



MARICOURT
CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL
& SIXTH FORM CENTRE

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Mission Statement

Our Maricourt family, with Christ at the centre, is a community of welcome, compassion and respect in which we are encouraged to discover our true purpose and empowered to achieve the extraordinary so as to be the change we want to see in our world

INSPIRE
WITH
MARICOURT

Draft
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Policy context and rationale

Stemming from our mission statement, we seek to educate the whole person; spiritually, morally, emotionally, psychologically, and physically towards Christian maturity. Shared gospel values permeate the way we educate the young people entrusted to our care, in the Catholic Christian tradition, ensuring that each one is valued and cared for and achieves the best of which they are capable.

Prayer and liturgy are intrinsic and essential elements in this endeavour and are much more than the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship for all pupils. Prayer and liturgy are Christ-centred, and an integral part of school life rooted in our Catholic and Mercy tradition, reflecting Gospel values.

Prayer and liturgy reflect a partnership of home, parish, and school, which together educate and pass on the Faith to our children. We aim to assist parents in their God-given role as educators by providing a full Catholic secondary education. Prayer and liturgy are central to this.

Definition of prayer and liturgy

Prayer has been described in many ways and there are many ways to pray. Prayer and liturgy are defined in broad terms as those opportunities offered for pupils, staff and the wider school community to come together to pray and worship in the presence of God. We are ever mindful of the wisdom of others that teaches:

‘Prayer is about awakening to the presence of God within us.’
(Laurence Freeman)

‘The more we find Christ within, the more we find Christ without.’ (Bede Griffiths)

‘In His presence we are bound to love.’ (Evelyn Underhill)

All suggesting that the more we place ourselves in God’s presence, the more likely we are to have the same attitude and actions as Jesus.

Young people need and desire an experience of reflection, prayer, and stillness. Opportunities for 'sacred time' in modern society are few and far between, but even more valuable and necessary for this. A daily act of prayer and worship brings benefit to those who participate in it.

Prayer and liturgy are a key element of pastoral care; a means of accompaniment, sharing experiences with pupils and offering them opportunities, challenge, formation and an invitation to flourish.

Prayer and liturgy meet the educational needs of all who share in it, considering the age and capacity of pupils. These include:

- Those who form part of the church-going Catholic community.
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of Church.
- Those from other Christian traditions
- Those from other, or no, faith backgrounds

Aims

At Maricourt, prayer and liturgy are central to our daily life as a Catholic community. Through prayer and liturgy, we aim to:

- Contemplate something of the mystery of God and remain open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
- Contemplate and develop an understanding of the liturgical year and actively celebrate the seasons and rhythms of the Church
- Create an atmosphere conducive to prayer, giving time for reflection, so that young people may learn to raise their hearts and minds to God in worship and prayer
- Provide opportunities to pray in different ways including meditation, prayerful silence, in song and movement and using the traditional prayers of the church
- Give priority to the celebration of the Eucharist and to the Sacrament of Reconciliation at key time during the liturgical year
- Develop a sense of community and provide opportunities for all members of our community to experience a sense of belonging, welcome, mercy and acceptance
- Re-affirm, explore and live the mission and values of our school.
- Attach great importance to educating young people in an awareness of the needs of and our responsibility towards one another, locally, nationally and globally, fostering a spirit of generosity and compassion. In particular, the needs of the oppressed, marginalised and persecuted.
- Develop awareness of our belonging to a global Mercy family working in the service of those on the margins of society following the inspiration of Catherine McCauley
- Work in partnership with families, primary partners, parish, diocesan and Mercy communities.
- Create an ethos of inclusivity and pupil by providing appropriate prayer spaces and opportunities for pupils of other faiths e.g., Muslim pupils during Ramadan.

Roles and Responsibilities

Form Tutors are expected to:

- Ensure that every school day begins with a time for prayer and reflection during form time
- Make use of the resources provided by the chaplain to support daily prayer and reflection
- Take ownership of the resources provided, reviewing and adapting them to meet the needs, age and maturity of the pupils ensuring access for all pupils
- Articulate how prayer shapes our self-understanding and inspires us to action in our lives and communities in the service of others
- Create a sacred atmosphere conducive to prayer, including time for reflection
- Animate, accompany and encourage meaningful and active participation in prayer and liturgy by all pupils
- Lead daily prayer in a way which respects the dignity of all present, created in God's image
- Commission and support pupils to collaborate with other pupils to prepare and lead well-constructed experiences of prayer and liturgy
- Model respectful and meaningful engagement in prayer and liturgy
- Recognise the centrality of sacred scripture as the Word of God in prayer
- Promote local, national and global fundraising opportunities, and in doing so foster a spirit of generosity, compassion and solidarity with the poor in line with the social teaching of the church.

Pastoral Leaders are expected to:

- Actively promote and celebrate the Catholic life and Mercy values of the school with all pupils and wherever possible
- Articulate how prayer shapes our self-understanding and inspires us to action in our lives and communities in the service of others
- Support form tutors in providing pupils with daily opportunities for prayer and reflection
- Regularly engage with CPD in leading prayer and liturgy and in liturgical formation
- Prepare and lead collective worship as an inspiring model of exemplary practice encompassing different ways of praying in song, prayerful silence, meditation and using the traditional prayers of the church
- Support and encourage pupils in the planning, leading and evaluation of prayer and liturgy making use of their artistic talents including music, dance, performance and proclaiming the Word of God
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy within form time alongside the year group SLT link, and the Curriculum Leader of Religious Education and

Catholic Life.

- Ensure assembly hall bases have a focal point for prayer and liturgy
- Implement the agreed school liturgical calendar including notable events in the school year

The Chaplain is expected to:

- Be a visible witness to the Catholic faith and Mercy values of the school for the whole school community
- Have a clear understanding of the liturgical norms of the Church
- Give priority to the celebration of the Eucharist and to the Sacrament of Reconciliation at key time during the liturgical and school year working with local clergy
- Prepare resources to support form and year tutors in leading prayer and worship
- Provide advice and support to form and year tutors in leading prayer and liturgy
- Lead and animate prayer and liturgy for pupils and staff at routine gatherings and events
- Commission, guide, and encourage pupils in the preparation, leadership and evaluation of prayer and liturgy
- Work in partnership with families, primary schools, parishes, Mercy and diocesan communities
- Plan suitable activities to mark and celebrate the major feasts and seasons of the Church and events in the school calendar, including Mercy Day.
- Ensure that school environment reflects our Catholic identity and distinctive Mercy charism
- Ensure the school chapels are a well cared-for resource, cherished by all and conducive to prayer
- Attend CPD provided by the archdiocese and other relevant providers
- Maintain and sustain a relationship with the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy to support our Mercy charism ensuring this permeates the Catholic life of the school

The Senior Leadership Team are expected to:

- Actively promote and celebrate the Catholic life and Mercy values of the school
- Be inspiring models of exemplary practice leading different ways of praying in song, silence, meditation and using the traditional prayers of the church
- Demonstrate servant leadership in prayer and liturgy modelled on the example of Christ
- Lead an atmosphere during sacred times conducive to prayer, including time for reflection

- Foster meaningful and active participation in prayer and liturgy by all pupils
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy in accordance with agreed evaluation cycle and strategically plan for its continued development
- Support pastoral leaders and other staff in the implementation of this policy providing training as required

Governors are expected to:

- Monitor the implementation of this policy through link governor meetings with the Headteacher and chaplain
- Discuss the Catholic Life and Mercy values of the school and prayer and liturgy at meetings
- Attend significant whole school acts of prayer and liturgy where possible

Provision

The provision of prayer and liturgy is set out in the annual plan and schedule which matches the liturgical calendar and significant events during the school year. Opportunities for prayer and liturgy occur daily, weekly and annually as outlined here:

Daily Prayer

- Every school day begins with prayer during form time for every form class

Weekly Prayer

- Every staff briefing begins with a prayer
- During one morning a week, every year group will have an assembly during which there is collective act of worship.
- There is a weekly opportunity for staff to attend a morning reflection in the chapel.

Annual Prayer

- Full year group liturgical services are held over the course of the academic year in line with the prayer and liturgy annual calendar
- Every INSET day begins with prayer and reflection
- Every whole school event to which external stakeholders are invited begins with an opportunity for prayer and reflection
- Throughout the year there will be opportunities for the community to come together in worship and participate in the Eucharist. Pupils will be given every opportunity to participate in the preparation and roles within the mass

Forms of prayer and liturgy

- Staff and pupils are provided with and encouraged to engage in a variety of different types of prayer and reflection
- Staff and pupils are provided with, and encouraged to engage in a variety of different ways of praying and reflecting, for example by making the Sign of the Cross, being still and contemplative, listening to and reading from sacred scripture, reflecting on the place of scripture in the life of the Church and their own lives, listening to and joining in sacred music, attending Liturgy, attending Mass and going on retreat
- Our pupils and staff are given the opportunity of receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school by arrangement with our priest chaplain. Special arrangements are made during Advent and Lent with the assistance of visiting Clergy. The voluntary nature of individual confession is always made clear

Environment

- Every opportunity should be taken to display the distinctive Catholic and Mercy nature of the school
- The school chapel is designated a sacred space and is a place all can go to celebrate and participate in acts of worship

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer and Liturgy

The chaplain has overall responsibility for the planning of prayer and liturgy across the school, including the provision of suitable resources to support prayer and liturgy. Weekly themes linked directly to the liturgical year and to scripture are in place, around which all acts of prayer and liturgy centre. There is a meaningful opportunity for prayer and liturgy at the start of every school day. This prayer and liturgy always follows the format of 'Gather, Listen, Connect, Respond'.

- Gather: Foster an atmosphere of stillness in which prayer can take place. Gather pupils together to participate in the Sign of the Cross and choral reading of the school prayer
- Listen: Introduce the weekly theme explicitly linked to the liturgical year and to scripture. Expand upon and explore this theme and relate the theme to an aspect of Catholic teaching
- Connect: Relate the theme to pupils' daily lives in the modern world
- Respond: Include opportunities for pupils to actively respond to and engage with the theme/focus
- Finish with a closing prayer and end with the Sign of the Cross and 'Our Lady of Mercy /Pray for Us'.

Pupils are invited to actively participate in and lead acts of prayer and liturgy. They are encouraged to be active participants in prayer and liturgy in a variety of ways, including asking for their own personal intentions to be remembered, for example, praying for a sick relative, or for success for the whole class as exams approach. They might be encouraged to research or read a reflection or may bring in a personal item that is important to them as a stimulus for the act of prayer and liturgy.

Guidance for staff

Prayer and liturgy should be as inclusive and as meaningful as possible. Therefore, staff are themselves invited to consider a few questions, amongst them:

- Do I create an atmosphere of stillness in which prayer can take place?
- Do I ever pray for my pupils before praying with them?
- Do I share myself/my story with my pupils?
- Is my attitude to leading prayer conducive to meaningful reflection?

Staff Training and CPD

The main points of contact for staff seeking support in leading and facilitating prayer and liturgy are:

- The Chaplain (Julia)
- The deputy headteacher with responsibility for personal development (Mrs Lawler)
- The Curriculum Leader for RE and the Catholic Life of the school (Mrs Bradley)

These staff seek to provide ongoing support to colleagues.

In addition, CPD time dedicated to prayer and liturgy has been identified and prayer and liturgy also forms a central part of the induction programme for new staff.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of prayer and liturgy takes the form of:

- Regular ongoing quality assurance of the delivery of prayer and liturgy
- Pupil, staff and parent voice
- Records of school planning for and evaluation of prayer and liturgy
- Regular line management meetings
- CPD records and evaluations
- Displays, social media records and records of school celebrations of Holy Days and other significant events

Evaluation Criteria

In evaluating the quality of prayer and liturgy, the following questions are considered:

- Is there evidence that the support materials/resources provided are helpful for staff?
- Is there evidence that the support materials/resources provided are helpful for pupils, relevant to their age and maturity both in terms of their accessibility and allowing them to be active participants in worship rather than just passive recipients?
- Are there examples of staff or pupils using their own resources to lead prayer in relation to the weekly theme?
- Does the response of pupils to collective worship suggest that it is something which forms part of their normal daily routine in registration?