



St Sebastian's RC Primary School

Prayer & Liturgy Policy

Names and Designation of Policy Author(s)	Gemma O’Neill, Prayer & Liturgy Coordinator; Caroline Doyle, Headteacher	Is this a Statutory Document?	
		No	
Approved by:	FGB		
Date Approved	December 2024, reviewed/revised September 2026	Is this to be published publicly on the school website?	Yes
Review Date	September 2028		
Target audience	Staff, parents, governors		
Links to other strategies, policies, procedures etc.	Religious Education Policy, Catholic Social Teaching Policy		

1. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

Prayer and Liturgy are central to the life of St Sebastian's. It is woven throughout the school week and follows the Liturgical Life of the Church. It gives the children meaningful opportunities to engage in positive liturgical experiences and also supports pupils to develop the skills so that they can prepare, lead and organise prayer and liturgy themselves.

Mission Statement

Keeping Christ at the heart of all we do, we will:

- Show kindness
- Spread joy
- Share peace
- Love everyone
- Speak the truth
- Respect everything

'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; 70

This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.

As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. St Sebastian's Church on special occasions.

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher

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 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 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.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

At St Sebastian's, children are given the opportunity to pray and reflect daily; morning, before lunch, after lunch and before going home. Planned Prayer and Liturgy is offered as a whole school gathering twice a week: Gospel Assembly and Celebration Assembly. Class Celebration of the Word takes place once a week led by pupils (where age appropriate). The Mission Team delivers Wednesday Word each Wednesday in class with the support of the class teacher. A weekly hymn is sung each morning and sung during the Celebration Assembly at the end of the week

Class Masses take place half termly and whole school Masses are observed on feast days, at the beginning of the school year, Advent, Lent and the end of the year. During these Masses there are opportunities for the Sacrament of Eucharist, and when there are other significant days in the Church's and school's calendar. Priority is given to the Sacrament of Reconciliation at key times in the liturgical year (Lent).

Prayer Partners : classes are paired up at key times of the liturgical year: October and May – Rosary; November – Remembrance; Advent and Lent.

Pupils have a shared repertoire of prayers and music: Appendix 1

Pupils progressive participation is facilitated: Appendix 2

All liturgies follow the same structure: Appendix 3 Planning Format

Annual Plan of Provision : Appendix 4

Gather together in a quiet setting. This can be done in a number of ways such as listening to music, singing or a quiet moment of reflection as we bring up the symbols of Light, Word, Cross.

Listen to the Good News - usually a piece of scripture based on our weekly theme. We pause to reflect on what we have heard.

Respond to the scripture we have heard by reflecting on it some more. It could be sharing a thought, saying a prayer, making a promise, singing a hymn or having a quiet moment to talk to God. In our class Celebration of the Word, this could be passing items around such as pebbles or writing something down to help us display our thoughts on what we have heard. Contemplation – an opportunity in this part to sit in the presence of the Lord

Mission This is about sharing the Good News and following God's mission in our everyday lives.

Day	Prayer and Liturgy Session	Focus
Monday Daily prayers and hymn of the week	Celebration of the Word Whole School Led by teachers and Prayer Leaders	Sunday Gospel
Tuesday: Daily prayers and hymn of the week	Class masses	Liturgical season or Gospel Values
Wednesday Daily prayers and hymn of the week	Wednesday Word led by the Mission Team supported by the class teacher.	Liturgical season
Thursday: Daily prayers and hymn of the week	Class Celebration of the Word with class – led by pupils according to age and ability.	CST and liturgical season
Friday Daily prayers and hymn of the week	Celebration Assembly – certificates awarded based on St Sebastian's Gospel Values and the CST principle of the week Led by teachers (rota)	CST, Gospel values, British Values, World events

Pupil formation:

- Adult leaders all contribute to pupil formation enabling them to engage and participate in the daily pattern of prayer. The daily pattern of prayer reflects the Catholic identity of the school and at the same time allows for the widest possible engagement and participation of all those present in the school. All pupil leadership ministry is considered a sacred experience and celebrated as such.

The Mission Team is made up of Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils. They:

- Read at school Mass and in whole school assemblies
- Help to choose, plan and run fundraising events to raise money for the charities we support
- Promote Catholic Social Teaching
- Lead liturgies throughout the year
- Help to lead Prayer and Liturgy in their classes and other classes
- Represent St Sebastian's' pupils by attending and taking part in out of school relevant activities
- Meet regularly to plan and discuss ideas

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 celebration of the word. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. Dedicated spaces for celebration of the word 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 celebration of the word 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.

APPENDIX 1 PRAYERS

Daily patterns of prayer: To begin and end each school day in prayer helps to put the whole day into perspective. There are three basic models of prayer. Each usually begins and ends with the sign of the cross and includes a pause for silence. Leaders consider the current liturgical season and how it might affect the prayer.

The three basic models are:

- A single prayer, suitable for the time of day (such as the Morning Offering)
- A simple structured pattern of prayer, with perhaps a short reading or psalm verse, prayer for others and a concluding prayer.
- A time of prayer which has some more spontaneous elements, such as improvised prayers or intercessions.'

Prayer formation: Children are introduced to the following prayers:

EYFS	KS1	LKS2	UKS2
The Sign of the Cross Morning Prayer Grace before meals Grace after meals Mission Statement	The Lord's Prayer Hail Mary School Prayer End of day Prayer	Glory be Act of contrition The Rosary The Magnificat	Eternal Rest

Hymns (weekly) practised throughout the year are chosen with reference to the liturgical year and stored on a Power Point with a link to the music.

APPENDIX 2

Pupil Participation Progression

Phase	Focus	Role of Pupils	Role of Adults	Key Skills Developed
EYFS	Encountering	Pupils join in with simple prayers, gestures, and songs.	Adults fully plan and lead. Pupils invited to choose symbols (e.g. a candle, cross, seasonal items).	Listening, joining responses, awareness of sacred space.
Year 1	Exploring	Pupils suggest simple prayers or songs. Help place symbols on prayer table.	Adults guide theme, scripture, and structure.	Making choices, understanding "gather–listen–respond–mission".
Year 2	Beginning to Contribute	Pupils begin to read short prayers or lines from scripture. Help choose hymns, artefacts.	Adults still structure worship but allow pupil contributions.	Reading aloud, responding reverently, linking prayer to lived experience.

Year 3	Guided Planning	Small groups help plan one element (Gather/Listen/Respond/Mission). Begin to suggest scripture passages with guidance.	Adults provide scripture options and planning templates.	Linking scripture to theme, group planning, reflective silence.
Year 4	Shared Leadership	Pupils plan worship in pairs/small groups using a scaffolded template. They begin leading readings, bidding prayers, music.	Adults act as facilitators and model reflection questions.	Independent reading, prayer writing, leading short reflection.
Year 5	Independent Planning (with guidance)	Pupils plan whole worships in groups: select scripture, music, prayers, symbols. They lead classmates in prayerful experience.	Adults provide feedback, ensure theological accuracy, and support with sensitive issues.	Ownership of worship, creativity in prayer forms (Scripture reflection with guided silence, artwork or collage responses, music and sung prayer outdoor prayer experiences) linking scripture to action.
Year 6	Full Independence	Pupils independently design and lead Celebrations of the Word for their class. They invite participation, create prayers, and lead reflection.	Adults oversee for safeguarding/doctrinal guidance but step back.	Spiritual leadership, living out faith through worship.

APPENDIX 3 – Planning Format

GATHER	How will you create a sacred space? Think about where people will sit and items that will help them pray - Candle, Cross, BIBLE etc. Remember there
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	are different coloured fabrics for different liturgical seasons • Will you include to time to be still and silent?
LISTEN 'READING'	Look at readings of the day: Universalis. Use Pray Together, Prayers before the bell, Mark 10 Mission, CAFOD. • Read the scripture passage. Who will read it? • Be still and let the stillness talk to you.
RESPOND	• Reflect on the scripture passage. • Leave some quiet time so people can think in silence and open their minds and hearts to God. • Prepare some questions based on the scripture. • Music you might want to include • If we use bidding prayers who will write them and who will read them?
MISSION	Based on the scripture ask everyone to go out and • Look for ways they can help others every day, look after the planet by caring for nature, smile and spread God's joy etc
Pupil Evaluation Gather	What went well? What would we change or do differently next time?
Pupil Evaluation Listen	What went well? What would we change or do differently next time?
Pupil Evaluation Respond	What went well? What would we change or do differently next time?
Pupil Evaluation Mission	What went well? What would we change or do differently next time?

APPENDIX 4 - Annual Plan of Provision

APOP 2026-27