Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Academic year 2026 to 2027

Love • Respect • Service • Ambition

Review completed 26 October 2026. Next planned review October 2027, or earlier following relevant change.

Policy owner: Headteacher and Chaplain. Approval authority: Local Governing Body under the Trust scheme of delegation.

Status: Revised for approval. Approval date and effective date are to be recorded by the authorised body on ratification.

This edition updates the supplied policy for 2026–27. Existing legal duties apply irrespective of the policy approval date. Staff must follow current safeguarding and safety procedures while approval is completed.

1. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

‘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 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) that is in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 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 from prayer and liturgy up to Year 11 (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(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school - Hannah Jackson, School Chaplain
- 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 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/s At Sacred Heart Catholic Academy, prayer and Liturgy Co-Ordinators is the Chaplain. 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

- Daily Prayer in Form: Each day begins with a moment of reflection and prayer in form provided by the school chaplain and led by form tutors.
- Weekly Prayer and Liturgy Service: Every week, each year group participates in a dedicated prayer and liturgy service. These sessions are led by senior members of staff, including the head of year, head of RE, or the chaplain on a rotating basis.
- Weekly Morning Prayer with Staff: The school community comes together for a weekly morning prayer with staff every Friday.
- Weekly Staff Mass: Staff members can attend a weekly Mass together.
- Welcome and Leavers Masses: Welcome Masses for new students and Leavers Masses for those transitioning.
- Reconciliation: Opportunities for reconciliation are provided when clergy are available.
- Holy Days of Obligation: opportunities for Mass are provided when clergy are available. These moments are marked with reverence and allow for deeper spiritual reflection in form time
- Feast Day Celebrations (Immaculate Conception): Celebrating significant events like the School Feast Day (e.g., Immaculate Conception) with special Masses and engaging activities.

- All significant dates are highlighted on the school calendar.

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 prayer and liturgy. 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.

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 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.

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.

This revised policy is submitted for approval for 2026/27. The actual approval date will be recorded on ratification; the next planned review is October 2027.

9. Withdrawal inclusion and safeguarding

Parents may request withdrawal from collective worship for pupils up to Year 11; sixth-form pupils may withdraw themselves. Requests should be made to the headteacher and will be respected without pressure, penalty or a requirement to justify belief. The school will arrange appropriate supervision for withdrawn pupils and explain arrangements sensitively. A discussion may clarify practical arrangements but is not a condition of exercising the right.

Prayer and liturgy will be accessible to pupils with SEND and respectful of different beliefs and family circumstances. Participation in sacramental actions will respect Catholic norms and individual conscience. Pupil leadership, visitor involvement and all liturgical activities remain subject to the school's safeguarding procedures. The Chaplain will monitor participation and accessibility and report annually to governors.

Review sources and related guidance

Catholic Bishops Conference Prayer and Liturgy Directory To love You more dearly

Guidance checked on 26 October 2026. Use the current version on the official source page and review this policy sooner if relevant requirements change.