



## **Prayer and Liturgy Policy draft**

# **St John's Catholic Primary School 2025/2026**

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**This policy will be reviewed March 2027**

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## 1 Introduction

'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; 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)).

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

### 3.1 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(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.

### 3.2 Head teacher

The Head teacher, 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 other 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.

### 3.3 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 Head teacher 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 Education Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

## 4 Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Type	Involved	Frequency	Location	Led by
Morning prayer	All classes	Daily	Classroom or together in the hall	Children
Grace before meals	All classes	Daily	Classroom	Children
Evening prayer	All classes	Daily	Classroom	Children
Class prayer and liturgy	All classes	Tuesday and Thursday	Classroom	Children supported by teacher
Mass for the start of the year and end of the year	All classes	Once a year	In Church	Head teacher
Deanery Mass for staff	All staff	Once a year	St Wilfred's chapel	St Wilf's
Harvest Liturgy	All staff	Once a year	In school hall	Headteacher
Mass for St John the Evangelist	All classes	Once a year	In Church	Head teacher
Advent service	KS2	Once a year	In Church	Head teacher
Epiphany Liturgy	All classes	Once a year	School hall	Head teacher
Lent Reconciliation liturgy and confessions	KS2	Once a year	School hall PPA room	Year 5
Friday celebration assembly	All classes	Once a week	School hall	Yr 6 and Head
Rosary club Oct & May	All classes	Once a week during that month	PPA room	Chair of Gov
Stations of the Cross	All classes	Once a year	In Church and around school grounds	DHT
Mass for the Annunciation of the Lord	All classes	Once a year	In the school hall	Head teacher
Mass for St George	All classes	Once a year	In the school hall	Head teacher
Marion parade	All classes	Once a year	Throughout the school grounds	SLT
Mass to celebrate FHC	All classes	Once a year	In the school hall	Head teacher
Gospel assembly	All classes	Every Monday	School hall	Head teacher
Singing assembly	All Classes	Every Wednesday	School hall	DHT
The Good Shepherd Mass	Prayer Leaders	Once a year	Worth Abbey or Arundel Cathedral	A&B and SLT
Leavers Mass (Going forth celebration)	Year 6	Once a year	In Church	Headteacher

<b>Term</b>	<b>Virtue</b>	<b>Special dedication/wider themes</b>
<b>Autumn 1</b>	<b>Respect Participation</b>	Start of School Year Education Sunday St Teresa of Calcutta (5th September) World Day of Prayer for Day of Creation Environment Harvest Fast Day St Francis of Assisi (4th Oct) (class assembly)
	<b>Solidarity</b>	Mental Health Day (10th October) Month of the Rosary (October) St John Henry Newman (9th October) Black History Month (October)
<b>Autumn 2</b>	<b>Hope Promoting Peace</b>	All Saints and All Souls Beatitudes (1st and 2nd November) Remembrance Sunday (Closest to 11th November) Universal Children Day (20th November)
	<b>Patience Subsidiarity</b>	Advent – Getting Ready Human Rights Day – Migrants Day, Amnesty and Prisoners of Conscience (10th December) Gaudete Sunday (3rd Sunday of Advent)
<b>Spring 1</b>	<b>Faith Human dignity</b>	Epiphany – Gifts to God/ New Year’s Resolution (6th January) Baptism of the Lord (1st Sunday) World Peace Day (2nd Sunday) Conversion of St Paul (25th Jan)
	<b>Simplicity The Common Good</b>	Holocaust Memorial Day (27th Jan) St Josephine Bakhita – Abolition of Slavery (8th Feb) World Day of the Sick/ Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes (11th Feb) World Epilepsy Day (14th February)
<b>Spring 2</b>	<b>Charity Preferential Option for the Poor</b>	Lent – Charity CAFOD Family Fast Day (Follows 1st Sunday of Lent) Lent – Taking Action St David (1st March) International Women’s Day (8th March)
	<b>Forgiveness Human dignity</b>	St Patrick (17th March) International Day of Happiness (20th March) St Oscar Romero (24th March) Lent – Prayer and Moving to Holy Week
<b>Summer 1</b>	<b>Perseverance &amp; Resilience Distributive Justice</b>	Season of Easter St George (23rd April) 3rd Sunday of Easter – The Road to Emmaus
	<b>Kindness The Common Good</b>	4th Sunday of Easter – The Good Shepherd Month of Mary (May) Pentecost
	<b>Honesty Stewardship</b>	Trinity Sunday & Corpus Christi St Anthony (13th June)
	<b>Service</b>	SS Peter and Paul (29th June)

	<b>Solidarity</b>	Reflections on the end of the School Year inc Mass Staying safe over the summer
<b>Summer 2</b>	<b>Honesty Subsidiarity</b>	Trinity Sunday & Corpus Christi St Anthony (13th June) Fathers' Day (Third Sunday of June)
	<b>Service Participation</b>	SS Peter and Paul (29th June) Reflections on the end of the School Year Staying safe over the summer

## 5 Our school context

St John's Catholic Primary School is a one-form entry, voluntary aided Catholic Primary school in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by West Sussex Local Authority. There are 203 pupils on roll and 52% are Catholic, 14% Other Christian and 1% of our children are Muslim, 1% Buddhist.

The school serves the Horsham parish. 6% of pupils are known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant, this has substantially decreased since last year. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is 38%. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is at 12% and there are 6% of children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan. This is considerably higher than other local schools.

Pupil's attainment on entry to the school is generally lower than expected levels. With speech, language and communication and self-care being areas of need when children start in Reception.

Outcomes for children are good in Reading, Maths, SPAG and Science and are improving in writing. This is still an area of focus for the whole school.

The average weekly proportion of curriculum time for RE meets the recommended 10%. This is evidenced through book monitoring, lesson observations and pupil voice. Prayer and liturgy is additional to this 10%.

St John's is part of the Deanery group of schools including St Wilfrid's Secondary School, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, St Francis of Assisi, St Robert Southwell and St Peter's in East Grinstead.

The staff team comprise of 28% Catholic Staff.

The Head teacher, Finula Farr has been in post since September 2021. The school secured a "Good" Ofsted rating in September 2023. The school underwent a rapid improvement journey that was focused around improving the quality of curriculum, subject leadership and raised outcomes across the school.

The Head teacher and Deputy Head have CCRS. The Head teacher is the Chair of the Diocesan Steering Group and actively takes part in the 'Growing Catholic Leaders' programme offered by the Diocese. She also worships in the Parish of St John's as does the Deputy. The Deputy Head teacher is the Subject Leader for RE as well as having oversight of RSHE which is incorporated into our bespoke PSHE curriculum which we refer to as our 'RESPECT' curriculum. The Head teacher is the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator.

We hold Mass within the school hall and at St John the Evangelist Church in town. We celebrate Mass at least once a term and more if the clergy can accommodate it. We will invite parents, carers, friends and parishioners to join us at Mass within Church. Mass within school is attended by the children and staff. During Mass children and staff who are in full communion with the Catholic Church and have made their First Holy Communion are invited to receive the Eucharist. All other children and staff are invited to receive a blessing during Communion. This is a personal choice given to each individual. The individual signals they would like a blessing by putting their right hand over their heart when coming up to the Priest. Children and adults may also choose to remain in their seats during this time. There

is the right for parents to withdraw their children from these celebrations if so they choose to. We invite parents/carers to discuss this with the Head teacher.

### 5.1 Celebration of the Word Assemblies

The children and staff will attend a Gospel assembly each Monday morning. Within the assembly children will join together to make the sign of the cross, recite the school prayer, recite the school values and hear the Gospel reading from the day before. The assembly will focus around the Gospel theme and where possible will also link to Catholic Social Teaching and virtues. Assemblies will involve children and staff participating by answering questions, sharing thoughts and feelings and acting passages out. There will be links made to our community today and how we live in our Country with the rights and responsibilities gifted to us. British Values are also incorporated into assemblies where it is appropriate. Each assembly should offer every child a positive and uplifting experience. Parents and carers do have the right to withdraw from acts of worship. This should be discussed with the Head teacher. When the Gospel is read out children and staff will stand and make the sign of the cross on the forehead, lip and heart as per the Catholic tradition. The Gospel should be proclaimed by an individual in full communion with the Catholic Church as per the Prayer and Liturgy directory.

### 5.2 Class Prayer

Children and staff should have the opportunity to pray together at the start of the day, before lunch and at the end of the day. This should be either the school prayers or prayers the children have prepared in advance. The prayers should be led respectfully by a child in the class. Children also have the opportunities to take part in open prayers, Lectio Divina and traditional prayers such as the Our Father or Hail Mary. If children or staff do not wish to take part in the prayers they are asked to sit or stand quietly whilst others pray. Children and staff are invited to take part in the prayer life of the school. The school has a subscription to ten:tens prayer and liturgy resources. This offers daily readings and suggestions that can be used within the classroom. Children are encouraged to take the lead in planning, leading and evaluating prayer.

### 5.3 Other Sacraments and Liturgies

We believe worship remembers and celebrates God's work in our lives. It celebrates his presence amongst us today and allows children and staff the opportunity to be joined with Him. In our school, Prayer and Liturgy takes many forms including prayer, song, assemblies, meditation and liturgies. We strive to provide many opportunities for the children to develop their relationship with God. Children and staff are encouraged to meditate and reflect deeply on the Gospel values and carefully consider how these will impact on their lives and the lives of others. We invite all to develop a personal relationship with God.

As visible on the tables above there are numerous religious observance throughout the year, these match to the Church's liturgical calendar. Reconciliation, distribution of ashes, Stations of the Cross will happen annually. All children and adults will be invited to take part in the liturgies. Care will be taken to ensure the services are appropriate for the stage and age of the children. School will liaise with the clergy to ensure the environment is appropriate, i.e. for Reconciliation children will be in the PPA room with an open door and a member of SLT present just outside the room. Other celebrations will either take place in the school hall all together or outside in the school grounds, i.e. Marion parade or Stations of the Cross. Children take an active role in planning, leading and evaluating Prayer and Liturgy, each class has two representatives to be 'Prayer Leaders.'

This academic year in the Spring term we have formed a Liturgical choir. This was opened up to all KS2 children. We are blessed to be part of the Diocesan Schools Singing Programme and choose to fund our participation in it. The choir is taught by Billie Robson who is a choral director for the project within the diocese of Arundel and Brighton. Where possible we will incorporate this choir into our celebrations. We also use the musical resource 'Back to the Ark' to support singing throughout the school. We pick hymns that are well matched to the liturgical season. To support the growth of a rich musical repertoire the Deputy Head teacher holds a singing assembly each Wednesday. We expose the children to both traditional church music and modern examples.

## 6 Resourcing

As Our Catholic nature is central to our school it is always an area of focus within our School Development Plan. As such RE always has ring fenced funding set aside to ensure it develops appropriately and resources are purchased when required. For the Financial Year 2024/25 the allocation of budget was £3600. This currently includes funding teachers to be released for training with the diocese each half term for the RED. The Head teacher's annual conference, RE leaders development days each term, RSE annual conference, the Steering Groups meeting once a term and training once a term for the Prayer and Liturgy co-ordinator. As RE and Prayer and Liturgy are both area of focus on the SDP both the Deputy Head teacher and Head teacher attend some relevant sessions together.

Due to the introduction of the new Religious Education Directory (RED) there is a significant amount of funding directed towards purchasing essential RE resources for individual classes and the whole school. This includes YouCats for each class and new Bibles. This investment allows teachers to follow the planning more faithfully and empowers them to create effective, purposeful and inspiring RE lessons.

As a school we created a new vision, values, ethos and mission statement together (in consultation with the children, parents/carers, clergy, Parish, Governors and staff.) This has now fully been embedded within school. There are wall decals in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to remind all of what we are working towards and who we are. The children also created actions to go alongside their values and recite them at the start of each assembly.

We invested in a new banner which is displayed at Church to ensure the community know of the school and our values, ethos and mission. This banner is also replicated on the school roadside fencing, it sits alongside a banner celebrating the Jubilee Year. This proudly promotes and displays our faith to the public.

Our Parish Priest, Father Tristan asked parishners to donate towards the purchase of a set Missals for the school. This was successful so we have a new translation set for use in school.

Responding to pupil voice, The Friends of St John's also fundraised to provide resources to create a new reflective outdoor space for prayer and contemplation. They purchased statues, plants and soft groundworks and benches. This has enhanced the school grounds and added a location for children and adults to develop their relationship with God. It also offers a space for classes when they are doing collective worship.

Within Key Stage Two there is a prayer focus area with religious artefacts and images on display. Throughout the building there are artefacts that clearly and proudly display our Catholic nature.

## 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. Training needs can initially be discussed during annual professional reviews held in the Autumn term. 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. RE CPD will be prioritised within the budget.

Father Tristan also provides CPD for staff during staff meetings or inset days. The Deanery come together once a year for an RE CPD focus day. Claire Franklin who is the Chaplain for St Wilfred's Catholic Secondary school is also available to support staff when required.

### 7.1 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.