

POLICY

POLICY TYPE

MAT Policy to adopted in full across all schools	
LGC Policy to be reviewed and approved locally	✓



*"Share the Love of God,
every day in everything
we learn, do and say"*

Approval Date:	2026/27 – AUTUMN TERM
Review Date:	2027/28 – AUTUMN TERM

ST PHILOMENA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

Our Mission

Our mission is: “With Christ at the centre, we strive for excellence, act with respect and serve our community.”

This mission underpins this policy and reflects our commitment to ensuring that Christ remains at the centre of all that we do. It guides our decisions, actions and relationships and supports our vision to share our love of God every day in all that we learn, do and say.

The Context of Prayer and Liturgy at St Philomena’s

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of the Catholic life and mission of St Philomena’s Catholic Primary School. They provide opportunities for our school community to come together in faith, to recognise and celebrate God’s presence and to grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Prayer and liturgy are our response to God’s invitation to relationship. Through Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, we gather to offer praise, thanksgiving and prayer and to listen and respond to the Word of God.

As a Catholic school, prayer and liturgy are central to our identity and mission. They enable pupils and staff to encounter Christ, reflect on the Gospel and participate in the prayer and worship of the Catholic Church.

Our prayer and liturgical life is rooted in the traditions, practices and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church and is informed by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales and the Catholic Education Service Prayer and Liturgy Directory.

St Philomena’s seeks to create a prayerful community in which all members are encouraged to grow in faith, develop a deeper relationship with God and live out the Gospel through love and service.

The Purpose of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy enable our school community to:

- encounter and develop a relationship with God;
- praise and give thanks to God;
- listen to and reflect upon the Word of God;
- celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- participate in the prayer and worship of the Catholic Church;
- grow in knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and tradition;
- develop a sense of belonging to the school, parish and wider Church;
- reflect on how faith informs our choices and actions; and
- respond to Christ’s call to love and serve others.

Prayer and liturgy also provide opportunities for silence, reflection, celebration, wonder and thanksgiving.

Statement of Requirement

As a Catholic school, St Philomena’s provides daily opportunities for prayer and liturgy in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church.

Prayer and liturgy are distinct from Religious Education and are not curriculum teaching time allocated to Religious Education.

The celebration of prayer and liturgy follows the liturgical year and provides opportunities for pupils to experience the richness of Catholic prayer and worship, including Scripture, silence, reflection, traditional prayers, music, symbols and celebration.

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from acts of collective worship. The school will provide appropriate information and support regarding this right where requested.

Principles of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy at St Philomena's will:

- place Christ at the centre of our school community;
- be faithful to the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church;
- reflect the liturgical year;
- be rooted in Scripture and the person of Jesus Christ;
- be appropriate to the age, ability and spiritual development of pupils;
- provide opportunities for active and meaningful participation;
- include opportunities for silence, reflection and response;
- enable pupils to develop progressively in confidence and responsibility;
- provide opportunities for pupils to prepare and lead prayer and liturgy;
- connect prayer and worship with the lived experience of pupils; and
- encourage pupils to take what they have experienced into their daily lives.

The school recognises that pupils and adults may be at different stages of faith development. Prayer and liturgy will therefore be welcoming, respectful and accessible while remaining authentically Catholic.

Forms of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy at St Philomena's include a range of experiences appropriate to the age and needs of pupils.

These include:

- daily classroom prayer;
- whole-school prayer and liturgy;
- class and year-group liturgies;
- celebration of Mass;
- Scripture-based prayer;
- pupil-led prayer and liturgy;
- traditional Catholic prayers;
- prayer through music and song;
- opportunities for silence and reflection;
- seasonal prayer and liturgy;
- prayer associated with the Sacraments;
- prayer for the needs of others and the wider world; and
- opportunities for personal prayer and reflection.

The Eucharist holds a central place in the life of the Catholic Church. Pupils regularly participate in the celebration of Mass and are supported in understanding its significance within Catholic life.

The Liturgical Year

Prayer and liturgy are planned in accordance with the Church's liturgical year.

The school gives appropriate recognition to:

- Advent;
- Christmas;
- Lent;
- Holy Week;
- Easter;
- Pentecost;
- Ordinary Time;
- feast days and celebrations of saints;
- Holy Days of Obligation; and
- significant celebrations within the life of the school and parish.

The life and example of St Philomena are also reflected appropriately within the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

The Pattern of Prayer and Liturgy

Where appropriate, prayer and liturgy may follow the pattern:

Gather

We come together as a community and prepare ourselves to encounter God. This may include music, silence, a welcome, religious symbols, candles or the Sign of the Cross.

Word

We listen to Scripture or another appropriate reading and reflect on God's Word and its meaning for our lives.

Response

We respond through prayer, silence, reflection, music, actions, symbols and participation.

Send

We are sent out to live our faith through our words, choices and actions, taking the message of Christ into our daily lives.

This pattern is flexible and is adapted according to the type of prayer or liturgy being celebrated.

Prayer Throughout the School Day

Prayer forms part of the daily rhythm of life at St Philomena's.

Opportunities for prayer include:

- morning prayer;
- grace before meals;
- prayer at the end of the school day;
- classroom prayer and reflection;
- prayer during assemblies and meetings;
- prayers for particular intentions;
- seasonal prayer; and
- opportunities for spontaneous and personal prayer.

Each classroom has a prayer focus area which provides a dedicated space for prayer and reflection. These may include a Bible, crucifix or religious image, candle, seasonal symbols and prayer intentions.

Pupil Participation and Leadership

Pupils are encouraged to participate actively in prayer and liturgy and to take increasing responsibility as they grow in confidence and maturity.

Opportunities include:

- reading Scripture;
- preparing and sharing prayers;
- leading responses;
- preparing reflections;
- choosing appropriate music and hymns;
- contributing to prayer spaces;
- leading elements of class and whole-school prayer; and
- taking responsibility for aspects of liturgical celebrations.

The school seeks to develop pupils' capacity to participate, prepare and lead prayer and liturgy progressively according to their age and ability.

Annual Plan of Provision

The school maintains an Annual Plan of Provision for prayer and liturgy.

The plan provides an overview of the school's prayer and liturgical life throughout the year and includes:

- the seasons of the liturgical year;
- significant feasts and celebrations;
- opportunities for the celebration of Mass;
- opportunities for the Sacraments;
- daily and regular prayer;
- opportunities for pupil participation and leadership;
- links with the parish and clergy;
- staff formation and induction; and
- opportunities for monitoring and evaluation.

The Annual Plan of Provision is reviewed regularly to ensure that prayer and liturgy remain purposeful, balanced and faithful to the Catholic life and mission of the school.

The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring that prayer and liturgy remain central to the Catholic life and mission of St Philomena's.

Governors will:

- ensure that prayer and liturgy reflect the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church;
- ensure that provision is consistent with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Prayer and Liturgy Directory;
- ensure that a named member of staff has responsibility for coordinating prayer and liturgy;

- support appropriate resources and funding;
- ensure that this policy is reviewed regularly; and
- monitor the Catholic life of the school, including prayer and liturgy.

The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher ensures that prayer and liturgy are central to the daily life and mission of the school.

The Headteacher will:

- support the development of a strong Catholic prayer and liturgical life;
- work closely with the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator;
- ensure that staff receive appropriate support and formation;
- ensure that suitable resources and opportunities are available; and
- support effective links with the parish, clergy and diocesan partners.

The Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

The Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

The Coordinator will:

- develop and maintain the Annual Plan of Provision;
- ensure that prayer and liturgy reflect the liturgical year;
- support appropriate opportunities for Mass and the Sacraments;
- provide guidance and resources for staff;
- support pupils in preparing and leading prayer and liturgy;
- support the induction and formation of staff;
- maintain links with parish, clergy and diocesan support;
- monitor and evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy; and
- contribute to the ongoing development of the school's Catholic life.

Staff Formation

St Philomena's recognises the important role that all staff play in the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

New staff receive appropriate induction into the Catholic mission and prayer life of the school.

Ongoing opportunities for formation and professional development are provided to support staff in developing their understanding of Catholic prayer, worship and liturgical practice.

Staff are encouraged to participate fully in the prayer and liturgical life of the school and to model a prayerful and respectful response to worship.

Links with Parish and the Wider Church

St Philomena's values its relationship with the parish, clergy and the wider Catholic community.

The school seeks opportunities to:

- celebrate Mass and other liturgies;
- support pupils' preparation for and celebration of the Sacraments;

- participate in parish celebrations and events;
- welcome members of the clergy and parish community into school; and
- work with diocesan partners and the Catholic Education Service where appropriate.

These relationships strengthen the connection between the school, parish and wider Church.

Inclusion and Respect

St Philomena's is a Catholic community in which every person is valued and respected.

Prayer and liturgy are authentically Catholic while recognising the diverse experiences of members of our school community, including those who are practising Catholics, those whose experience of faith begins within school, members of other Christian traditions and those of other faiths or no religious affiliation.

All members of the community are treated with dignity and respect.

Resourcing Prayer and Liturgy

The school provides appropriate resources to support meaningful prayer and liturgy.

Resources may include:

- Scripture;
- Catholic prayer books and resources;
- liturgical artefacts and symbols;
- music and hymn resources;
- materials for pupil-led prayer;
- seasonal resources; and
- dedicated prayer and reflection spaces.

The school environment reflects its Catholic identity through appropriate religious imagery, displays and opportunities for prayer and reflection.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Prayer and liturgy are monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure that they remain central to the Catholic mission of the school and continue to support the spiritual development of pupils.

Monitoring considers:

- the quality and appropriateness of prayer and liturgy;
- fidelity to Catholic teaching and practice;
- the participation and response of pupils;
- opportunities for pupil leadership;
- the quality of prayer environments and resources;
- the implementation of the Annual Plan of Provision;
- staff formation and support;
- links with parish and clergy; and
- feedback from pupils, staff, governors and the wider school community.

Evaluation is used to celebrate strengths and identify areas for development.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated where necessary to reflect:

- the Catholic mission and vision of St Philomena's;
- the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church;
- the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Prayer and Liturgy Directory;
- guidance from the Archdiocese of Southwark;
- the developing needs of the school community; and
- findings from monitoring and evaluation.

This policy is intended to support a prayerful, Christ-centred community in which pupils and adults encounter Christ, grow in faith and are inspired to live out the Gospel through love and service.