

St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Approved: July 2024

Next Review Date: July 2026

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'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.)

1. Policy Introduction

Prayer and liturgy are integral aspects of the spiritual life within our diverse school community. While deeply rooted in Catholic tradition, our school acknowledges and respects the unique backgrounds and beliefs of all our children. This policy outlines the principles, practices, and procedures governing prayer and liturgical activities within St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School, ensuring inclusivity and respect for the faith traditions of all members of our community.

St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School are committed to fostering a vibrant faith community rooted in Catholic teachings. Through prayer and liturgy, we seek to deepen our children's spiritual formation, promote a sense of reverence, and cultivate a spirit of service and compassion.

2. Statement of Requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all children, 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)). Sixth-form children 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 children's entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which children 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. Objectives

- To provide opportunities for children, staff, and families at St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School, to actively participate in prayer and liturgical celebrations.
- To nurture a sense of belonging and unity within St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School through shared worship experiences.
- To educate children about the significance and meaning of Catholic rituals and traditions.
- To encourage active engagement and leadership roles for children in planning and conducting liturgical events.
- To uphold the values of inclusivity, respect, and reverence in all prayer and liturgical activities.

4. Central Principles

- **Catholic Identity:** All prayer and liturgical activities shall reflect the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church, in accordance with the Magisterium.
- **Inclusivity:** Prayer and liturgical celebrations shall be inclusive, welcoming individuals from diverse backgrounds and abilities.
- **Active Participation:** Children, staff, and parents of St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School are encouraged to actively participate in prayer and liturgical events through reading, singing, serving, and other roles.
- **Sacred Spaces:** Classrooms and other designated spaces shall be maintained as sacred spaces allowing for prayer and worship.
- **Preparation and Planning:** All liturgical events shall be thoughtfully planned and prepared, ensuring that they are meaningful and spiritually enriching.

- Collaboration: Collaboration between school staff, children, parents, and parish members shall be encouraged in the planning and implementation of liturgical events.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

a) Governing Body

The governors, as guardians of St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary 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 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 St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School.

b) Headteacher

The headteacher, as the spiritual leader of St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School, 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 St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School.

c) Prayer and Liturgy Leader(s)

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary 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 children, appropriate to age and ability.
- children 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 children.
- 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 St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary 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.

6. Summary of Prayer and Liturgy Provision

Daily

- Children will gather as a minimum of four times throughout the school day to be still and silent in prayerful reflection. During these times children will learn and say several 'common prayers' such as; The Lords Prayer, Grace, Glory be, Haily Mary, Eternal Rest, Prayer of St John Henry Neman

Weekly

- Children will gather as a school/key stage for a Gospel Worship and a Liturgy led by a member of the parish typically the Parish Priest.

Mass

- Throughout the year the school community will gather for the celebration of the Eucharist. Mass will take place at key times of the school year (Feast of St John Henry Newman, Leavers, Ash Wednesday etc) and on Holy Days of Obligation.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

- During the season of Lent and Advent child will be offered the opportunity to make the sacrament of reconciliation. This will be facilitated by the Parish Priest.

7. Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary 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. These images also reflect the distinctive context of St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School. 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 St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School.

8. Training and Continuous Professional Development

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 throughout the school year, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

9. 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: children, parents, staff, clergy, and governors. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

10. Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed regularly by the St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School leadership team and governing body in consultation with staff, children, parents, and parish members to ensure its alignment with the school's mission and the evolving needs of the community. Any revisions shall be made in accordance with Catholic teachings and approved by the relevant authorities.