
- grow in liturgical understanding and development.
- reinforce positive attitudes.
- participate fully.
- take time out for personal reflection and appreciation.
- respond to the wider and global community.
- reflect upon our own individual faith journeys.
- to foster and nurture relationships
- reflect on values that are of a Christian nature and on their own beliefs.
- lead and develop the worship offered.

Daily Worship will be in the form of prayer. Prayer can be described as the 'raising of one's heart and mind to God or the requesting of good things from God' (CCC 2559).

Daily Worship will take place every morning via form tutors, whole college Celebrations of the Word.

4. THE PRAYER AND LITURGY FRAMEWORK

The Head of Faculty, in collaboration with the Lay Chaplain, is responsible for writing the policy as Joint Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators. This work is reviewed through a consultation process involving the SLT lead for Catholic life, prayer and liturgy coordinators, the Mission and Welfare governor committee, and the college Principal.

Roles and Responsibilities

Whilst remembering worship is a shared responsibility of all those in our community, the following have specific responsibilities:

(a) Governance

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

- (i) 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
- (ii) there is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Lay Chaplain and Head of Religious Formation).
- (iii) the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- (iv) there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

(b) Principal

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

- (i) 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
- (ii) they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
- (iii) 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
- (iv) there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

(c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

The Head of Faculty for Religious Formation and the Lay Chaplain will ensure that:

- (i) 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
- (ii) 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
- (iii) all students have access to prayer that is appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- (iv) students 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
- (v) resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and students
- (vi) induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- (vii) staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- (viii) monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- (ix) monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the Principal and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- (x) there is collaboration with local clergy and parishes
- (xi) liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

5: OVERVIEW OF PRAYER AND LITURGY PROVISION AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Prayer throughout the college is adapted for each year group, promoting spiritual formation as students mature. A new prayer book was launched in September 2025.
- Prayer during tutor time follows an organised program, led by the Chaplain and resources in the prayer book.
- Where necessary, prayers will be adapted by the Lay Chaplain to fulfill the requirements of the liturgical year, or in response to events within our parishes, diocese or globally.
- Daily prayer is the responsibility of Form Tutors except when whole college and House/Year group celebrations of the Word are taking place.
- It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to ensure that the legal requirement of a daily act of worship is given to their students each morning.
- It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to emphasise the importance of prayer by creating a conducive atmosphere in the classroom. This may be achieved by:
 - Beginning and ending prayers by saying and making the Sign of the Cross.
 - Encouraging students to be still and to bow their heads.
 - The tutor may lead prayer; however, it is encouraged for students to lead the prayer at the start of each day.

Celebration of the Word (Assemblies)

'If there is only one assembly a week, then its main purpose should be to pray together. This can be based around a celebration of the word'

- Each House/Year Group (Post-16) will have one Celebration of the Word per week
- Celebration of the Word will usually be led by Heads of House or members of SLT.
- Prayer features an integral part of every Celebration of the Word, beginning and ending.
- The Lectionary, the liturgical calendar and the Cycle of Prayer will inform the planning. This work is facilitated by the Lay Chaplain.
- It is the responsibility of the person leading to emphasise the importance of prayer by creating a conducive atmosphere. This may be achieved by:
 - Beginning and ending prayers by saying and making the Sign of the Cross.
 - Encouraging students to be still and bow their heads.
- It is the responsibility of every member of staff present in the assembly to support the importance of prayer by helping to create a conducive atmosphere.

This may be achieved by, for example:

- directing students into the assembly in an orderly and quiet manner.
- supervising students

Celebrating the Sacraments

Voluntary Mass

Mass is celebrated every Wednesday, factored into the weekly timetable. A different class is chosen to help prepare the liturgy. We follow the weekly Sunday Mass readings and students prepare the bidding prayers and take up the offertory gifts. Students in years 11, 12 and 13 are commissioned as Eucharistic ministers within the school. They minister for the voluntary mass and for masses on Holy Days of Obligation. Their training and ongoing support is provided by our Lay Chaplain. In addition, several pupils serve as Altar Servers in Mass.

Obligatory Mass

The Lay Chaplain (who is also the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator) organises the liturgy for Holy Days of Obligation alongside the Head of RF, and the lead for Catholic life. This involves coordinating students from all year groups as well as liaising with the music department.

The Lay Chaplain also liaises with Heads of House for the house Masses which take place once a year. These Masses fall close to the Feast Day of the individual House Saints. This involves working with House captains and representatives to determine a theme, appropriate hymns and to prepare bidding prayers and post-communion reflections as well as ensuring that the student representatives are then able to organise tutor groups within their house to provide the different parts of worship.

Additionally, the college collectively celebrates the Feast Days of St Bede and St John Baptist de La Salle.

Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to all students during Lent. The whole college attends a reconciliation service and individual are invited to sign up for individual confession if they wish. Priests from neighbouring parishes within our college catchment are invited in to hear confession and they give generously of their time.

Sixth Form Students have their own Reconciliation Service which is prepared for with explanation assemblies leading to Reconciliation with a local priest, who has designed the service and offered his support in implementing it.

More detail can be found in the Chaplaincy policy.

6: 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.

All members of staff have access to college prayer books, both digitally and physically. These are provided specifically to tutors at the beginning of the year.

7: 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.

In addition, the Lay Chaplain will ensure the following materials are provided for staff to understand their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. This includes:

- Weekly Staff Bulletin about prayer for the week.
- Lenten, Advent, and other Diocesan materials.
- House/Year Prayer books for staff and students.
- Tutor weekly prayers and staff prayers issued by the Lay Chaplain ~~weekly~~ on Mondays and Tuesdays.
- The Chaplaincy and RF team have various resources, for example, books on assemblies and festivals.

Staff Professional Development needs on an individual, team or whole college basis will be identified through, for example:

- Discussions with individuals, line managers and especially the House/Year Leader.
- Performance management.
- Regular in-service surveys.
- Discussions at tutor group and RF faculty meetings.
- All College based staff inset days will start with a liturgy and all full staff meetings and briefings will incorporate a prayer/reflection; these will also indirectly form useful exemplars.
- At least one inset day will focus on Catholic Life/Ethos CPD where all staff are invited to reflect upon the important contribution they make to the Catholic life of the College.

7: Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is embedded into the college quality assurance calendar. This process is conducted by Heads of House, Lay Chaplain and SLT. Stakeholders in this process include students, 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 governors.