



St Philip Howard
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Prayer & Liturgy Policy

**This Policy has been approved and adopted by the Governors
of the Catholic Ethos Committee**

Approved	Review
January 2026	January 2027



1. 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.)

2. 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.

3. Responsibility

(a) 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)
- 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.

(b) 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.

(c) The members of the Chaplaincy team are the “Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator(s)” for St Philip Howard Catholic School

They 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 Education Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

(a) Collective Worship

“In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Philippians 4:6

At SPH, we start every day with an act of Collective Worship. These times of prayer and reflection can take place during Assembly or Tutor Time, are student focused, creatively delivered, and Gospel centred.

(b) The Sacraments

“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Galatians 3:27

The SPH community hinges on the celebration of the Sacraments throughout the year in the following ways:

- Staff Welcome Mass

- Year 7 Welcome Mass
- St Philip Howard Feast Day Mass
- Lenten Reconciliation
- Whole School Mass
- Monthly Morning Mass
- Holy Days of Obligation Mass
- St John Bosco Feast Day Mass?

The school also promotes and supports students and staff undergoing the sacraments of initiation within their parish context through the Chaplaincy Team.

(c) The Liturgical Year

**“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven”
Ecclesiastes 3:1**

Throughout the school year, the liturgical calendar is highlighted and celebrated through additional times of prayer and liturgy, including, but not limited to;

- November prayers for the dead
- Advent Liturgies
- Ash Wednesday Services
- Annual Services of Reconciliation in Lent with the Sacrament
- Lenten Liturgies
- Patronal Feast Day Liturgies
- Liturgies for Transition at the start of Year 7, and the end of Year 11 and 13

These additional times of prayer and reflection strengthen the Ethos of the school and encourage every member of the community to consider how they might continue ***Becoming the People God Calls them to be.***

(d) Staff Prayer

**“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them.”
Matthew 18:20**

Times of prayer for the staff body provide refreshment and times of stillness. Prayer is open and invitational, begins every meeting, and places Jesus at the heart of all our decision making as educators. Opportunities for staff to prayer together are faithful, frequent and fruit-bearing.

5. Our school context

Student Data (Correct as of January 2026)

Year Group or Class	No. of pupils	% Catholic pupils	% FSM eligible	% SEND	No. of pupils with EHCP	% EAL
Total	1325	59%	10.1%	20.83%	54	20 %

Some considerations:

(a) Mass

- Students and staff are all active participants in Mass at school, with a subsection of the community expressing their faith through ministerial roles within the Liturgy including;

Percentage of pupils who are baptised Catholics:	59%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	31%
Percentage of pupils from other religions:	1.2%
Percentage of pupils who are non-religious:	5.7%

- Reading during the liturgy of the word and leading others in the Prayers of the Faithful
 - Ministering as Altar Servers
 - Bringing forward the gifts in the Offertory as well as offering any symbolic artwork, candles or other items that are significant for that particular Mass
 - Commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion amongst staff and confirmed students in KS4 and 5
 - Supporting the music for liturgy in choir and band
 - Providing IT support with the PPT slides
 - Creating art work that stimulates and provides a prayerful atmosphere in Mass
 - Ministering as Welcomers or Ushers
- Before receiving communion, the school community is invited forward to receive Jesus, either in the Eucharist, or by receive a blessing. They indicate this by crossing their arms over their chest. Members of staff will facilitate this by ushering students through the space in a calm and prayerful manner.

(b) Celebration of the Word Assemblies

- Year Groups meet together weekly to pray together through Assemblies. These are Celebrations of the Word that are based upon the Gospel of the week and are prepared and led by various members of the school community including;
 - Heads of Year
 - Heads of House

- Senior Leadership Team
- Chaplaincy
- Sixth Form Leadership Team
- Tutor Groups
- Dedicated groups of Students (i.e. “RE Ambassadors”)
- Students enter the assembly space in prayerful silence that may or may not be accompanied by live or recorded music. Everyone present is invited to begin and end the Celebration of the Word by making the sign of the cross together. We conclude by asking St Philip Howard, and/or relevant House Patron, to pray for us.

(c) Class Prayer

- Class Prayer takes place every day that the tutor group is not in assembly. This is facilitated by the Tutor with members of the class taking a leading role throughout the year.
- Weekly resources are provided by the Chaplaincy with a variety of prayer styles focused on the Gospel of the week. Each tutor group is provided with a candle which will be lit during these times of prayer, along with a liturgically coloured cloth, and a prayer focus for the year. (E.g. Mission Statement card, wooden cross etc.)

(d) Other sacraments and liturgies

- Reconciliation is celebrated every Lent and is very well supported by local clergy.
- Ash Wednesday Liturgies are held for all students to mark the beginning of Lent. These are facilitated by the Chaplaincy Team with support of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

(e) Music

- “Music is integral to liturgy and celebrations of the word. It is not an add-on but a key element of the prayer... All are encouraged to participate through singing, and it is a priority of those responsible for the music to ensure this.” (PLD 6.2)
- SPH continues to build upon a strong tradition of singing within liturgy and will work towards greater participation by building regular singing into assemblies, celebrations of the word, and class prayer.
- Adequate time, staffing and resources are channeled into the preparation of music for liturgy through the Performing Arts department, supported by the Chaplaincy.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the Governor members of the Catholic Ethos Committee.