



Holy Cross Catholic Multi Academy Company

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Responsible for Policy	Marina Kelly
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1.0	Draft	03/2021	J Parry	HCCMAC, Central Team	Creation of draft document
1.1	Approved	31/03/2021	J Parry	HCCMAC, Central Team	
2.0	Draft	05/2024	K Ainsworth	Director, HCC MAC	P and L policy reviewed and amended to reflect policy within the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
3.0		15.5.2024			Submitted to MAC Board for approval.

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Catholic schools aim to be places where love of one's neighbour is obvious at all times. As St. John reports, Christ said to His disciples at the Last Supper 'This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you'.
- 1.2 Catholic schools are staffed by teachers and support staff who are not only qualified and expert in their own field but who also, having freely chosen to work in a Catholic institution, commit themselves to care for and support each other in every way possible consistent with the teachings of Christ, Gospel values, Catholic doctrine, and the ethos of the school.
- 1.3 All members of our school communities have a duty to ensure that Gospel values underpin the relationships within the school and should draw on the guidance offered in 'Christ at the Centre'. Whilst not definitive, the core values based on the Beatitudes may be summarised as follows:
- faithfulness and integrity;
 - dignity and compassion;
 - humility and gentleness;
 - truth and justice;
 - forgiveness and mercy;
 - purity and holiness;
 - tolerance and peace;
 - service and sacrifice (Christ at the Centre' 2008 Fr Marcus Stock STL MA).
- 1.4 This policy will be applied in accordance with statutory regulations for the governance of Holy Cross schools which may apply at any time in accordance with the procedures and delegations adopted by Holy Cross Catholic MAC under those regulations.
- 1.5 This policy is for use by Holy Cross Catholic MAC and some academies' governance terminology differs within Archdiocesan Multi Academy Companies. This policy uses the term Director to represent Trustees of the Company. The term Local Governing Body is used throughout.

2. Holy Cross Catholic MAC Mission and Aims

- 2.1 The **Mission** of *Holy Cross Catholic Multi Academy Company* (the '**MAC**') is:

Our school communities are united as the family of God to provide an outstanding Catholic education for all our pupils. With Christ at the

centre of all we do, we will inspire every child to be the best person they can be by developing their God-given gifts and talents.

2.2 The main aims of the MAC are:

High aspirations for all

Outstanding education - creating an ethos of collective responsibility, through which the MAC will promote achievement and improve pupil performance

Living out Gospel values instilling a *Catholic ethos* in all our schools, with reconciliation and peace at the heart of all we do

Young people – developing our young people to be resilient and to make positive contributions to their parishes and our diverse and ever-changing communities

Community - strengthening and nurturing the Catholic life of our schools

Realising talent - developing pupils, staff and all other members of our academy for the benefit of the *Holy Cross* community and society generally

Optimising resources - realising best value by sharing assets, gaining economies of scale and making the most of what we have

Standards - maintaining the highest quality of Catholic education by ensuring accountability at all levels

Service to God - serving others in our school and local communities and in national and international communities in need.

2.3 Our schools are bound together by our motto:

Achieving together in faith

2. Rationale

Prayer and liturgy celebrate God's presence in our MAC community and in our lives, and lead us on the way to eternal salvation.

It is about 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 our creator, made possible through the saving work and example of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, to enlighten all, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, '*who opens the eyes of the mind and makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth.*'¹

Prayer has traditionally been described as 'lifting up of the hearts and minds to God' – it involves the whole person – our head as well as our heart. Communal prayer forms an essential dimension of life in a Catholic school.

Celebrations of the word are usually longer periods of time allotted to prayer where a larger number of people are involved – where there is a need for more formal structures, but which are not directly taken from the liturgical books of the Church, the common element being the proclamation of scripture.

Liturgy is directly taken from the liturgical books of the Church. The most familiar forms in schools are the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The liturgical books (such as the Roman Missal, the Lectionary and the Divine Office) set out the structure to be followed, the words to be spoken, the gestures to be performed and the symbols to be used when celebrating a liturgy. Prayer and Celebrations of the word have much room for creative freedom. Liturgies have some room for creativity and adaptation, but they have to be exercise within the parameters authorised by the liturgical books.

3. 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.)

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

¹ *Dei Verbum* – the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Vatican II 1965

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 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.

5. Responsibility

(a) Governance

The Directors, as guardians of the MAC'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 (are) named person(s) responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the 'Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator')
- 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 Co-ordinator

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 of prayer and liturgy takes place regularly and fed back into planning for future liturgies
- monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the headteacher and governing body(ies) 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 that they keep updated with best practice.

6. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Prayer and Liturgy in St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School is practised through:

- Mass normally every fortnight, on Feast Days and on other occasions, often celebrated in partnership with our shared parish school Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation – often liturgies of Reconciliation followed by individual Confession
- Stations of the Cross during Lent
- Celebrations of The Word
- Remembrance assemblies
- Class, key stage or whole school prayer
- Classroom prayers throughout the school day including at the start of the school day, before lunch and after lunch and at the end of the school day
- Form/class group prayer, celebrations of the word and liturgies in class, on school grounds e.g. School Prayer Garden or in St Elizabeth's Catholic Church or other suitable place
- Beginning of staff meetings with prayer
- Beginning of every staff INSET day with prayer or Mass
- Involvement in parish masses and liturgies

7. Planning and Content of Worship

Prayer and liturgy are planned to follow the structure of the liturgical seasons of the Church's year, the Liturgy of the Church, the RE programme, feast days and other significant dates in the School and Church year. Pupils are taught that prayer and liturgy are the foundation of our faith and its purposes is our sanctification – that "*in Christ the perfect achievement of our reconciliation came forth and the fullness of divine worship was given to us*".² Prayer styles are used which are appropriate to the age, stage of development of the pupils. Parents and parishioners are invited to participate in some celebrations.

8. 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

² *Sacrosanctum Concilium* - The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Vatican II 1963

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.

9. 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 so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

10. 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.

11. Prayer

Pupils are given experience of personal prayer by being encouraged to speak in their own way to God, and of communal prayer by being introduced gradually to formal words for prayer at the appropriate level.

We celebrate our relationship with God throughout the school day, therefore prayer and “sacred silence” are not confined to acts of collective prayer and celebrations of the word. We are conscious of children’s need for expression through speech, song, movement, art, writing and silence. We are aware of the importance of giving pupils a focus for prayer in each classroom.

12. Staff Prayer

Staff pray together at meetings and briefings and Governors and Directors pray together at their meetings. Teaching and classroom support staff are expected to be present at, and participate in all acts of prayer and liturgy to ensure that they are fully part of the school worshipping community and can actively support students in their prayer and faith journeys.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the directors.

Appendix 1 - Information on Prayer

Why is prayer necessary?

Prayer is the foundation of Christian Life. Prayer is communication or communion with God. Through prayer we are drawn deeper into the life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself taught us the need for prayer. In Gethsemane as He prepared Himself for the climax of His life, Jesus received the strength He needed in prayer to His Father, "*Abba (Father)! Everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it.*"³ At moments of His public ministry when those in need were pressing around Him, Jesus went off to a lonely place and prayed there.

What is Prayer? We can pray anywhere and at any time. The first step is to place ourselves, as we are, in the presence of God. The second step in prayer is to speak to the Lord, giving him praise and adoration, thanking him for the many gifts he has given to us and asking him for our needs. A third step is to be silent so that the Lord himself can guide the direction of our hearts.

How do we Pray? The best prayers come from the heart and may be improvised in our own words, times of meditation, may be taken from books of prayer or the psalms, or may be the prayers we have learned by heart. Children's experience of prayer and worship in school will have a deep impact on their spiritual development as Christians, and a love of their Catholic heritage which they can take into their adult life. Their love of prayer and worship must be continually developed and fostered.

In prayer we become aware of God's presence with us and his love for us. We listen to him in order to discover his will for us and express to him our gratitude, praise, love and adoration.

We can foster the children's life of prayer by helping them become aware of God's presence in their lives and his love for them, and by leading them to respond to him in a manner appropriate to their age.

Children learn to pray chiefly by sharing in the faith and prayer of adult Christians, especially parents, priests and teachers, therefore we believe that we should go beyond simply teaching them prayers; we should pray *with* them in their presence. We should encourage them to pray by themselves, especially in the morning and at night. There are many ways of helping the children meet God Our Father in prayer, some of which are:

Prayers of Silence: To help pupils to participate in prayerful silence and meditation, we can use various ways of focussing their minds on prayer. We can ask them to

³ The Gospel of St Mark, Chapter 14.

concentrate on an object, a picture, a lighted candle, some quiet background music, a religious symbol or by giving them guidance about what to think: "Let's think about..."

Liturgies and Formal/Traditional Prayers: "*Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them*".⁴ As the children move through school they will be taught and introduced to the commonly used prayers and liturgies of the Church so that they are able to join in and participate in parish celebrations of Holy Mass, the Daily Prayer of the Church (the Office) and other liturgies and devotions. The introduction of many of the responses of the Holy Mass are incorporated into their classroom and assembly prayer and worship. Our aim is to help the children to develop a reverence and a positive attitude to praying.

Praying through Music and Song: Listening to reflective music can create an atmosphere conducive to prayer and reflection. The singing of hymns and psalms can be both reflective and joyful. "*Address...one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.*"⁵ "*He who sings prays twice.*"⁶

In our schools, appropriate reflective music and singing are both used to facilitate prayer and as integral parts of prayer, celebrations of the word and liturgies.

⁴ Gospel of St Matthew, Chapter 18

⁵ St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 5

⁶ St Augustine of Hippo

Appendix 2 – Common Prayers

[Take in from Section 9.5 (pp72-78 of the Prayer & Liturgy Directory)]