



St Bede's Catholic High School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty." John, 15:5

This policy document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher, and Governing Body of St Bede's Catholic High School. No amendments can be made without their express instruction and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

Review date: October 2025

Next review date: October 2026

Reviewed by: Mrs J Brown / Mrs V Stacey-Swale

Approved by Governors: 6th November 2025

St Bede's Catholic High School's Mission Statement.

"I am the vine; you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me, with me in them, bears fruit in plenty." John 15:5

This collective worship policy is designed to reflect and support our school's mission statement, in which we commit to keeping Christ at the centre of all that we do. It is only by doing this that we can truly live life in its fullness (John 10:10) and bear fruit, both individually and as a community.

Therefore, Collective Worship, as a means of contemplating, celebrating and developing our relationship with Christ is central to the school Ethos and its character.

This is expressed through opportunities for prayer and reflection, both privately and as a community, through assemblies, and through whole school prayer and Collective Worship each morning during form. It is also expressed through sacramental and non-sacramental liturgies during different parts of the year.

Our worship is reflected beyond the confines of school, particularly through, a range of faith formation programmes, retreats, social outreach projects and community and parish faith events.

Definition of Terms.

In the interests of clarity, it is useful to ensure all have a clear understanding of the terminology used in this policy and what it denotes.

- **Worship:** In Catholic terminology 'worship' is not generally used to name and describe distinct type of prayer or event. Worship is about living our lives in a way that recognises everything we have is a gift from God and that everything we do should give glory to God. That does include prayer, but the scope is broader.
- **Liturgy:** Is a formal act of the Church. Liturgies celebrated in our school include Mass, the Sacrament of the Eucharist. There is a specific structure to be followed, words to be spoken, gestures to be performed and symbols to be used when celebrating a Liturgy. The official liturgical books, such as the Lectionary and Roman Missal set this structure out. Other Liturgies include Reconciliation and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
- **Liturgical prayer-** Prayerful celebrations in our school community. These are services which are built around scripture and prayer, these will include assemblies, carol services, services of reconciliation (non-sacramental). Texts, symbols and gestures will feature in these services to help reinforce their Catholic nature and they can be used with a greater creative freedom than in the Liturgy.
- **Prayer-** Prayer takes place at the beginning of each school day and may also happen at other points during the day. Although such prayer times will have a clear structure, it will begin with the Sign of the Cross and appropriate silence will form part of the prayer, the form it takes will vary.

Prayer may include traditional prayer, reflection on scripture, stillness, spontaneous prayers of intercession. Prayer will always follow the Liturgical calendar, for example the Stations of the Cross during Lent but prayer can take a variety of forms providing opportunities for pupil creativity and engagement.

Purpose

Through Prayer and Liturgy/Collective Worship

At St Bede's Catholic High School, we seek to actively engage the whole school community, pupils and staff alike in the liturgical life of the Church. We recognise that Collective Worship provides a key opportunity to support our students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. It is our aim that, through Collective Worship, pupils will experience prayer in a variety of forms throughout their school life, enabling them to encounter the person of Jesus Christ, deepen their relationship with Him, and develop in character through the personal development of virtues.

Prayer and liturgy /Collective Worship provides opportunities for pupils and staff to come together to worship God. Its purpose is to:

- Enable pupils to develop a relationship with God.
- Contribute to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of each student.
- We aim to expose pupils to the school virtues, fostering the development of character in all our students, modeled on the example of Jesus Christ.
- Reaffirm and practise the values of the school community.
- Consider, clarify and celebrate Gospel values.
- Provide an opportunity for members of the school community to form a personal response to those values.
- Make opportunities available for prayer, reflection and worship in recognition of all that we do together.
- Involve pupils with the preparation and participation of daily prayer, worship and liturgy.
- Celebrate and give thanks for achievements both personally and within the school community.
- Foster and enable a concern for the needs of others, a recognition of the vulnerability of self and of others.
- Share our concerns about major issues of the day and place them in a Christian perspective.

School Responsibilities in Facilitating Prayer and Liturgy.

Governors

Direct the promotion, monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy by agreeing to a policy and undertaking periodic review of the prayer and liturgy policy which reflects the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the policies agreed by the governing body. This is done through an examination of the prayer and liturgy in the school in collaboration with other members of SLT, the school chaplain and Head of RE. This is central to our school's mission and development plan.

School Chaplain

The school chaplain plans and coordinates prayer and collective worship resources supporting staff in their delivery when required. In collaboration with SLT and Head of RE, the chaplain monitors and evaluates prayer and liturgy in order to inform future planning.

Teachers and non -teaching staff

All adults in St Bede's contribute to the liturgical life of the school by modelling active participation during prayer and liturgy. In the classroom and wider contexts, staff can lead and facilitate prayer and liturgy through the prayer resources available and teach pupils how to participate meaningfully. They can encourage pupils to organise , lead and evaluate prayer, collaborating with other staff to ensure best practice.

Pupil leadership

The pupils of St Bede's are encouraged to take an active role in organising and leading prayer and liturgy in a meaningful in a variety of contexts: In forms, RE classes, year groups, faith formation groups/chaplaincy.

Clergy

The school works closely with local clergy in the planning and celebration of liturgy and catechesis of pupils.

Staff and pupils of different cultures and faith.

Pupils and staff in Catholic schools come from a broad range of traditions- both Christian and other. We recognise that pupils and staff will have different levels of religious literacy and varied experiences of and engagement with faith and prayer and liturgy. With this in mind, we seek to reflect this diversity in the prayer and liturgy resources and experiences we share, through ongoing dialogue and mindfulness of the cultures and experiences represented in our school.

Opportunities for worship

Throughout the Liturgical year there are a many opportunities for our school to worship and experience liturgy, both Eucharistic and non Eucharistic.

Mass

The Mass is the source and summit of the life of the Church. The celebration of the Eucharist is recognised as the most important action of the Church and essential to the faith development of our pupils.

Weekly Mass for alternating year groups is celebrated in Saint Anne's church on Wednesday or Thursday mornings following the two week timetable. Whole School Masses are celebrated at various points in the year marking key Liturgical dates. Pupils are escorted to Mass on Holy days of Obligation. Students have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate in the preparation and leading of liturgies in a variety of ways; individually, as classes and as part of faith formation groups. Music is an essential part of our school's collective worship provision and is recognised as a form of prayer and praise.

We seek to develop the spiritual and prayer life of staff and pupils through staff stillness and scripture reflection twice a week before school, Rosary and prayer and reflection before each morning's briefing. Staff Mass is celebrated at the start of each year.

Non -Sacramental Liturgies- pupils' faith formation and relationship with Christ is further developed through the celebration of non-sacramental liturgies including reconciliation services, examination of conscience services, distribution of ashes and The Stations of the Cross, meditated upon during Lent, and the Carol Services.

Weekly Assemblies

Each year group has two weekly assembly; A 'liturgical assembly' and a pastoral assembly.

Celebration of the Word assembly.

At St Bede's Catholic High School, we aim to engage the whole school community—pupils and staff—in the liturgical life of the Church, supporting students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Through Collective Worship, pupils encounter Jesus Christ, deepen their relationship with Him, and develop character through the growth of virtues.

Assemblies follow the Sunday Gospel, combining the Celebration of the Word with Lectio Divina-style scripture reflection, guided by the liturgical calendar and lectionary. They may focus on feast days, Holy Days of Obligation, or Catholic devotions and include scripture, prayer, Catholic Social Teaching, and reflective activities, with flexible use of media.

Assemblies are led by senior staff, year leaders, the Chaplain, or Form Classes, with pupils encouraged to participate in preparation and leadership, supported by the Chaplain, Head of RE, and Year Leaders.

Pastoral assemblies

Pupils also enjoy one pastoral assembly each week. These assemblies are planned thematically and will have a different focus each week, they are varied and wide ranging and linked to personal development. Whilst different in content to the liturgical assemblies, scripture and prayer are also an essential part of these pastoral assemblies and are an integral part of the planning and delivery of them, reflecting our Catholic identity.

Occasionally, guest speakers will be invited to lead assemblies.

The school recognises that there is a difference between acts of Collective Worship and the assembly of students. On some occasions, an assembly may precede or follow an Act of Collective Worship. When this happens the transition from one to the other will be marked in some suitable way e.g. The sign of the cross, the lighting of a candle or reflection on an image on the projector or power point presentation with a moment of silence for reflection.

Students will have the opportunity, and will be encouraged to participate in, the preparation and leading of assemblies.

Form time

Our school Mission statement promotes the truth that fullness of life is to be found when Christ is at the centre of our lives. Our pupils flourish academically, spiritually and emotionally through the realisation of this in daily life. It is for this reason, that every single day begins with prayer.

To facilitate this, form time follows a clear structure:

Sign of the Cross

Register

Daily Prayer

Notices

Resources for Day

There is a fixed weekly form timetable for each year group to ensure that a variety of prayer and reflection is enjoyed, either in form classes or year groups alongside the distribution of notices etc.

Resources

Daily prayer and collective worship resources which are linked to key dates in the liturgical calendar and secular key national events are prepared and distributed weekly to all staff for delivery in form time. Pupils are given the opportunity to write their own form prayers for inclusion in the weekly resource.

Form prayer resources reflect the richness of the Catholic tradition in that they include a mixture of inherited traditional prayer, reflective prayer, use of scripture, opportunities for contemplative stillness. The form of the prayer can depend on the liturgical season, for example Stations of the Cross will form the basis of collective worship during Lent, Prayers to Our Lady will feature more in May. Form teachers are encouraged to incorporate their own creative and innovative reflections and ideas should they wish to.

The Character and Virtues resource is prepared by the School Chaplain in partnership with the Pupil Liturgy Group and delivered by form tutors weekly during a 25 minute form time. It covers all four core school virtues and the complementary virtues for each strand. The resource is progressive, building pupils' knowledge, understanding, and skills in self-growth and applying virtues in school and beyond. It is underpinned by a commitment to extended prayer in a variety of forms, including formulaic, contemplative, and reflective stillness. This resource complements wider provision, including the behaviour curriculum, Personal Development, and quality of education, ensuring that Catholic life underpins the school's mission.

Wider provision

Pupils are given opportunities throughout the year to lead the planning and delivery of liturgical and non liturgical faith services and events, in school and in the wider community. In doing so, pupils involved understand how Collective Worship can actively contribute to faith-based community cohesion and enhance their own journey of faith through active citizenship.

We seek to develop the spiritual and prayer life of staff and pupils through staff stillness and scripture reflection twice a week before school, Rosary, prayer and reflection before each morning's briefing, ethos briefing for staff once a week. Staff Mass is celebrated at the start of each year.

Our school prayer space offers the opportunity for personal and planned prayer and reflection, for both pupils and staff.

The school works closely with local parishes and is actively involved in the planning and delivery of Sacramental catechesis in school and coordinates the celebration of the sacrament with the Pastoral Deanery.

Monitoring and evaluation

“Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” Matthew 18:20)

We recognise that prayer and Liturgy are at the heart of our Catholic community. They are essential to the Catholic life and mission of St Bede’s and the faith journey of all our pupils.

It is for this reason that Collective worship in our school is

- Properly planned
- Well resourced
- Recorded
- Monitored
- Evaluated

Evaluation of Collective Worship

Following the planning of prayer, liturgy and worship, the evaluation and recording needs to be an integral part of the process. Worship is evaluated by SLT, those planning, leading the worship, other staff, the pupils for whom the worship is intended or members of the governing body. Feedback from any of these groups will help to improve the quality of worship offered to the students.

The School Chaplain encourages feedback from students and staff on Collective Worship so that we can review and develop the provision. We recognise that this is an ongoing process and key to the quality of provision.

Monitoring of Collective Worship

The monitoring of the planning and provision of worship should be carried out on a regular basis. The Foundation Governors have a key role in this process to ensure that the legal requirements are met and that the worship offered to the pupils is of the highest quality. It is important that Collective Worship is monitored regularly. The Senior leadership team are responsible for this and make regular visits to different classes to monitor the Worship. The chaplain provides support to staff delivering collective worship should they require it.

Policy review date: October 2026.