

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School



Approved by:	Mrs C. Vile, Headteacher
Lead of Review:	Angela Doherty – Chaplain, Lucy Oakley – Assistant Headteacher
Last reviewed on:	May 2025
Next review due by:	May 2026

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 everyone has a contribution to make daily
- 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

Context of prayer and liturgy policy

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.)

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, 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 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.

Responsibility

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 Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator – Angela Doherty)
- 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.

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.

Prayer and Liturgy Coordinators

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 Model prayer and liturgy policy 71 9.4
- 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.

Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Chaplaincy

Angela Doherty is our lay chaplain who provides opportunities and resources for prayer and liturgy for staff, and across all year groups. Services for feast days take place across the year. Support is provided for form tutors, SLT, and members of staff who lead prayer and liturgy. A chaplaincy group made up of pupils across the year groups – 10:10 Team – meet weekly to support the spiritual life of the school. Opportunities for prayer and reflection in the chapel space are made available to all pupils across the school in line with the liturgical calendar, facilitated by our chaplain.

Celebration of the Word

Celebrations of the Word 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 **G**ather, **L**istening to God's Word in the Scriptures, an **A**ctive response and **M**ission.

This will be done through:

- Recognising key liturgical themes throughout the year.
- The use of Scripture, prayer.
- Catholic Social Teaching strands, as outlined below.



All Celebrations of the Word 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 asked to respond to what they have heard by being given a Mission.

All students attend one assembly per week:

Day	Assembly
Monday	Year 7
Tuesday	Year 8

Wednesday	Year 9
Thursday	Year 10
Friday	Year 11

Please note: sixth form assemblies also take place weekly and are led by the sixth form team in conjunction with the prayer and liturgy programme as set out above.

The school Celebrations of the Word pattern follows the liturgical calendar and a series of Catholic Social Teaching themes throughout the year, and is delivered by the Headteacher, members of the Senior Leadership Team, Pastoral Leads, the Chaplain, and form tutors with their form groups. The themes for all assemblies for this year can be found in the All-Staff Team for 2025-26.

Form Time

There are two form times in each school day, where the first form time of the day is predominantly focused upon prayer and liturgy. Our chaplain provides prayer resources for each day in advance of the week ahead linked to the liturgical calendar and Catholic Social Teaching.

Day	Focus
Monday	Monday Mission (Theme of the Week based on Sunday's Gospel)
Tuesday	Traditional Tuesday (Traditional Prayers of the Church)
Wednesday	Wonderful Wednesday (celebrating God's creation)
Thursday	Thankful Thursday (remembering to be grateful for what we have)
Friday	Leo's lessons (reflecting on the words of Leo)

If appropriate, each form tutor has access to a school Prayer Book, which they can use to assist in the delivery of form time prayer should they so wish.

The form time focus for the afternoon is linked to Catholic Social Teaching themes from a socially conscious perspective. Each afternoon form time closes with a set prayer in order to end the school day.

Retreats

Feeder primary school retreats:

Year 4 pupils are annually invited to EPOCHS as part of their spiritual journey, where they participate in prayer and liturgical activities based on a Gospel theme, including, but not limited to:

- Pupil lead prayer.
- Reflecting on their gifts and talents.
- Art to express their gifts and talents.
- Liturgy to give thanks to God.

Planned retreats for 2025-26:

It is planned to take a group of students to Lourdes on the annual Diocesan Pilgrimage in the summer of 2025.

Year 7 Conwy Residential Retreat – to follow an outdoor pursuits programme linked to Catholic Social Teaching. This takes place annually in March each year.

It has been proposed that the following retreats take place across the academic year 2025-26:

- Savio House for year 10.
- Shrewsbury Youth Mission Team to provide retreat experience in school.

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.

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.

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.

Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.

