



ST JAMES'

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Policy Owner	Senior Deputy Headteacher
Date of Adoption	March 2024
Date of Review	March 2026

St James' Mission Statement:

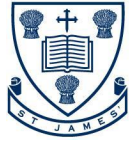
*To ensure everyone within our school **family** achieves their full potential, to encourage learning and development through **faith**, and to strive for **excellence***

Rationale:

At St James' Catholic High School our values sit at the heart of everything we do and within our everyday teaching, learning and encounters with our children, we strive to develop global Catholic citizens who have developed a deeper understanding of and appreciation for our faith and this is underpinned by our spirit "with God all things are possible". A well-defined and implemented prayer and liturgy policy is integral to the mission of our school. It serves as a foundation for the school's Catholic identity, fosters a sense of community, integrates faith with learning, and contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of students. Through prayer and liturgy, the school becomes a living witness to the Catholic faith, creating an environment where students are encouraged to grow as individuals committed to serving others and living out their faith in the world. Regular communal prayer and liturgical celebrations help to create a faith-filled environment that reflects the school's commitment to living out the Gospel values in daily life.

Aims of Liturgy and Worship

The aims of prayer and liturgy are two-fold: to offer worship to God and to allow for growth in personal holiness of members of our school family and to allow members of our school family to participate in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. From these overriding principles flow all other liturgical aims and objectives in the life of the school. We are aware that liturgical services touch individuals in a different way depending on their experience of and participation in them. We recognise that liturgy must proceed from and rest upon faith, therefore liturgical expression within the school community has another role – that of evangelisation and the



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handing on of the faith. Liturgy within St James' should always be faithful to the life, teaching and mission of the Catholic community we serve.

Specifically at St James' we aim to:

- promote a common ethos and shared Gospel values, giving worth to God and marking Him as special
- strengthen and celebrate the school family and its place in the universal family of the Church
- provide opportunities for children and staff to come together to worship God
- where possible, encourage parents to participate in liturgy
- celebrate the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and liturgy
- involve children in the planning, preparation and delivery of prayer and liturgy
- support children and staff in pursuing and developing their relationship with God
- provide opportunities to reflect on spiritual and personal beliefs
- provide opportunities for faith sharing, reflection and wonder
- enrich the religious experience of children and staff
- enable and encourage a sense of family within the school, local parishes and in the wider community
- strengthen the links with children and staff and the parishes to which they belong
- provide a regular routine of prayer and liturgy that reflects the Church's liturgical year and offers a variety of ways of praying

Context

Prayer, worship and liturgical celebration are central to our Catholic tradition and form an integral part of the school day at St James'. Prayer is encouraged in a variety of ways; private individual prayer, group prayer, and whole school prayer. The Catholic life of our school underpins everything we do and is Christ centred with our school purpose being "To educate and develop global Catholic citizens." This is underpinned by our three school values of Family, Faith and Excellence and we are reminded of these values as we move around school with each Faculty having their own purpose displayed on the walls. Our school Chapel is centrally located within the school and this emphasises its importance as a place of worship and reflection. "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)

Statement of Requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils (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 61 from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1)).

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.

Roles and Responsibilities



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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

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

The **Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator**, responsible for prayer and liturgy, 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
- 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

Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

The liturgical calendar is shared with children and staff and allows all to develop a greater understanding of the liturgical seasons and also guides staff and children when leading prayer and worship. The assembly themes for each year are based around the liturgical calendar.

We work closely with our local parishes and encourage the clergy to join us in school whenever possible strengthening the links with our local community. We recognise that we have an integral part to play in encouraging our children to attend their local church and to participate in weekly prayer and liturgy and this works best when the Priests and school staff work closely together. Wherever possible we ask our local Priests to celebrate Mass, as we recognise this as the fundamental liturgical service of our Catholic faith.

An inclusive approach is important at St James' and is reflected in our value of Family. However, we must respect the integrity of both the Catholic tradition and also the faith position of staff or children from outside that tradition. We acknowledge that children and staff engagement will vary greatly and we need to ensure we



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support all members of the school community to engage in a meaningful way. As the Catholic community is culturally broad, with children and staff from many different parts of the world and cultural traditions, it is important that we are aware of these. There may be children and staff within our Catholic community who belong to the various arms of the Catholic faith, for example members of the Eastern Catholic Churches or the Eastern Orthodox churches. There will also be other Christians or those of no faith. We must be mindful of these within our prayer and liturgy. Equally, there may be children or staff of other faiths who wish to access a prayer space, this will always be facilitated within school and further guidance sought if appropriate. Further guidance can be found in the Prayer and Liturgy Directory.

At St James' we provide the children and staff with the following opportunities to explore and practise their faith:

- A centrally located Chapel which is accessible for all with planned opportunities for prayer and liturgy
- Daily prayer and worship within Form time with an extended Form based Celebration of the Word once a week
- Whole school Masses at key times during the year
- Whole school liturgies at Christmas, Easter and at the end of the academic year
- Morning prayer for each Form in the Chapel on a cyclical basis led by the Lay Chaplain
- Raising awareness of and visibility of the Chaplaincy by "walkabout"
- Opportunity for children to be involved in the Faith in Action group
- Faith prefects led by the Senior Deputy Headteacher form a key part of our Year 11 Prefect team
- Participation in Mini DASH
- Retreats for each Year group
- Use of scripture within prayer and liturgy
- Morning prayer open to all on a Wednesday morning
- Lay Chaplain leads prayer and worship within the RE curriculum and linked to it
- Each day ends in prayer with a prayer bell ringing at 2.57pm
- All meetings within school start with a prayer
- Lessons reflect the distinct Catholic identity of our school and include elements of Catholic Social Teaching
- School charity nominated each year which shares in the mission of the Catholic church
- Food Bank collections take place twice yearly
- Promotion of Family Fast Day within school
- Promotion of Catholic Social teaching linked to our school purpose "to educate and develop global Catholic citizens"
- Lunch time prayer for all students and staff signalled by a prayer bell at 1:14pm
- Regular lunchtime Masses throughout each half term
- Student Chaplaincy Team which is open to all students
- Year group assemblies with a focus on Catholic Social Teaching

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 namely our centrally located school Chapel. 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.

Training and formation

All staff who work at St James' agree to support the Catholic ethos of our school regardless of their personal beliefs. To support them, they receive formation and guidance in the Catholic life of the school and the Lay Chaplain is always available to support and guide where needed. All new staff will be supported during



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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.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, 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.