The Catholic High School Chester

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Approved By	Full Governing Board
Category	Catholic Life
Policy Owner	A.Gasparini
Date Approved	14/7/26
Next Review Date	July 2029

1. Context

1.1 Our Mission Statement:

“Christo Fidelis” Faithful to Christ.

“Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.” John 14:21

1.2 Our Vision:

“Together we will achieve success by developing our strengths, exploring our talents and recognising that Christ, our original teacher, will support us.”

1.3 At The Catholic High School, Chester, we aim to educate the person as a whole: body, mind and soul, helping the students identify their gifts and talents to develop them in order to flourish as children of God.

1.4 Jesus began with a bowl of water and a towel; he washed the feet of the disciples. He began with the bread and the wine when he shared a meal with them.

1.5 We must begin in the same way, with the fabric of everyday life, with everyday human actions and values: doing things as groups, greeting and welcoming, listening, thanking, asking for forgiveness, sharing, marking special occasions, experiencing symbolic actions.

1.6 Jesus showed us perfect love by getting up from the table and kneeling at the feet of his disciples and washing them. We are all invited to imitate him and follow Jesus’ footsteps.

<u>What do we mean by Prayer, Liturgy and Celebration of the Word?</u>

1.7 “*Full, conscious, and active participation*” in Liturgy is what the Church desires for all the faithful. (Sacrosanctum Concuilium 2 .14).

1.8 As members of the community at The Catholic High School, Chester, we must strive to bring this about in all that we undertake.

What is Liturgy?

1.9 “Liturgy is always in the first place communion or fellowship with Jesus Christ. Every liturgy, not just the celebration of the Eucharist, is an Easter in miniature. Jesus reveals his passage from death to life and celebrates it with us.” [1085 Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church]

1.10 Liturgy is a formal and prescribed act of the Church where people adore and express deepest respect for God. The word Liturgy means the work of people; therefore, Liturgy recognises the work of Christ done

for his people and proclaims the Word of God in which people participate. God himself is the Word, His nature is to speak and dialogue with his children, a two-way conversation. Liturgy is a ritual, symbolic and public action, it involves singing and drama, in which people hear the story of salvation. Furthermore,

1.11 Liturgy is a living pattern given once for all in its essentials by Christ and his apostles. This tradition must be lived out through all the ages, not individually, but by a living community. The Church desires that participation in the Liturgy should be full, meaning people engaged in body, mind and spirit; conscious, where people understand the meaning of what is happening; and active, so that people's lives may be transformed as a result of the encounter with God in Liturgy.

1.12 At The Catholic High School, Chester, we believe that Liturgy is woven through the very pattern of our lives. What we are trying to do is to be more aware of God's work and blessing in our lives.

1.13 In Liturgy, we who have been baptised are called to share in the priesthood of Christ, who has given us the example that we must copy.

What is Prayer?

1.14 Prayer is a conversation with God. This can be formal, such as the Lord's prayer and the Angelus, or less formal, giving room for creativity, such as hymn singing, praying with images and intercessions. Prayer takes place every day in school, at the start of the day, at lunchtime we say Grace before meals, during form time. The focus and format of prayer varies according to the liturgical calendar and theme of the week, providing opportunities for the students to engage in prayer.

What is Celebration of the Word?

1.15 Celebration of the Word follows structural patterns found in the liturgy and are created for the school community with the purpose of proclaiming the Word of God, as we celebrate it in the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. The incredible story "The Road to Emmaus" found in Luke 24:13-35, gives the platform in which Celebration of the Word is structured, -a four-pillar model called 'Emmaus': GATHER (Luke 24:15) – LISTEN (Luke 24:27) – RESPOND (Luke 24:30) – MISSION (Luke 24:33).

1.16 The most common examples of Celebration of the Word are the weekly assemblies in year groups based on the theme of the week linked to the Liturgical calendar, the "Good News" at form time, staff prayer on inset days and specific reflection days such as National Day of Remembrance, a school bereavement, a current circumstance happening in the community or anywhere in the world.

1.17 Each year group has a set day on which their Celebration of the Word takes place.

2. Statement Of Requirement

2.1 Within maintained schools and academies, there is a legal requirement for an 'Act of Collective Worship' to take place daily. The governing body is legally required to ensure that it is provided. At The Catholic High School this is fulfilled in daily Prayer and Celebration of the Word plus regular Liturgy, which are integral activities to the Catholic identity and life of the school.

Right of Withdrawal:

2.2 Parents do have the right to withdraw their children form Prayer, Liturgy and Celebration of the Word, and they are informed of this through the school prospectus.

3. Statement of Inclusivity

3.1 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)

3.2 The Catholic High School welcomes students and staff of every faith and no faith alike, as we are all called God's children. Our school community is culturally broad, with pupils and staff coming from many different parts of the world and cultural traditions, enriching our understanding of diversity as part of God's creation.

3.3 Non-Christian staff and students are asked to respect and support the prayer of others and they are encouraged to participate in prayer and liturgy by keeping silence and adopting an appropriate posture. Likewise, the school respects their religious integrity by not asking them to make the sign of the Cross or say the responses and prayers.

4. Responsibility

4.1 Worship is legally the responsibility of the Governing Body. In practice at The Catholic High School, it is the Leadership Team, link Governor, along with the Head of RE, the Religious Education Department and lay chaplain who will make decisions regarding the Prayer and Liturgy within the school.

4.2 All staff appointed at the school are expected to support the ethos of the school and contribute effectively to Prayer and Liturgy, as agreed at the time of the sign of contract. Students are also responsible of preparing and leading Prayer and Celebration of the Word in the school.

4.3 Governors have the responsibility to ensure that this Policy, required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales is enforced, monitored, and evaluated, so that it continues to meet the needs of the school community. The governing body must ensure clarity of vision and the ethos direction of the school.

4.4 Governors should be aware of their legal responsibilities regarding Celebration of the Word, taking account of the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, Education Act 1996 and the school standard framework 1998.

4.5 In this voluntary Catholic academy, it is the overall responsibility of governors, in consultation with the Headteacher, to ensure that the legal requirements are met and opportunities for quality Celebration of the Word are being delivered. Those responsible will ensure that Prayer and Liturgy are in accordance with the school's trust deed and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

4.6 The following will be monitored by the Leadership Team:

- Time set aside for Celebration of the Word
- Whether the observed practice is consistent with agreed policy
- Whether Celebration of the Word is resourced in terms of materials, visual aids etc.
- Staff development on Celebration of the Word and its impact
- Prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing pupils into prayer
- Impact on pupils and members of the school community
- Opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access Prayer and Liturgy
- Records of themes and teachings of the Catholic Church covered in Celebration of the Word

4.7 Outcomes of monitoring will be communicated to staff and governors with recommendations for future action.

4.8 The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the Prayer and Liturgy Policy agreed by the governing body. It is important that the Leadership team and responsible staff for Prayer and Liturgy model good practice as they participate in and lead Prayer and Liturgy.

4.9 The chaplain and staff responsible for Prayer and Liturgy will seek to keep parents and carers informed of the Catholic Life of the school, as well as the Prayer and Liturgy of the school, providing resources to help them make links at home so help to build up the domestic Church. The way of communication to parents and carers is via Firefly/Chaplaincy, emails, School Post, the school website containing links to podcasts, newsletters, and Parishes' newsletters.

4.10 The chaplain will liaise with subject leaders to ensure that Prayer and Liturgy is celebrated in all its richness, such as IT, Arts, and Music.

4.11 The School Council and 6th Form Leadership Team with the help of the chaplain and responsible staff, are responsible for the preparation and delivery of Celebration of the Word and for the organization of events that contributes to the Catholic Life of the School, such as charity events, prayer groups, celebration of saint feasts, and anything that falls under the umbrella of the Catholic Social Teachings.

4.12 Local Clergy play a key role in the Prayer and Liturgy of the school, especially in the celebration of weekly Masses/Staff Masses and Sacraments.

5. Content and Celebration

Catholic Life:

5.1 It is paramount that the students are given well planned and meaningful Liturgy, as this may be the only opportunity that they have to participate and reflect on their own faith.

5.2 On a day-to-day level, staff are provided with resources to assist them in Prayer and reflection with their form groups. The "Good News" resources are very beneficial for tutors to use during Form Time.

5.3 At special times, such as Holocaust Memorial Day the form tutor may be given a more developed reflection to use with their class.

5.4 Staff are aware that the chaplain along with the Religious Education Department have resources to use in Celebration of the Words.

5.5 The chaplain plans reflections, services, and Masses at The Catholic High School, Chester. Students and other teaching staff are actively encouraged to assist in the planning of Prayer and Liturgy and participate whenever possible.

The Eucharist:

5.6 We understand that some staff and students are not familiar with the meaning and importance of the Eucharist as others. We are a Gospel community and an inclusive community where all are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist.

5.7 Pope John Paul II reminded the Church that she lives from the Eucharist, that the Sacrament is nourishment for her life and mission: 'a renewed impetus in Christian living passes through the Eucharist.'(Ecclesia de Eucharistia 60)

5.8 Preaching on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ in 2004 the Holy Father quoted words from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26).

5.9 He continued: ‘With these words St. Paul reminds the Christians of Corinth that the "Lord's supper" is not only a convivial gathering, but also – and above all – the memorial of the redeeming sacrifice of Christ. Whoever takes part – the Apostle explains – unites himself to the mystery of the death of the Lord, in fact, becomes his "herald."’

5.10 There is, therefore, a very close relation between “celebrating the Eucharist” and proclaiming Christ. To enter into communion with him in the Paschal memorial means, at the same time, to become missionaries of the event that the ritual realizes. In a certain sense, it means to render it contemporary at all times, until the Lord returns. (John Paul II, homily for the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, 10th June 2004)

5.11 Similarly, Pope Francis restated the importance of the Eucharist when he stated, “The Eucharist *is* Jesus who gives himself entirely to us, feeding on Him and abiding in Him through Eucharistic communion — if we do so in faith — transforms our lives into a gift to God and to our brothers and sisters.”

5.12 The best way that we have to help our community understand Liturgy, and particularly the Liturgy of the Mass, is to ensure that they have opportunities to experience the human values involved in the celebration of the Mass, which naturally arise in everyday life:

- Helping others
- Working together
- Socialising together
- Giving and sharing
- Welcoming others
- Listening
- Saying sorry and Thank you
- Celebrating

5.13 Liturgy during the school year is as follows:

- Year Group Mass through the year in form groups, one form each week.
- Trips to local parishes to celebrate a Holy Day of Obligation.
- Start and end of year Masses.
- Leavers Masses for Year 11 and Year 13.

- Welcome Mass for Y7.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation in Advent and Lent.
- Masses at local Parishes with a small group of students once a term.

Prayer:

5.14 Prayer should occur simultaneously across the school in the morning and at Form Time- in this we are united in our faith. All form tutors will pray with their students at the start or the end of registration, as well as at the start of lunch.

5.15 All staff are provided with resources to assist them in praying with the students, however, one would encourage staff to consider reflection and prayer in other ways such as:

- Students could listen to a reflective piece of music.
- There can be a Prayer Focus for prayer in each classroom.
- Students should be encouraged to write and say their own prayers.
- A newspaper article can prompt a reflection.
- A reading from the bible.
- 'Good News'
- Staff Retreat Day

5.16 Families have access to our weekly prayer via the school website and on Firefly following the path: Firefly/Chaplaincy/Chaplaincy Corner/Theme of the Week and Prayer.

5.17 Families have access to 'The Good News' resources on Firefly following the path: Firefly/Chaplaincy/Good News

5.18 Prayer during the school year is as follows:

- Beginning of day (school prayer).

  Christ has no hands but your hands to do his work today.
  He has no feet but your feet to help friends on their way.
  He has no lips but your lips to say what he has to say. Amen.

- Form Time (weekly prayer linked to the theme of the week).
- Grace before meals.
- Dedicated prayer to form saint by prayer focus on each classroom.
- Staff prayer before briefing: Prayer binds us as a community and gives us focus for the day ahead. We share in joy and celebration as well as in times of sorrow or anxiety.
- Stations of the Cross: This may be a living representation by the drama department or traditionally in the dedicated area of the quite garden.
- Voluntary Rosary during break in the chapel.
- Individual prayer in the chapel and 6th form chapel.
- Weekly Sunday's Gospel reflection and prayer via email to all Staff.
- At the start of Governors and SLT meetings.
- Voluntary staff prayer at 8.15am in the chapel: Stations of the Cross, decade of the Rosary during October, Marian reflections during May.
- Residential and school trips.
- Charity Days.

Celebration of the Word:

5.19 Firstly, it is important that we distinguish between an assembly and Celebration of the Word. If a Year group is gathered for information/notices, this is an assembly, whereas Celebration of the Word involves a gathering for the proclamation of scriptures, reflection, and prayer.

5.20 At The Catholic High School, Chester, we recognise the importance of celebrating achievements; for example, merit certificates and the Christo Fidelis Award, and that a Year group gathering is an ideal opportunity for a Head of Year to discuss operation matters. There must be an obvious differentiation between notices and the start of Celebration of the Word from whoever is leading the assembly.

5.21 Staff planning a Celebration of the Word should aim:

- to keep it as close to the Liturgical theme they have been given as possible.
- to involve the students as much as possible in the planning and delivery of the Celebration of the Word.
- to allow the students opportunity for some quiet reflection.
- for prayer to occur.

5.22 Celebration of the Word during the academic year as follows:

- Weekly Celebration of the Word
- Advent Service
- Christmas Carol Service (in the evening and during school time)
- Ash Wednesday Service
- Lent Services
- Holy Week Services

Displays:

5.23 Displays are important to reinforce messages that have been given to students during reflections and services. On various places in the school, there are clear displays on the most important celebrations of the liturgical calendar such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. At other times in the academic year the liturgical calendar will provide inspiration for other displays.

6. Resourcing

6.1 All the materials for Prayer and Liturgy are provided by the Lay Chaplain and the Religious Education department. Tutors are also encouraged to produce their own resources and to involve the students in the planning and delivery of Prayer and Liturgy. Access to resources for parents, carers, staff and students are via Firefly within the chaplaincy department.

6.2 A range of resources are offered, including traditional prayers, intercessions, contemplative prayer, scripture reflections, hymn singing including Y7 Choir and Staff Choir, silence, and praying with images.

6.3 To assist the participation of Prayer and Liturgy the school provides the students and staff with Bibles, hymn sheets, Mass cards, projected texts and images, projected order of service, displays, rosaries, prayer books, and software.

6.4 Another extremely important resource we have at the Catholic High School, Chester, is the pastoral provision, with a dedicated area called Trinity, where all three aspects of the human being, physical, mental and spiritual, are being looked after and developed through the building of human relationships, by sharing life experiences and encouraging students to reflect on their actions. The chaplain, as part of the Trinity provision, works together with the pastoral team to deliver a holistic experience for our students.

6.5 The school has two chapels, one in the lower school and one in Emmaus, 6th Form. These chapels are open all day for the students and staff to spend time in prayer and reflection at a convenient time. The chaplain is available to assist in prayer and/or to listen to people whenever required.

7. Formation and Development

7.1 The staff responsible for Prayer and Liturgy in school is regularly trained by the Diocese of Shrewsbury through CPD courses.

7.2 Liturgical formation of pupils is progressive throughout the years at The Catholic High School involving pedagogical content and catechesis.

7.3 Pupils and staff can assist with the celebration of Prayer and Liturgy in school, roles such as readers, altar servers, procession with gifts, instrumentalists, and choir, amongst others. Training and formation are provided for those invited to undertake these liturgical ministries.

7.4 All staff is trained on dedicated staff meetings and on specific inset days, called ‘Ethos Day’, by the RE department and the chaplain, making sure the staff is up to date with Prayer and Liturgy as well as their own spiritual formation and development. New staff joining the school have an induction session run by professional mentors in addition to follow-up sessions with the chaplain, where they are introduced to the Catholic Life of the school as well as Prayer and Liturgy.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 Monitoring and evaluating Prayer and Liturgy in school is extremely important as it gives the staff responsible in this area the feedback needed in order to reflect upon the changes needed to improve the quality of the provision for Prayer and Liturgy as well as to target the areas that need more support.

8.2 The Leadership team and Year Leaders of Learning, on a half termly basis, collect evidence and forms used for monitoring and review, such as long-term, medium-term and short-term planning sheets, recorded examples of liturgies, prayers and Celebration of the Words, emails containing reflections, photos and videos, the Good News booklets, evaluations, pupils/staff/parent voice. In addition, there will be a less formal quality assurance by YLL, the chaplain and CLL throughout the year to support staff.

9. Review

9.1 The Prayer and Liturgy policy will be reviewed in three years, that is July 2029, according to the new Prayer and Liturgy Directory.