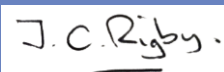
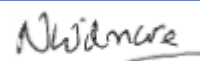


Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Date approved: 4 December 2024
Signed by Chair of Governors: Mr Jon Rigby



Date approved: 4 December 2024
Signed by Headteacher: Mrs Natasha Wilmore



Reviewed: September 2025
Next Review: September 2026



St John Fisher Catholic School Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Introduction Mission Statement:

"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" John 10:10

St John Fisher School is a learning community striving to live the gift of life that God gave us:

- We know through our spirituality that everyone is a loved creation of God and that every person has a lesson they can teach someone else.
- We will take every opportunity to help each other and those less fortunate than ourselves.
- We will do our best to reach our aspirations and celebrate our successes.

St John Fisher Catholic School - A Centre of Mission and Formation

Our mission statement and the teaching of the Catholic Church is central to teaching and learning, the curriculum, and all other opportunities that we provide. It is concerned with the development of the whole child ensuring that students are valued and supported to reach their full potential as a child of God. Our mission statement promotes inclusivity, respect, celebration, caring for others and an understanding for the innate dignity and uniqueness of each human person. Everybody will flourish with God.

This is a mission deeply rooted in the biblical redemptive concept of Human Flourishing demanding respect for the dignity of all people and the safeguarding of basic values and resources needed for the whole of creation to flourish. This is when we see the glory of God, and this is why our school motto is: 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' (John 10:10)

Our core values are rooted in the person, teachings and actions of Jesus as shown in the Gospels therefore our school has Christ at the centre. St John Fisher, martyr, our patron saint was an advocate for universal education and is a role model for the Christian life. We always aim for excellence in every aspect of our work. This is because our mission which is also the Church's mission, demands real human flourishing for our society and future society to flourish too. In other words, our students are formed to contribute to the Common Good of society and become advocates for change in an ever-challenging world.

'Gospel values are a guarantee of peace and of collaboration among all citizens of the world in the shared commitment to serving the common good.' (Pope John Paul II 2004)

Students are formed to understand the connections between what they learn and what we pray for and to know why and how the key areas of Catholic Social Teaching link to what they learn in the classroom. This means that students have a strong sense of social justice and understand fully why we support and pray for those in need.

I. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

a) Aims:

'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.)

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore own beliefs
- To experience the presence of God
- To value stillness and quiet moments in prayer
- To respond to and celebrate life, its dignity and holiness.
- To experience a sense of belonging, develop social conscience and community spirit.
- To experience communal worship as part of the one Body of Christ
- To develop common ethos and shared values
- To enrich and provide opportunities for religious experience.
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce and engage in prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition.
- To reinforce positive attitudes and wellbeing
- To participate as fully as possible
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to' the awesomeness of God.

At St John Fisher, Prayer and Liturgy is an integral part of nurturing and developing a person's relationship with God. St John Fisher School is the smallest secondary school in Peterborough and the only Catholic secondary school in the West of the Diocese. The school reflects the demographics of the local and wider area with a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and faiths. Holding our Christian values at the centre of all that we do enables our young people to develop the core skills needed to be responsible citizens who serve the common good and treat others with tolerance, respect, and compassion; they learn to act with integrity and to celebrate their own and others' successes; and they become young people with hope and aspirations who are confident and happy. As a diverse and inclusive school, we value the individual and promote that we are united in our differences; in that we are all a loved creation of God; and to 'love each other more dearly'. With Christ at the centre of all that we do at St John Fisher, students and staff are encouraged to plan, lead, and evaluate Prayer and Liturgy.

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, discipline, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20; Instrument of Government, clause 2).

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 students 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 for Prayer and Liturgy – Key Staff

(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 (The Lay Chaplain is **Rowena Goodfellow**)
- 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.

The Catholic Life link governor is **Roisin O'Shea**

(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(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.

(c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator (Lay 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

4. Provision for Prayer and Liturgy

(a) Overview

The Catholic faith, including the values and virtues of the gospel with Christ at the centre are central to the life and culture of our school. We celebrate and pray every day and help all our students regardless of faith or background to express their faith by encouraging them to use their gifts and talents in order that they are supported to progress spiritually and flourish. This engagement and participation are progressive throughout each key stage, planned and evaluated annually. Prayer and Liturgy at St John Fisher provides an opportunity to engage with and reflect on God's word in the Bible and to celebrate and respond to the beliefs and attitudes which characterise Christian life. We provide a rich variety of prayer and worship within assemblies, daily thoughts, reflections, liturgies, and Mass. All students and staff are invited to participate ensuring that God's spirit is spread amongst us, creating a sense of belonging to our special community. Members of the school community meet weekly for assemblies and daily as Tutor Groups following the liturgical calendar to form the foundation for prayer. Every student in the school has scheduled time in the chapel for reflection and Year 7 meet for prayer throughout the year which is led by our Sixth Form Leadership Team. Celebration of the Word is often in the form of para-liturgies with song and drama to reinforce the key messages from scripture. We have strong links with the Diocese and our deanery priests celebrate voluntary Mass weekly, as well as on Holy Days of Obligation and for House Masses. The Sacrament of Reconciliation takes place twice a year during Advent and Lent. We hold services for Ash Wednesday, remembrance as well as celebrating Year 7 Welcome Liturgy and Years 11 and 13 Leaver's Liturgies. In addition to the traditional prayers of the Church, we have our own school prayer which is known well and used at least once a week:

Thank you, O God, for another day.
 Help me to spend it wisely and to spend it well.
 Grant that everything I do today
 May be done as well as I can do it.
 Grant that everyone I meet
 May be happier for the meeting.
 Keep me all through today.
 Conscientious in my work:
 Truthful in my speaking:
 Loyal to all my friends
 And faithful to those who love me.
 Through Jesus Christ my Lord
 Amen

We support our local churches and the Diocese in a variety of ways. We attend Mass and/or special occasions within the community such as Holocaust Memorial, Diocesan Schools Mass, and annual Catherine of Aragon Mass at Peterborough Cathedral.

(b) How does Prayer & Liturgy happen at St John Fisher? (Implementation)

- (i) We always consider the religious and educational needs of all who engage in it:
- Those from other faith backgrounds
 - Those with English as a foreign language
 - Those with Special and Additional educational needs
 - Those where school is their only experience of Church whether baptised or not.
 - Those from no faith background
 - Those who are baptised Catholics, practising and active members of their church.
 - Those who are baptised Christians of other Christian denominations and actively practising.
 - Those who are baptised Christians of other denominations but not actively practising.
 - Those who are baptised Catholics but not practising.
- (ii) We invite all who are present at Celebrations of the Word and liturgy to engage in four related actions:
1. **To be present:** pupils bring themselves to the celebration, with all that is going on in their lives and in the world. Being alert to this is the first step in engaging with any form of worship.
 2. **To experience:** to engage in what is happening through the senses – at the most basic, to see and to hear.
 3. **To reflect:** to ask what has been experienced, and what it means to their lives.
 4. **To respond:** to ask how to take forward what has been experienced into living a good life.

Therefore, all are **welcomed, included, and invited** to engage in prayer and liturgy and participate actively as appropriate to faith background. All faiths are respected, and we are sensitive to the needs of each through regular dialogue with for example our Muslim community. Many students actively participate in prayer and liturgy and opportunities for progressive participation are provided at each key stage for students to develop spiritually, including through leadership. Formation is provided for ministry for students and staff where

appropriate and students are selected sensitively for this and trained with the support of the local parish. Students and staff who are Catholic minister at Mass.

(iii) Staff responsibilities and experiences in Prayer and Liturgy

We start each day in prayer which is led during tutor time by students or staff or during the House assembly. All our staff are expected to be good role models in supporting or leading the prayer and liturgy of the school and to engage in prayer and liturgy as people of good will. All staff are expected to encourage student engagement in prayer and liturgy, particularly form tutors and if appropriate, to participate in and lead prayer with the support of key staff. Training and Formation is provided for staff on induction and throughout the year through our bespoke school Emmaus Programme. All staff experience prayer as part of the rhythm of the school day and week and have an opportunity to lead and take part in prayer during staff morning briefing and before meetings.

(iii) Student leadership

All students are encouraged to take part in the planning and leading of celebrations of the word for special celebrations and assemblies. The Chaplaincy ambassadors support students to do this and all students are encouraged to use their individual gifts and talents to enhance the celebrations. The Chaplaincy ambassadors and SJF champions lead the student evaluation the prayer, liturgy, and Catholic life of the school along with key staff.

How is the Chapel used?

Voluntary Mass is celebrated in the chapel weekly on a Tuesday at 8.40. The chapel is available for all members of the school community for reflection and prayer and each tutor group attends morning prayer in the chapel on a rota basis. The chapel programme follows the liturgical year as do the weekly themes and thoughts across school.

Is there another prayer room?

During Ramadan an additional allocated room can be made available to those members of our school who are Muslim and wish to pray.

What are the arrangements for Mass?

In addition to voluntary weekly Mass, Mass is celebrated on Holy days of obligation and each House has a special annual Mass. Students who have received formation as ministers read at Mass and serve, as appropriate. All students and staff, regardless of background or faith, are encouraged to engage at whatever level is appropriate for them to do so. All students and staff are encouraged to use their talents such as through singing and music to engage in the liturgy and full active participation is encouraged and supported for those for whom it is appropriate.

Detailed responsibilities of all key staff in the implementation of Prayer and Liturgy

We have a full-time Lay Chaplain who leads prayer and liturgy in the school. In addition to the main responsibilities outlined in section 2, the Lay Chaplain, and key staff (Headteacher, Deputy Head, and the Head of RE) are responsible for:

- Writing and implementing the annual schedule 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.
- Daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the Prayer and Liturgy Directory.
- Supporting students and staff 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 for new members of staff as required and ongoing formation of staff
- Signposting and leading staff effective training and formation opportunities.
- Ensuring monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies.
- Ensuring that the monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school.
- Collaboration with local clergy and parishes.

Chaplaincy Team

There are 3 Chaplaincy Team meetings per year where they evaluate and plan prayer and liturgy. Members include: the Sixth Form Leadership Team, Our Parish priest who is also a Foundation Governor, lay Chaplain, Headteacher and Heads of Music and Drama. Additionally, SJF Champions (students who help to monitor and evaluate Prayer and Liturgy) meet termly. We also seek evaluation from parents and all staff at least once a year through surveys.

Monitoring standards of Prayer and Liturgy

There are a team who conduct this to ensure that the voices of all stakeholders is included: SJF Champions for student views, Pastoral Leaders to monitor daily routines, Sixth Form Leadership Team, Lay Chaplain and Link Governor to provide a more general overview.

Self – Evaluation

The Governor Link for Catholic Life supports with the Self-Evaluation of the RE Curriculum, Catholic Life and Prayer and Liturgy. The Head of RE and other key staff meet once a term to self-evaluate using monitoring evidence and to update the CSED annually based on termly monitoring activities. Regular meetings are calendared for all those involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Prayer and Liturgy.

Training:

All new staff are expected to attend our in-house bespoke training, The Emmaus Programme, led by the Lay Chaplain, the Headteacher and Senior Deputy Headteacher which supports teaching in a Catholic School. As part of this training, valuable places for gaining resources for assemblies or other opportunities for prayer are shared. Ongoing formation and training are also provided for all staff.

Dissemination:

Copies of the Policy will be given to all members of the Governing Body and all staff. It will also be available on our school website and paper copies can be provided to parents on request. Form tutors will also be provided a hard copy of the Policy and appendices including the workbook.

Appendices:

Workbook and useful resources for staff and student prayer leaders
 Weekly assembly themes and rota (APOP)
 Calendar of events for Chaplaincy (Prayer and Liturgy Schedule)
 Chaplaincy & Catholic Life Development Plan (Annual)
 Visiting Clergy and Religious
 Visiting mission leaders and youth teams
 Visiting prayer leaders and speakers
 Retreats
 The Prayer & Liturgy Directory