



THOMAS BECKET CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

2025-2026

Approved by:

Local Academy Committee

Date: September 2025

Next review due by:

Local Academy Committee

Date: September 2026

Prayer and Liturgy Policy
Thomas Becket Catholic School
'Christ's Love is Our Foundation'

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) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

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. This is regularly evaluated.
- 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.

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Aims of Collective Worship

We believe that collective prayer and worship in our school provides opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To know that students are loved and to understand they are loved
- To help them find their purpose in life
- To help students have an open relationship with God

- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To foster and nurture relationships with God, students and staff
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop a sense of community
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To actively participate in Collective Worship.
- To extend the exposure and experience of different types of prayer to staff and students.

Collective Worship

There must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This may take place at any time during the school day and could be a single act of worship for the whole school, or separate acts of worship in school groups.

It can be celebrated together as classes, tutor groups and year groups. Building a sense of community makes a special and significant contribution to developing the school ethos.

To fulfil this requirement, collective worship may take the form of....

- Prayers during form time- could be the school prayer, a traditional prayer from the form prayer board or a prayer from the Tutor Prayer Book.
- Prayers during lesson- Departmental prayers or the First Friday Angelus
- Form group act of worship- Leadership of the morning prayer
- Year group act of worship – Class Masses (readings etc). Year Mass
- Key Stage end of year Celebration Service.
- CST Assembly, led by SVP students every half term
- Staff prayer- briefing/ meetings, staff Mass
- Assemblies- Every week following the liturgical year.

Mass

- Induction Mass for staff at the beginning of each school term.
- There is Mass in the school Chapel every Wednesday at 3.30pm.
- Weekly Class Masses take place each Friday at 2:15pm.
- Each year there is a Mass for Year 11's and 13's before their exams.
- Students also attend Mass at Northampton Cathedral for such events as the feast of our Lady Immaculate, The St Thomas Becket Relics Mass, the Chrism Mass (even when this falls in the holidays.)

- The students from Choir, SVP and Ethos groups attend a yearly Mass in each of our local parishes of the Cathedral, St Gregory's, St Aiden's, St Francis and Terese, St Thomas More and the Sacred Heart. At these Masses they lead the welcoming, the music, readings, collection and offertory.
- Each term, the SVP students attend the Healing Mass at the Sacred Heart and lead in a similar way.

Assemblies (Collective Worship)

At TBCS we believe that Collective Worship provides a very valuable opportunity to enrich the spiritual development of the students. Collective Worship should be welcoming, supportive and informative and allow time for personal reflection. High-quality collective worship has the potential to nurture a positive school ethos that focuses on developing an understanding of God's love, care for the self, others and the pursuit of all forms of excellence.

The programme of Collective Worship is linked to the weekly Gospel theme and is outlined in the School Pastoral Calendar. (Collective Worship Rota). The weekly themes follow the cycle of the Liturgical Year of the Roman Catholic Church.

Collective Worship can make a positive contribution to pupil self-development and therefore be at the heart of raising achievement and standards. By planning to encourage pupils to reflect upon our school values of Faith, Respect, Compassion, Trust and Justice and their associated virtues, such as peace, humility, kindness, forgiveness, courage, they play a hugely important role. It is therefore essential that assemblies are carefully prepared and planned and that they aim to have a lasting impact.

Collective Worship is an important opportunity for spiritual development through music and prayer and for presenting Christian values to the students. Assemblies are organised on a year group basis. These are usually led by members of the Leadership Team, SLT, Heads of Year, Form groups, students and the Chaplain or Head of RE.

Other forms of Prayer

- All staff and students participate in Collective Daily Prayer, and the following activities start with a **publicly identified** prayer: i.e. The School Prayer. Assemblies/Collective Worship, Form Time Registration, all formal school meetings e.g. Governors meetings, Staff meetings, HoY Meetings, SLT meetings, CPD meetings HoD's Team meetings, Student Council, Youth SVP begin with a varied form of prayer.
- The Angelus is said by the whole on the first Friday of each month. A bell rings at midday and students stand to pray. Often there is a theme attached to this prayer such as peace in the world or for those taking exams. Sometimes it is a personal prayer.

- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available for students each week before or after the Wednesday Mass and throughout the afternoon on Ash Wednesday.
- Whole year groups celebrate Liturgies together at least 4 times per year. These take place during the Advent/Christmas season, Ash Wednesday, Easter and End of Year Celebration.
- Breaktime Rosary takes place every day in the Chapel during the months of May and October
- Lunchtime grace before meals is said at the end of P4 in RE Lessons and is encouraged in all lessons. Lunchtime prayers are on the tables in the Canteen in different forms and different languages.
- Light Fever takes place during Pentecost as well as on Ash Wednesday in conjunction with distribution of Ashes.
- Worship Wednesday takes place in the Auditorium each week
- A daily hymn is sung each week at the year group Collective Worship reflecting the liturgical season (Also at Staff Briefing each Tuesday)
- Adoration and morning prayer take place in the Chapel each Wednesday before school.
- Lent (Stations of the Cross) and Advent Reflections take place each year at the Cathedral of Our Lady Immaculate and St Thomas of Canterbury. TBCS students take a lead with our local Catholic Primary Schools.

The Liturgical Calendar is at the centre of our school life.

The Chapel

This is an important place for the school community, the heart of the school. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Chapel. As a result of this, when not used for celebrating Mass the Chapel is a place for private and community prayer, for quiet and reflection and for gatherings of the students of the Ethos Teams. Students independently take responsibility for ensuring that the candles, holy water, liturgical coverings, flowers etc are fresh and up to date. On a Wednesday after school, students set up for Mass, organise server and reader rotas as well as sorting out the IT and clearing everything away after Mass. This also happens for the weekly Form Masses each Friday.

Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy is key to the growth of spirituality at TBCS. Students are inspired to take part, to lead and to engage others in Collective Worship. There is a form of prayer and or music

taking place each day (except Wednesday – Auditorium) in the Chapel, regardless of other activities in nearby RE classrooms.

- Monday – Faith Sharing
- Tuesday - Youth SVP (Year 9 and above. Led by student leaders) and Youth Alpha – led by Faith Leaders.
- Wednesday – Morning Prayer/ Adoration.
- Year 7 and 8 Ethos Meeting and Prayer (led by Year 9/10 Faith Leaders with a different form of prayer each week.)
- Wednesday Worship in the Auditorium (Hymns and Prayers) Mass after school.
- Thursday - Bible Study (led by Students)
- Friday – Mass for individual classes, P5.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy takes place regularly, using the Prayer and Liturgy Annual Plan of Provision, 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.

8. Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.