



## PRAYER & LITURGY POLICY

*'This policy will be implemented in a way which honours the vision that every FCJ school is a community of persons - students, staff, governors - bound together in mutual respect and ready to rely on each other in fulfilling their privileged task as educators in a Catholic school.'*

## RATIONALE

Prayer and Liturgy is vital to the spiritual life of Upton Hall FCJ Grammar School. We recognise its impact on the spiritual, moral and social development of our pupils and value it as a part of our distinctive ethos.

All staff, under the guidance of the Chaplain and the Senior Leadership Team, actively plan, lead and deliver prayer & liturgy throughout the academic year.

We recognise that daily Prayer & Liturgy (Collective Worship) is a statutory requirement in all schools, but that in schools with a designated religious character, prayer and liturgy is far more than a statutory requirement; it is crucial to the religious and spiritual life of the school.

Our Mission Statement 'Age Quod Agis' forms the foundation of the spiritual life of the school and how we do this through our actions is explored and lived out in the prayer and liturgy offered to all our pupils and staff.

## Principles of The Prayer and Liturgy Policy

- Christ is at the centre of everything we do. Opportunities for prayer and worship therefore is the top priority.
- Every effort will be made to give pupils positive experiences based on sound educational, pastoral and liturgical principles.
- Prayer and Liturgy will prepare pupils for the liturgical life of the Church.
- Prayer and Liturgy will consider, as far as possible, the age, aptitudes and backgrounds of the pupils.
- Eucharistic celebrations will highlight as special occasions, Holy Day of Obligation, or important seasons in the liturgical year.

## Implementation

The intended impact of all prayer and liturgy should:

- Give glory and praise to God
- Be structured as per the school's guidelines to ensure a quality experience for all participants.
- Be succinct.
- Be clear in the liturgical focus and varied in their delivery.
- Be open to all staff and students.
- With regards to year group collective worship, use the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday to ensure that students hear the Word of God in liturgical order.
- Each year group will have one assembly each week known as 'Collective Worship' and every day worship will be held in form and teaching rooms using a prayerful reflection. Daily worship resources are provided by an FCJ Chaplain.
- Collective worship prayer and liturgy takes place according to the published 'Building the Kingdom' rota and is planned and delivered by a different member of staff or guest each week.

- Individual form groups may also come to the Chapel for a special prayer during registration time on a rota basis and in consultation with our Chaplain.

## Liturgy

### The Celebration of Mass

Various opportunities to celebrate Mass both in school and in the local parish of St. Joseph's Parish Church are provided throughout the year. A rota is provided for all staff.

Students participate by: -

- Each form group take its turn to Lead Mass and prepare the readings, prayers and offertory.
- Proclaiming the readings and joining in with the responses at Mass.
- Playing music and singing.
- Writing and praying bidding prayers.
- Writing and leading post-communion reflections where appropriate.
- Bringing up the offertory.
- Welcoming guests to the school or church if applicable and handing out booklets such as the 'order of service'.

## Holy Days

Although few Holy Days now fall on a school day, when they do, school Masses should be celebrated if a priest is available. Staff, students and parents are invited to attend when appropriate.

In the event of a priest being unavailable to say Mass, a service will be delivered by the School Chaplain and the ethos representatives will be involved where possible. During services, opportunities are sought to enhance the liturgy in a way not always possible in Mass – for example, reflective music/videos or drama.

When Ash Wednesday falls during the term time, school will hold 5 services for each of our year groups, but no Mass is held due to the priest's schedule. However, ashes will be blessed by the parish priest beforehand and distributed to all year groups and staff members by staff and student Extraordinary Ministers who have received permission from the priest beforehand.

## Masses for other occasions

The school will provide many other occasions to celebrate Mass throughout the school year. Examples of Holy Days of Obligation and other opportunities are: -

- Annual School Mass at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. All students, staff, Parents, Governors and trustees are invited.
- Staff Mass on INSET days (when possible).
- Y7 'Mass of Welcome' in our school hall held once the Y7 retreat days have taken place. Parents and family are invited. Preparations for Mass take place during the Y7 retreat programme and in form time.
- Y13 'Leavers' Mass at a local church. Parents and family are invited.
- Confirmation Masses for pupils being confirmed held at various feeder parishes.

## Services

Throughout the year, services are held at appropriate times to aid the spiritual and prayer-life of the school. Examples are: -

- Remembrance Day service is held in our peace garden with a 2-minute silence, prayers delivered by staff and students and poppy wreaths laid at the foot of the cross by Head Girls' Team or cadets.
- Advent services in the school hall for all year groups with opportunities for carols to be sung and advent readings to be heard.

- Christmas Carol Service is held at a local church in the lead up to Christmas with parents and community members invited, as well as all staff and students.
- Ash Wednesday services for all year groups with distribution of ashes.
- Reconciliation Service is held during Lent with opportunities to go to confession (at least one year group).
- Stations of the Cross services held during RE classes or other subjects if applicable.

### **The Sacrament of Reconciliation**

Opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held each academic year. Non-Catholics will also be invited with the opportunity to meet a priest and/or ask a religious based question. Further opportunities to receive the sacrament will be explored where appropriate and as often as possible through liaison with local Priests from our feeder parishes. This will take place in our School Chapel, hall or another appropriate space.

### **Collective Worship Assemblies**

Collective worship takes place in the main hall once per week for each year group and attached staff. For staff members not attached to a year group who wish to attend collective worship, cover will be provided for that staff member when appropriate to enable them to participate.

The theme for collective worship is taken from the previous Sunday's Gospel reading and planned around the themes of Gather, Listen, Respond, Send Forth. Prayer in form and/or lessons (Collective worship) follows the same structure, Gather, Listen, Respond, Send forth.

'Building the Kingdom of God' rota is distributed to all staff in advance and includes the full Bible reference, a breakdown of the theme for staff to use as a starting point and the place in the liturgical calendar as well as other more secular themes are included too.

Worship, prayer and reflection is the sole purpose of the assembly and should last between 10-15 minutes. Heads of Year have a responsibility to prepare students in the hall in an appropriate way for prayer by ensuring a silent, respectful atmosphere is held. Head of Years where appropriate should link and summarise worship before any other essential notices are given at the end of assembly time. However, if essential information needs to be given to the year group that might not be appropriate to take place after worship, then an additional assembly should be arranged on a Wednesday during form time so as not to take away from prayerful purpose of assembly time.

Reward assemblies carried out in extended assembly time once per term. However, reward assemblies are additional to planned worship on the rota and should not be done 'instead of worship and prayer'. Rewards and certificates should not be distributed at the end of assemblies focussed on worship and prayer.

### **Thought for the Week on non-assembly days**

Students have a statutory entitlement to collective worship every day, but it does not need to be delivered through assemblies every day. On non-assembly days it is the responsibility of the form and class teacher to ensure that the form participate in prayer during every period 1 and 5. The tutor/teacher should introduce the prayer time and ready the students appropriately for the time of prayer. Students could pray the opening and closing prayers collectively; the reflections could be led by a combination of form tutor/teacher and pupils.

Prayerful themes are varied and offer students an opportunity to think about key issues and themes throughout the year such as: -

- The Mission Statement
- Anti-bullying
- Climate change

- Catholic social teaching principles
- Gospel values
- CAFOD fast days
- Remembrance Day
- Youth Sunday
- Saints' feast days
- Topical current world events

Sometimes weekly prayer and reflection may differ in its appearance and structure during Lent and Advent so that students can take part in CAFOD Advent and Lenten calendars.

One of the benefits of the Daily prayer and reflection is that the concerns of life and of the world are brought to God regularly and students are encouraged to pray to God about any concerns of the world. Through this daily prayer, students are made aware that prayer is a very normal response to any need. This will nourish the faith and prayer life of students and their relationship with God. Every Friday, we end our week with an examen.

Students will be reminded regularly of their value and importance in campaigning standing in solidarity with those in need and putting faith into action. Examples of this are clear during times such as Upton's celebration of the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception.

Pupils participate in formal prayers such as *The Glory Be, the Hail Mary and Our Father (all shared on the staff shared area)*. During the month of May, students may participate in the rosary during retreats and learn about the different mysteries.

There is an additional selection of formal prayers in the teacher shared drive should teachers wish to extend their worship time or pray for any additional intentions.

## The Liturgical Year

Students experience the special feasts and seasons of the church e.g.: Advent, Lent, Pentecost in collective worship and through special activities in school such as morning prayer doing Advent with prayer stations in every classroom, 'Stations of the Cross' during Lent, the lighting of the advent wreath, rosary in October and May, seasonal hymns and prayers. All students hear the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday's Gospel during worship in assemblies, providing the opportunity to listen to the Word of God in liturgical order.

Where appropriate, liturgical colour is used in imagery and display during worship in both form and assembly, for example purple during Advent/Lent, red for Pentecost & feast of martyr's, apostles and evangelists. We have a lectern in our hall (designed by a Year 13 Product Design student), which can reflect the Liturgical year through its light design.

## Provision & Monitoring of Prayer and Liturgy

### The Chapel

We use our Chapel for liturgy, prayer and sometimes assemblies. We also hold Mass here on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and other special events. Our chapel has become a focal point in November for remembrance.

The chapel does not have reservation for the Blessed Sacrament and so therefore has more of a chaplaincy feel, however the permanent fixture of the Altar along with pews and stained-glass windows gives the room a sense of holiness and spirituality.

The school chapel is open to everyone for quiet prayer and reflection. It is situated prominently at the centre of school and can be accessed by all at all times of the day.

### The Shared Drive

The Chaplain will provide appropriate resources and training for staff on how to plan, lead and deliver prayer and liturgy. All resources are stored centrally on the shared drive for all staff to access.

### Roles & Responsibilities:

Every member of our community is responsible for contributing to the ethos of our FCJ Catholic School. Some specific roles and responsibilities are outlined below.

#### The Governing Body:

- Ensures the Catholic ethos of the school is maintained to a high level
- Maintains an overview of the various forms of collective worship in the school by attending events from time to time such as the annual school Mass or Feast Day, and by meeting on a regular basis with the leadership team, and chaplain.
- Reviews the performance of the school against as outlined in the Catholic Schools Inspection Framework and the areas identified for development as identified in prior inspections.

#### The Senior Leadership team:

- Maintains the Catholic ethos so that it permeates across all aspects of the curriculum
- Ensures staff have access to appropriate support, guidance & training through Inset days and staff training.
- Liaises with relevant staff to support the further development of collective worship where appropriate.

#### The Chaplain:

- Works with staff and students to plan and provide appropriate resources for all forms of liturgy and collective worship as well as the general Catholic life of the school
- Liaises with local clergy to arrange for the sacraments to be celebrated in school and for any other relevant involvement.
- Maintains the upkeep of the school chapel
- Provides support to students to enable them to develop leadership skills in the various aspects of collective worship.
- Liaises with outside agencies and the Diocese for updates and opportunities which will support the Gospel values of the school.
- Arranged other opportunities both inside and outside of school, for staff and students to gain experiences that help to develop their faith and put faith into action.
- The chaplain monitors the quality of Tutor Prayers and Collective Worship, observation and feedback from students.

#### Heads of Year:

- Ensure that tutor time prayers are being said regularly by their tutor teams as directed by the Chaplain and the Senior Leadership team.
- Lead prayers in assembly as guided by the Chaplain.
- Encourage students to engage with the Catholic life of the school
- Monitor tutor prayers, and collective worship in assembly to make sure they take place in line with our prayer and liturgy policy.

#### Teaching and support staff:

- Uphold the Catholic Ethos of the School

- Make a concerted contribution to the Catholic life and mission of the school by setting an individual appraisal target each academic year
- Celebrate the Liturgical Calendar with students such as Advent and Easter.
- Support students to develop their faith through prayer and service
- Exemplify the FCJ Values and teach students about these values
- Encourage attendance and appropriate behaviour in Masses, Services and prayer times
- Organise and lead daily morning prayers in tutor times
- Accompany and supervise tutor groups/teaching groups throughout prayer and liturgy (collective worship)
- Encourage students to join in prayer and liturgy
- All tutors support students in writing and leading prayers.
- Seek support from Chaplain or a member of the Chaplaincy team if required.

All staff:

- Contribute to the Catholic ethos of the school in a thoughtful manner through the appraisal process
- Engage in and support the Catholic ethos of the school
- Conduct themselves in a Christian manner
- Lead by example by participating in Collective worship within the school

### Training and formation

*"We are God's work of art created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning God had meant us to live it." (Ephesians 2: 10)*

All new staff will be supported during the induction process and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school.

New staff also partake in training on the FCJ charism and values. Some of these staff will also participate in an induction weekend in London with our FCJ partner schools.

Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation.

There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development regularly during inset days so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

We formed a chaplaincy team during 2023-24. This group of staff lead on distinctive aspects of the Catholic Life and Mission of our school. This model was inspired as a result of a CPD opportunity by David O'Malley.

A range of staff also participate in Diocesan meetings such as Dash, Mini Dash, Shore, DADAH.

A range of staff also participate in FCJ Chaplain, Head of RE, Directors of Business, Directors of Sixth Form, Deputy Headteachers and Headteachers meetings/retreats take part during each academic year. Sixth form student leadership teams also take part in annual conferences to set out their goals for the year ahead.

In 2023-24, there was an opportunity to be part of a FCJ Chaplaincy group with our FCJ partner schools – this involved two retreats in Oxford and London as well as a series of virtual meetings. The sessions focussed on Ignatian pedagogy which enables each participant to encounter Christ together. Staff had the opportunity to accompany and be accompanied on their own personal journey of faith and spirituality with the aim to be a better leader of faith back at school.

## Monitoring

Monitoring of prayer and liturgy includes drop-ins during moments of prayer during form-time and/or lessons (collective worship) and assemblies.

Monitoring will be undertaken by the chaplain, SLT & Head of Years regularly.

Monitoring aims to ensure key elements of prayer and liturgy are being met (such as the structure, liturgical cycle, consistency etc) it does not aim to criticise the prayer itself, as prayer is a distinctly personal experience.

Feedback will be provided if appropriate/requested.

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.

## Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the School Chaplain, Leaders and Governors.