



**HAGLEY CATHOLIC  
HIGH SCHOOL**  
SEMPER FIDELIS

# Prayer and Liturgy Policy

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## Mission

*“Called as God’s family, we strive to achieve our personal best by living and learning in Christ.”*

### The Nature of Collective Worship

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

### Aims of Collective Worship

Prayer and liturgy are crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to students’ moral and spiritual development. Prayer is an important part of our Catholic school’s distinctive ethos. Taking part in daily prayer helps build community cohesion by creating a consistent structure around the core values and symbols of Christianity.

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

1. To contemplate something of the mystery of God
2. To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
3. To explore their own beliefs
4. To respond to and celebrate life
5. To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
6. To develop a common ethos and shared values
7. To enrich religious experience
8. To grow in liturgical understanding and development
9. To take time out to ‘wonder at’, ‘come to terms with’ and ‘to give worth to.’
10. To reinforce prayers which are part of Catholic tradition.

### Legal requirements

Collective worship is a legal daily requirement which is distinct from curriculum time. For Catholic schools, this requirement is made explicit within the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham which states:

*“Religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup>*

Collective worship is a term used in legislation but is not a phrase we readily use in a Catholic context. Worship at Hagley Catholic High School is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. Parents and Carers have the right to withdraw their child from the daily act of collective worship if they wish for children up to the age of 16. The DFE guidance can be found [here](#).

### How we meet our stated aims through the different forms of liturgy and collective worship

Through regular prayer and worship, including the celebration of the Eucharist, the rhythm of the Church’s year becomes a normal part of school life and each pupil’s life.

At Hagley, prayer occurs at set points every school day: During form time at 9am, at midday in teaching groups to pray the Angelus and in teaching groups at the end of the school day to pray Department prayers (from January 2023). Prayer may also be said during other times in the school day, where appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> Archdiocese of Birmingham ‘Instrument of Government for Catholic Voluntary Aided Schools.’

## **The Eucharist**

Weekly celebration of Mass is at the heart of our school life. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the *“Eucharist is the source and summit of all Christian life”* and every Tuesday morning, students gather in Mass with their year group. Each year group celebrates Mass at least once every half-term with our priest chaplain, Fr Philip Griffin, in the hall or theatre. Students are encouraged to lead the readings, offertory and music/singing in Mass, supported by the lay chaplain and pastoral team. All students and staff are invited to receive a blessing during Mass if they are unable to receive Holy Communion.

The lay chaplain is responsible for ensuring that Mass is ready to be celebrated each week, including ensuring that students are fully prepared, Mass linens are clean and there are sufficient consumables for the celebration of Mass.

## **Weekly Schedule**

On Monday mornings, students reflect on the Gospel of the previous Sunday with their form tutor.

If students are not in Mass on a Tuesday morning, then they will usually attend an assembly, which always includes prayer. We acknowledge that prayer and assembly are distinct activities. They usually form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

During Wednesdays to Fridays, there is a rota in place for form groups to visit the chapel. Form groups will usually visit the chapel once per term. These prayers introduce students to Adoration, different ways of praying and students planning their own liturgies in order to develop students’ skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship, supported by the lay chaplain. Students not in the chapel will lead prayers in their form rooms, supported by the form tutor.

Throughout the year, the school will also gather to celebrate important events in the Church’s and school’s calendar including:

- Holy Days of Obligation that fall during term time. These include: All Saints Day (1<sup>st</sup> November), Epiphany (6<sup>th</sup> January), Ascension and the Feast of St Peter and St Paul (29<sup>th</sup> June).
- All Souls Day – November 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Armistice Day – November 11<sup>th</sup>
- Minibus Accident Anniversary – November 18<sup>th</sup>
- Patronal Feasts, especially the feast of St Nicholas Owen, celebrated on 23<sup>rd</sup> January in the Archdiocese of Birmingham
- Opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent
- Advent
- Lent, which includes Ash Wednesday (where this falls during term time) and Stations of the Cross
- Voluntary prayer and retreats during the school day and at weekends.

The Assistant Principal with responsibility for Catholic life is responsible for organising liturgical timetables and rotas for the school year and are published on the school calendar and Mass/Assembly rota.

## **Links with the Parish Community and Parents**

- Parents, Carers and local parishioners are welcome to attend any of the Tuesday morning Masses and other celebrations during the school year, including the Family Mass in the Autumn term, Carols and Mass during Advent, a prayer service during Lent and the Leavers’ Masses.
- Students also visit the parish communities throughout the year, supported by staff in school, to lead the readings and music.

## **Sacred Spaces and Physical Signs**

- Each classroom has an identified sacred space to aid prayer and worship during prayer.
- These spaces include a crucifix, images of the patron/house saints, the school’s virtues, traditional prayers, a battery-operated candle and a ‘God Who Speaks’ lectern with the Bible on it.

- The student chaplaincy team, supported by the lay chaplain, are responsible for checking and auditing these spaces.
- During the key seasons of the liturgical year, a poster is displayed on the sacred space giving information about the importance of that season – Ordinary Time; Advent; Christmas; Lent; Easter.
- There are physical signs throughout the school of its Catholic identity including crucifixes, Wall Art containing references from Scripture and the Stations of the Cross.
- The school has a chapel with the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle. The chapel is used regularly during form prayers on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, during lunch with the student chaplaincy team and is open throughout the day for quiet prayer and reflection. The lay chaplain is responsible for caring for the chapel and ensuring it is kept as a sacred space.

### **Resources**

To support students and staff with prayer several resources are available including:

- School prayer book
- Online resources/folders, including the weekly Gospel reflections and prayers
- A bible in every classroom
- Prayer intentions boxes
- A missal in the chapel office for the celebration of liturgies
- Planning and crib sheets to support student led prayer (See Appendices)

### **Monitoring of prayer and worship**

- The Assistant Principal with responsibility for Catholic life co-ordinates the monitoring of prayer and liturgy.
- At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all students and whether students are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.
- Monitoring and evaluation of prayer and worship takes place termly to ensure the school's provision meets the needs of all students. Monitoring takes the form of student voice (both online and face to face); staff voice, members of the senior and pastoral leadership teams joining form prayers and regular updates to the Board of Directors and the Local Governing Body, the latter being legally responsible for ensuring the requirements of the Trust Deed are met. The Link Governor for Catholic life and Collective Worship is Mrs E Yates.

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

- Prayer and liturgy are accessible to everyone in our school community and inclusive to all. Students of different faith traditions are supported to pray in fidelity to their own commitments.
- Staff are supported through regular CPD in prayer and liturgy and can receive further support from the lay chaplain or Assistant Principal.
- Students are encouraged to plan and lead prayer in form rooms, prayers in the chapel and during assemblies.

### **Health and Safety**

- Battery operated candles are used in classrooms for health and safety reasons.
- When candles are used in the chapel or in the celebration of Mass or retreats, a risk assessment is in place to ensure the effective and safe supervision of lit candles. Candles are extinguished as soon as practicable and never left unattended. The use of candles by students is supervised by an adult and appropriate instructions always given.
- Visits to places of worship are carried out in compliance to the Educational Visits policy, which includes thorough risk assessments.

### **Review date**

This policy is monitored by the Assistant Principal with responsibility for Catholic life and is evaluated and reviewed bi-annually by the Local Governing Body.

**Appendix 1**

Liturgy Planning Sheet

<b>Form Group</b>		<b>Date &amp; Liturgical Season</b> <i>(Ordinary Time, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter)</i>	
<b>Focus or Theme of Prayer</b>		<b>Resources</b> <b>(Who is leading each aspect of the liturgy? What will they say? What resources are needed?)</b>	
<b>Gather</b>	The sacred space should be the focal point of the prayer. The candle should be lit and the sign of the cross made to begin the time of collective worship. The school mission statement should be said and a short introduction on the theme of the prayer.		
<b>Listen</b>	A reading from Scripture.		
<b>Respond</b>	A prayer/reflection linked to the theme.		
<b>Go forth</b>	Prayer should lead to action. What challenge do you want others to complete linked to living out the school's mission?		

## Appendix 2

### Form Prayer Crib Sheet

- Students remain standing and face towards the sacred space
- Light candle to show that this time is sacred/special
- Make the sign of the cross - *"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."*
- All say mission statement together - *"Called as God's family, we strive to achieve our personal best by living and learning in Christ."*
- Introduce prayer - *"Today we are praying for.....(insert prayer intention)"*
- Student led prayer e.g. from prayer book/their own prayer, a reading from scripture. Prayer can also be a period of silent reflection.
- All students say the school prayer together - *"St Nicholas Owen, make this school a safe refuge. Inspire in us a love of God and a love of our neighbour. Guide us in our work and play, that we may always be faithful to Christ, Our Lord. Amen."*
- St Nicholas Owen, pray for us.
- End prayer with the sign of the cross and extinguish candle