

# Prayer and Liturgy Policy

## Ellesmere Port Catholic High School



<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Mrs C. Vile, Headteacher</b>
<b>Lead of Review:</b>	<b>Mrs L Baillie, Religious Studies – Curriculum Leader</b>
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## Mission Statement

**“I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.” John 10:10**

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School aims to provide a Roman Catholic education in an environment within which all members of the community are encouraged to develop their spiritual, moral, academic and physical potential, based on the teachings of Jesus.

### **We will strive to:**

- Be a welcoming community
  - Promote the dignity and worth of each person
  - Recognise and celebrate achievement
  - Foster an understanding that each individual has a contribution to make on a daily basis
  - Provide opportunities for all to participate in prayer and worship
  - Share in the life of the local and wider community
  - Promote justice and peace
  - Encourage tolerance, patience, forgiveness and trust
  - Have a genuine concern for others through empathy, co-operation and understanding
  - Support those in need
  - Do our best
  - Promote British values
- Through our actions we will try to be a witness to Jesus Christ.

**“If the Lord does not build the house then its labourers toil in vain.” Ps. 127**

### **Our school’s vision is:**

- To promote the dignity and worth of each person
- To have a strong Catholic Ethos
- To ensure every child is known
- To have high expectations of everyone
- To have excellent leadership at all levels
- To provide excellent teaching
- To encourage exemplary behaviour and personal standards
- To be at the heart of the community
- To promote British values

## **Legal requirements**

The Education Act 1996 requires that all students attending a maintained school shall take part in an act of Prayer and Liturgy on each school day. Schools can provide an act of Prayer and Liturgy in a variety of ways from a structured assembly programme to a series of thoughts for the day or readings that provide students with an opportunity to think and reflect and develop their own spirituality.

## Introduction to Prayer and Liturgy at EPCHS

Pope Benedict XVI stated in September 2010 that *“education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full – in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator, for “both we and our words are in his hand, as are all understanding and skill in crafts” (Wis 7:16)”*

POPE FRANCIS invited teachers and those who draw up educational programmes to always be attentive to the formation of individuals in their integrity, which he explained, means not only providing tools to acquire knowledge, “but also to know oneself and to recognise oneself as a being capable of loving and being loved.”

He highlighted the fact that it is not about “proselytizing” or excluding from our schools those who do not think as we do.

Jesus, he said, is always walking, and he exhorts his disciples to do the same, even commands them to go ahead of him, reaching out to the ends of the earth.

“In this way, the Catholic school in its initiatives must embrace social problems, locally and universally, it must learn and, in this learning, teach to open the mind to new situations and new concepts, to walk together without excluding anyone, to establish points of encounter and to adapt the language so that it is capable of capturing the attention of those who are furthest away,” he said.

Prayer and Liturgy at EPCHS goes beyond the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship for all pupils. Worship in this school is Christ-centred and an integral part of school life rooted in the Catholic tradition, reflecting the values of the Gospel.

Prayer and Liturgy should be defined in broad terms as those opportunities offered for pupils and staff to come together to pray and worship God. It is through these acts of communal worship that we may come to a fuller appreciation of ourselves, and of our relationship with God and others, while allowing us to reflect on what is of value and importance in our lives. All members of our school community have opportunities for prayer and reflection and both sacramental and non-sacramental liturgies.

There are many opportunities for the school community (pupils, staff, governors and parents) to share in the liturgical life of the school. Some occasions will be voluntary but encouragement is given to all to participate using their own gifts and talents. Acts of Prayer and Liturgy occur in Year group Assemblies, Form Time morning prayer, Staff Briefing prayers/reflection, prayers before meetings, Reconciliation Services and weekly Masses.

## 2. Aim

To nurture an environment in which we provide opportunities for the members of our school community to express their belief through organised collective acts of worship.

## 3. Rationale

Prayer and Liturgy is held for the following reasons;

- To celebrate our faith
- To provide opportunities for staff and pupils to come together to worship God

- To provide Eucharistic and non- Eucharistic liturgical experiences
- To involve as many people as possible in the preparation and delivery of prayer and liturgy
- To reflect upon our needs, hopes and those of our school family and the world we live in.
- To recognise each person's uniqueness and value
- To celebrate and educate the whole person, not only academically but morally and spiritually
- To provide opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### **4. Guidelines**

- The expectation is that pupils will participate in a daily act of Prayer in Form Time and Liturgical Prayer in Theme of the Week and in Assembly.
- The expectation is that every child will have the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of a Mass and Assemblies.
- To facilitate meaningful and reverent acts of worship to take place, guidelines for the preparation and delivery of assemblies and morning prayers have been produced.

#### **5. Expectations**

Pupils are expected to:

- Participate in Prayer and Liturgy in a respectful and reverent way.

Parents are expected to:

- Promote a positive attitude towards Prayer and Liturgy

Staff are expected to:

- Ensure that acts of worship are in accordance with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church
- Ensure that there are opportunities for quality Prayer and Liturgy to be delivered.
- Ensure that an appropriate time is allocated for Prayer and Liturgy and that the scheduled format for the day is followed.

Pastoral Leaders are expected to:

- Ensure that Form Tutors facilitate Prayer and Liturgy with their Forms
- Monitor the quality of Prayer and Liturgy in Form periods.

The AHT for Quality Assurance:

- Ensure that the Prayer and Liturgy Policy is fully implemented
- Evaluate the impact of this policy on the quality of Prayer and Liturgy

The Governors are expected to:

- Ensure that Prayer and Liturgy is delivered and monitored in accordance with this policy.
- Ensure that any adult leading Prayer and Liturgy has been appointed with the understanding that they are able to fully support the Catholic nature and ethos of the school.

## 6. Assemblies

Assemblies contribute in a special way to the ethos of EPOCHS and are shaped in the Form of Liturgical Prayer - The key elements of which are – how we **Gather**; Listening to God’s word in the Scriptures; an **Active** response; **Mission**.

This will be done by -

- Recognising key liturgical themes throughout the year.
- The use of Scripture, prayer.
- Sharing common aims and values.
- Celebrating achievement and special times.
- Exploring together the world in which we live.
- Developing a community spirit.
- Developing pupils’ own spirituality.
- Reflecting on what it means to be human.
- Reinforcing positive attitudes.

All assemblies support the Catholic Life and Ethos of our school. They all start with the sign of the cross and the School Prayer They include Bible readings, prayers and opportunities for thought and reflection. Pupils are also asked to respond to what they have heard by being given a mission; some way of acting on what they have heard. Our Assemblies also play an important part in the school Personal, Social and Health Education programme by looking at important social and moral issues. Often assemblies will be followed up across the wider life of the school. Examples of this are:

Anti- Bullying week, Raising achievement, Charity Fund raising, Behaviour for Learning and Remembrance.

All students attend one assembly a week. The assembly rota for the current school year is outlined in the table below. On Wednesdays when Mass is celebrated, the year group attending Mass will have their assembly at a different time.

Day	Assembly
<b>Monday.</b>	Year 11
<b>Tuesday</b>	Year 10
<b>Wednesday/Mass</b>	Year 9
<b>Thursday</b>	Year 8
<b>Friday</b>	Year 7

The school Assembly pattern follows a series of themes throughout the year and is taken by the Headteacher, members of the Senior Leadership Team, Pastoral Leads, Chaplains , Form Teachers with their Forms, and sometimes other staff on a rota basis. The Assembly themes for the current academic years can be found in the staff handbook.

## 7. Form Time

The tutorial programme is delivered by the form tutor during form time on four out of five mornings per week.

There are four prayer themes for each of the days when a year group is not attending an assembly or Mass.

Day	Focus
1.	Theme of the week
2.	Traditional prayers of the Church
3.	Wonderful Wednesday
4.	Thankful Thursday
5.	Francis Friday

Focuses are designed to consider a range of issues to make pupils pause and think. Some activities look at social or moral dilemmas, current affairs and some celebrate human qualities and achievements whilst others encourage students to think about their rights and responsibilities. Some activities may consider religious or cultural issues depending on the time of the year. Time is also allocated for reading and Form Tutor checks. Pupils are also encouraged to raise their own issues for discussion. These discussions not only raise important social and moral issues but also provide students with a structured forum to express their views and listen to those of others.

Each Form Tutor has access to a School Prayer Book which they can use to assist with Form Time Prayer – contributions to this will be added through the year.

## 8. Masses

Year group celebrations of Mass take place when possible and at significant times of the year. These are:

- Advent/Christmas
- Lent/Easter
- End of Year

When possible, Mass will take place in St Joseph's Hall. In cases where celebration of Mass is not possible, we are hoping to hold a Liturgical celebration – these plans tbc.

## 9. Chaplaincy

Mrs Pat Barker and Mrs Angela Doherty are our Lay Chaplains who work together during the year to provide opportunities and resources for Prayer and Liturgy for staff and across all year groups. Reconciliation Services will take place during Lent. Support will also be given to Form Tutors in leading Collective Worship. A Chaplaincy group made up of pupils across the year groups (10:10 Team) meet weekly to support the spiritual life of the school.

We are working to establish 10:10 Form Prefects who can take a lead in their Form with Daily prayer This has been set up in Years 7&8.

During the Academic Year it is hoped to that each Form Room will have a “Sacred Space” that the prefects will design expressing the Liturgical Seasons of the Church.

We are hoping to establish a Staff Chaplaincy Support group inviting staff who are interested to offer ideas and support – meet each half term for planning.

## **10. Retreats**

It is recognised that the experience of a retreat is a unique and valuable experience and supports the Prayer and Liturgy experiences of pupils. Many successful retreats have taken place in previous years, and we hope to develop these further during the course of the year

This policy will be reviewed throughout the year and evaluated after one year.

The National Prayer and Liturgy Directory is now published and we are awaiting Diocesan training however we have changed some of the terms used in this Policy Document to Prayer and Liturgy Policy, instead of Collective Worship; the reason being, this a term used by the State and not by the Church.