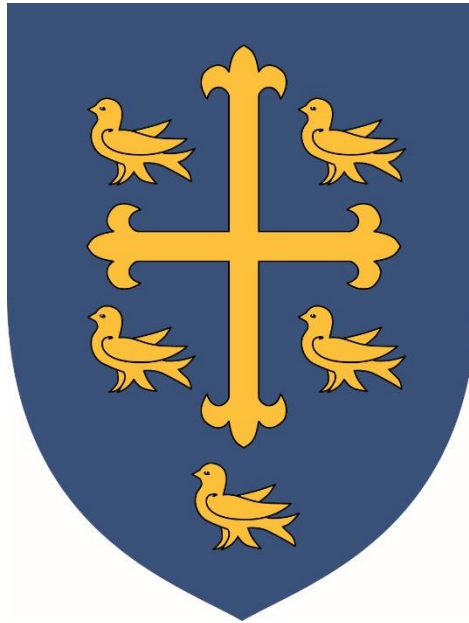


St. Edward's Catholic Primary School



Prayer and Liturgy Policy 2026-27

Policy agreed/Signed by: _____

Date: _____

(Mr K Connolly – Chair of Governors)

Agreed on: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

'Jesus is at the heart of all that we do'

At St. Edward's, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children and adults in our school, and we have the same expectation of our staff and volunteers.

Prayer is a remembrance of God often awakened by the memory of the heart “We must remember God more often than we draw breath.” But we cannot pray “at all times” if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it. These are the special times of Christian prayer, both in intensity and duration.

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Rationale

Prayer and Liturgy in St. Edward’s Catholic Primary School, while respecting diversity of belief and commitment, will be Catholic in character and will have Christ at its heart. It will reflect the tradition of the Church and its belief in the Trinity. Throughout the academic year, we will hold assemblies that reflect other religions as we want all children to feel included whatever their beliefs or background.

We believe that Christian worship, in a Catholic school, names and celebrates God’s presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word, thought and action, to God’s invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that in our daily prayer and liturgy when all members of the school come together, we try to create an occasion which produces a variety of responses, one of which is worship. We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God.

All acts of prayer and liturgy in our school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school
- Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church
- Include a range of experiences; offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings

Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that prayer and liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit

- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce prayers which are part of Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully and grow in confidence
- To develop their spiritual growth through periods of stillness and silence.

In order to achieve this, pupils will conduct themselves with dignity and respect; be calm and reflective and be quiet, thoughtful and listen carefully. This will also be modelled by the staff who lead them.

The legal position of Prayer and Liturgy

We recognise that all pupils should on each school day take part in an act of prayer and liturgy and that parents have the right to withdraw their children from such acts, as outlined in the Education Act 1996 Part V, Chapter 3, section 389. This should only be done once the parent has given written notice to the school governors. However, parents should be aware that acts of worship in a Catholic School may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

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 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 Lead and Team

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.

Organisation and delivery of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy in class

Formal prayers:

Morning Offering, Grace before and after meals and Prayer at the end of the day are said in class each day and organised by the class teacher, with children taking turns to lead. Children also offer their own personal intention that we collectively remember each time we gather for prayer. In addition to these, other traditional prayers of the Church as stipulated by the

Diocese are to be taught and prayed in each class according to the Formal Prayer timetable which is appropriate for each year group.

Informal prayer

There is a prayer space in every classroom, where children can place intentions. It provides a reflective place for the children to pray and talk to God. It has artefacts relating to the liturgical year and cloths of the liturgical colours.

Prayer areas should follow the colours of the liturgical seasons:

Green – Ordinary Time

Purple – for Lent (sign of sorrow and kingship)

Purple – for Advent

White - Christmas

White and Gold – Eastertide

Pentecost – Red

In addition key symbols, icons or visual aids could be used in the display e.g. bowl of water, pictures of the disciples, fishing net, fish to reflect on the Calling of the disciples.

Prayer calendar

The Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator produces a termly prayer calendar (APOP) with the important feasts and memorials of the Church's year which is to be used during class prayer times. This also contains festivals from the multi-faith religious calendar in order to foster respect and awareness of faiths other than the Christian tradition.

Each week we gather together to worship in a number of ways:

- **Monday:** Gospel assembly led by the Head teacher or Deputy Head Teacher. It focuses upon the Gospel from Sunday and children have the opportunity to contribute and participate. It is an opportunity to promote ways that we can live like Jesus in our school community.
- **Tuesday:** 'When we sing, we pray twice' children participate in hymns if they will be attending Mass that week, where we practice those being used in that week's mass, but also as an opportunity to introduce and learn new hymns.
- **Wednesday:** If Father Denis is not available for the celebration of mass, we will hold a celebration of the Word. All classes have the opportunity to prepare and lead multiple times throughout the year. From Reception, children contribute to the selection of appropriate hymns. In LKS2 children continue with this but also think of the symbols they would like to dress the altar with and in UPKS2 children will also contribute to write the introduction and bidding prayers.
- **Thursday:** Pupil prepared celebration of the Word in classes.
- **Friday:** Praise assembly led by a member of SLT. It celebrates the gifts God has given us that can be witnessed and used in or out of school.

- During Lent, the children take part in the Stations of the Cross and Holy Week assemblies (should we be in school that week). Other liturgical celebrations include the May Procession and October devotions. Sometimes, these will be planned and delivered by a team of children called the 'Liturgy Leaders'.
- Children attend mass in church for Holy Days of obligation (as agreed with the Parish Priest) and other special feasts which are agreed with Fr. Denis when the prayer calendar is planned.
- Throughout the year the 'Legion of Mary' come to visit each class on Thursday, which is timetabled by the Prayer and Liturgy Co ordinator and pray the Rosary with the children. They focus on exploring the different mysteries, give each child a set of Rosary beads and stay to answer any questions that the children may have. At times, this may take place via zoom.
- At the start of children's school and faith journey at St. Edward's, the reception children are welcomed into the school and church family through a *Blessing*. At this time they visit church with their *buddy* and parents are welcome and invited to participate.

Prayer and liturgy will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all will gain. It is planned using Gather, Word, Respond and Mission as the basis but the format may also offer:

- A focal point
- Time for reflection
- Communal prayers
- Private prayer
- Scripture reference
- Music/ mime/ singing

We will always continue to foster and deepen the children's personal relationship with God our Father in daily life. We do this by helping them to become aware of God's presence in their lives and of His love for them. Prayer is not confined to an act of worship. Worship in our school is more than just a legal requirement; it is an integral part of school life.

Preparation for Prayer and Liturgy

If this is taking place in class, children should be given adequate time, resources and support in order to do this. Staff can call upon the Liturgy Leaders to offer support also as well as some of the older pupils in school. A useful grid and prompts can be given to the children to help guide them in their preparation and what it should include.

If this is in relation to mass, a number of things should be done first. Parents should be invited and notified at least two weeks in advance. If mass changes to Celebration of the Word school can notify parents of the relevant details needed. Children should be given readings and prayers at least ten days prior to enable them time to familiarise themselves with words and to gain confidence in proclaiming the word of God. A number of opportunities should then be given to go through the sequence of mass and allow pupils to practice being eloquent. All children should be given the opportunity to participate in a way that they feel comfortable with over the course of the year.

Progression for Pupil Prepared Prayer

EYFS- children will help choose items for the prayer focus and help to reverently set up a welcoming, prayerful environment. It must have cloth, crucifix, candle and Bible and one item chosen which reflects the time of prayer. As the children become more independent the children choose a song to sing from a choice and are beginning to choose a familiar prayer from a selection e.g. traditional prayer, sorry prayer or a thank you prayer.

KS1: Children will choose a song to sing during Celebration of the Word. Consider a reflection question linked to the Celebration of the Word– e.g. how can you share joy today, how do you show that you are grateful... Through led discussion then decide on a Mission (whether that's an action or whole class reflection at the end of the day) Children will also choose a prayer to say too. As the children enter into Year 2, children can become more independent in the preparation and sharing of prayer under guidance from the class teacher- leading to children planning and preparing in groups by the Summer Term in readiness for KS2.

LKS2: When given a theme, children will choose a scripture reading or other relevant reading/source as part of the Word section of Celebration of the Word and under the teacher's guidance, will consider how to respond to chosen scripture. The children use resources to support them and where children are confident, they plan more aspects of prayer. As the children become more confident they will start to consider the liturgical year, current learning, holy days of obligation, feast days, saints' days, current news and values and virtues and will consider how to respond to chosen scripture. The children plan all 4 areas of the Celebration of the Word, with support. The children lead on all four aspects, with support, and they also set up the focal point.

UPKS2: Under the teacher's guidance and working to become more independent, children plan all four aspects, with support on how to Go Forth (Mission).

Evaluation of Prayer and Liturgy

Many stakeholders are involved in the evaluation of prayer and liturgy, including but not restricted to; children, staff, parents, governors and our Parish priest. Some of the evaluation is using formal templates and commenting on a specific part of mass, others take the form of what went well and even better if. The children's evaluations are kept in the Catholic Life big books and all other forms of evaluation are shared with staff at regular intervals and kept in a monitoring folder.

Evidence of Prayer and Liturgy

Evidence of Pupil prepared prayer is kept in the Catholic Life big books that each year group keeps, this is kept through their planning grids, photos and evaluations. Evidence of mass and other forms are kept on the shared staff platform and a sample in the monitoring folder.

Staff Prayer

- On a weekly basis, at all meetings staff are expected to begin with a prayer. During key liturgical seasons (Lent and Advent) staff have the opportunity to share in prayer after school led by members of SLT.
- Extended prayer or the celebration of Mass is planned into some INSET days.

Retreat Experiences

- We aim to offer all students an off-site retreat experience during their time at St Edward's Catholic Primary School
- When children are in Year 6 they attend Alton Castle for a 2 night Retreat.
- Year 6 also visit St. Chad's Cathedral annually.
- One Life Music visit school to lead a whole school retreat in which staff and governors are invited to attend. Additional retreats are organised for sacramental year groups.

Raising Awareness of Prayer and Liturgy

- As a Catholic School we recognise the importance of positive role models and examples in the school community. As such it is important to promote, inform and report to stakeholders about Prayer and Liturgy.
- The Headteacher reports to governors at Full Governing Board meetings.
- Staff use social media to celebrate the opportunities of Prayer and Liturgy presented to children.
- The fortnightly newsletter also highlights the importance of Prayer and Liturgy within our School Community and examples of this is celebrated within school.

Prayer buddies and Faith Friends

Children in Year 5 and Year 6 have prayer partners in Rec and Y3 respectively. They attend whole school Masses together and join for other prayer sessions during different liturgical times of the year.

Prayer Bags

To develop prayer and liturgy at home and to further strengthen our home/ school links; each class has a prayer bag.

This allows the children to have some reflective, prayer time with their families. The children can choose to evidence their special time in the class prayer book. It is up to them how they want to respond but the Liturgy Leaders have modelled possible ways they may want to do this. They are given to each member of the class in turn and they contain a number of objects, prayers, scripture and stimulus linked to the RE curriculum, sacramental development and liturgical year. Time will then be spent in the class sharing their experience if they would like to.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

Catholic Social Teaching is 'an aspect of the life and the thinking of the Catholic Church.' It concerns what the Church has to say about social issues and the way in which Catholic faith should be lived out within society. These teachings are rooted in Scripture and especially in the teachings of Jesus found in the Gospels. They are also based on various Papal statements and Encyclicals which have been published over the years.

Whilst Jesus' teachings about the way in which we should live has been about for 2000 years and 'has always been part of the living out of the faith as saints throughout the ages' show modern day CST is recognised as having emerged in 1891. This was at the time of the Industrial Revolution when, in his Encyclical Pope Leo XIII, spoke about society's duty to ensure and protect rights for workers. Since this time the Church, through the voices of the Pope and the Bishops, has continued to speak out about many different social issues and to

encourage members of the Church to be an active force for good within their local communities as well as on a wider, global basis. Catholic Social Teaching is based on the belief that God has a plan for creation, a plan to build his kingdom of peace, love, and justice. Through prayer and liturgy, we can work together to achieve God's plan.

Gospel Virtues

We follow the Catholic School Profile which is rooted in Jesuit values. There are eight pairs virtues which help pupils to lead better and more fulfilled lives as Jesus would have wanted. Each half term, we focus on a set of virtues and what they mean in our lives. Each half term a mass is celebrated centred around the Gospel virtues for that half term.

Resources

Each classroom has a selection of resources to aid prayer and liturgy, for example crucifixes, candles, statues and rosary beads. There are additional resources available in the RE cupboard. Staff understand that they are not just limited to the use of specific religious artefacts but can use other appropriate items relating to the theme of focus of the worship. It is the responsibility of the RE lead and Prayer and Liturgy Co Ordinator to audit and ensure the resources are sufficient.

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 and formation 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 Review

At least once a year, more frequently when possible or necessary, the school's provision of prayer and liturgy will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading.