OUR LADY AND ST KENELM RC SCHOOL

'Bringing out the best in everyone, for the benefit of all, in the Spirit of Christ.'

Liturgy and Prayer Policy

Introduction

This Policy is in line with communal acts of prayer and the liturgical celebrations of the Church that will form part of everyday life of Our Lady and St Kenelm Catholic School.

"For me prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look toward heaven it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy."
(St Therese of Lisieux, Story of a Soul)

Intentions of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and Liturgy at OLSK Catholic School should provide an opportunity for every member of the school community to:

- Pray by giving praise thanks and intercession to God using traditional prayers of the Catholic Church and many other sources of prayer that will enable this to take place.
- Come to know and acknowledge the presence of God who is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Continue to nurture a relationship with God through words, symbols, song, gestures and silence.
- Take part in an educational experience that is rooted in prayer and the worship of God.
- Contemplate the mystery and transcendence of God who is ever close to us and ever beyond us.
- Develop a sense of wonder and awe at the presence of God amongst us and the gift of life itself.
- Explore the beliefs of the Catholic faith community and their own beliefs.
- Experience what it means to belong or take part in the worshipping community of the Church.
- Acknowledge joys and sorrows, the ordinary and darker side of life as part of a relationship with God.
- Learn how the Liturgy of the Church is structured and the meaning of the different parts of the liturgical rites.
- Be able to make links between communal prayer and liturgy and the daily life.

Legal Requirements

Circular 1/94 sets out the current legal criteria for providing Liturgy & Prayer in schools. This states that a daily act of worship should take place at any time during the day either as a whole school or phase or class activity. Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship and the school is duty bound to accept this right. However, liturgy and prayer are such an integral part of school life that parents and indeed prospective parents need to be made aware that it can never be confined to "timetabled slots" but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those specifically structured.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to make arrangements for Liturgy & Prayer after consultation with the head teacher. In a Catholic, Voluntary Aided School, governors must also take account of the School Trust Deed, which states that acts of Liturgy & Prayer shall be consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church. Foundation governors have a particular responsibility for seeing, so far as is practicable, that the Catholic character of the school is reflected in Collective Acts of Worship.

The daily Act of Worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and should not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum. It must be distinctive and be able to be identified as such if it is to meet legal requirements. The governing body also has the discretion to allow Liturgy & Prayer to take place outside of the school for example in the church for special occasions.

Section 5 inspections are required to report on whether the school fulfils its statutory responsibility for Liturgy & Prayer. The Catholic School Inspection will inspect the content of Liturgy & Prayer.

Diocesan Requirements

The policy of the Archdiocese has always acknowledged that Prayer and Liturgy in schools must be planned to meet local needs of the school community. It is the responsibility of the head teacher and governing body to discover the best possible provision that could be made for the school community. In making those decisions the following needs to be carefully considered.

- Opportunities on a regular basis for the whole school to gather together for Prayer and Liturgy.
- Opportunities for phase and class acts of Prayer and Liturgy to take place.
- Prayer to be integral part of the beginning and end of each day for all members of the school community.

- Prayer and Liturgy is rooted in the Liturgical Calendar of the Church. This should include seasons, solemnities, feasts, memorials of saints and the ferial celebration of the Church's Liturgy.
- Prayer in the classroom, led by staff & the children, and in assemblies should always include the use of symbols and a focal point for prayer which should be appropriate to the liturgical season and content of that time of prayer.
- Staff at all levels of the school community should be involved in leading and participating in Prayer and Liturgy.
- Students should actively participate in prayer and liturgical actions and where appropriate lead the time of worship.
- Prayer and Liturgy is sometimes influenced by aspects of the RE Curriculum and other areas of the National curriculum. This reminds us that whilst Prayer and Liturgy is always concerned with nurturing our relationship with God it also takes on an important educational dimension.
- The celebration of Mass should be a regular part of the school's provision for Liturgy. In the Eucharist the school celebrates its Catholic identity and acknowledges that the source and summit of its life is found in the offering of Jesus Christ.
- Provision for Prayer and Liturgy should take into consideration the age and maturity of the students and appropriately provides for their different needs.
- Opportunities for Prayer and Liturgy should provide the school community with a chance to experience a variety of forms of prayer that help each individual foster their own relationship with God in the school community.
- Ensure that at least fifteen minutes each day is set aside for Prayer and Liturgy.

Structuring Prayer and Liturgy

In every act of communal Prayer and Liturgy a five-fold structure is to be observed. The structure is based upon the principals of gathering together, listening, responding and going forth.

Gathering together

In our coming together for Prayer and Liturgy we acknowledge the presence of Christ with us in our act of gathering together. Our time of prayer is not simply personal, based upon our individual relationship with God, but it is also communal, for our life of faith is shaped through the faith we share in the community of the Church.

- Music, song, lighting of candles, and use of incense, procession, and blessing with holy water can all contribute towards helping the community enter into a time of Prayer together.

- At Morning Prayer, the greeting, "Lord, open our lips; and we shall praise your name", might be used as an appropriate greeting.
- The use of a psalm as a gathering prayer should be considered. Psalms 145 – 150 are particularly appropriate as they remind us that our duty is to praise God when we come together to pray.
- Consideration should be given to seating and posture for prayer and Liturgy so that the community has an awareness that it has gathered together to pray.
- The use of the focal point connected to the seasons of the Church's year and the appropriate feast day will be helpful in support of the gathering together to pray.
- The leadership of the time of prayer and Liturgy may be shared, where appropriately with the students.

Listening

Our time of Prayer and Liturgy is about deepening our relationship with God and with one another.

- In every act of communal Prayer and Liturgy God's Word should be proclaimed.
- In class prayer time, assemblies and other non-Eucharistic liturgies, consideration should be given to using scripture readings outlined in the Morning and Evening Prayer of the Church or from the Mass of the day or a reading closely associated with the current liturgical season, feast day or memorial.
- The Word of God should be proclaimed from the Bible or the appropriate liturgical text books including the Lectionary and the Book of Gospels.
- The reader should always have a good understanding of the meaning of the text. The reading in its entirety should be proclaimed by one reader, unless it is to be broken down into speech parts for the different voices in the reading.
- Consider other ways in which the reading can be effectively proclaimed. It might be accompanied by sign language, symbols or perhaps using images using interactive ICT.
- The reader should always clearly announce where the reading comes from and should use the appropriate liturgical conclusion to which the assembly makes the appropriate response. If the gospel is proclaimed it should be accompanied by the action of making the sign of the cross on the forehead, lips and heart.
- A few moments of silence should be given following the reading to allow everybody to reflect on what they have just heard.
- During assemblies and whole school non-Eucharistic liturgies the lectern might be used to proclaim the Word of God.

Responding

One of the oldest and best definitions of prayer is: "raising the mind and heart to God." This definition reminds us that at the heart of our communal
Prayer and Liturgy is a relationship with God who has been made known to us as a relationship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In our responding to god's presence in our gathering together and listening to the Word of God, we use a variety of forms of prayer. These include praise, thanks, intercession and contrition.

Use a variety of forms of prayer that provide opportunities to give praise and thanks to God for the many blessings God bestows on us.

The prayer of Zachariah and the prayer of Mary in the Magnificat are examples of praise and thanks.

- Look at a variety of traditional prayers of the Church and those of the saints and highlight those which have moments of praise and thanksgiving. The Canticle of creation by St. Francis of Assisi is a classic example, but there are many more in the treasury of the Church.
- Use interactive images with ICT to help younger children appreciate the wider world to give praise and thanks for and also intercession.
- Ensure that prayers of intercession are not limited to personal needs.
- The formulae used for the general intercessions in the celebration of the Mass may be very helpful. To pray for the Church, the world, other needs and local needs.
- Prayers of contrition can be based around the different traditional prayers of the Church including the various forms of the penitential rite used at the celebration of Mass and the psalms, especially Psalm 50.
- Responding should include some time for personal reflection and silence. Providing opportunities for groups of students to learn simple listening and breathing skills will be good in helping them to enter into meditative and reflective prayer. Good posture for this type of prayer also needs to be taught. Indicating the need to sit in an upright position with feet firmly of the ground and hands held comfortable in the lap.
- Using guided meditations taking scenes from the gospels can aid this type of prayer and help students enter into a scene from the life of Christ and let the words of the gospel speak to them in a new way.
- The use of appropriate background music and a symbolic focus is also beneficial to reflective prayer.
- The prayer of the Rosary can also be introduced through this type of reflection and meditation. Encouraging those taking part in the time of prayer to think

about the scene reflected in the mystery and to use the traditional prayers that accompany it as background to the meditation and reflection that takes place.

- The use of symbols, actions and other gestures including song and where appropriate, liturgical dance is encouraged to emphasise the response that we make in prayer to the action and presence of God in our lives.

Go Forth

Here children come to reflect on what they would like to hold on to, to understand and express how faith is lived out in the school community, at home, in the parish, the local and wider community. They identify ways of applying faith to life.

- Request to do something linked with the word e.g. prayer, deed, to pass something on.
- Memento as a reminder e.g. card, shell, prayer, candle
- Mission through personal example i.e. forgiveness
- Spread the word (amongst others)
- Shake hands
- Ensure pupils follow through on what they are asked to do
- Words of commitment
- Reflect (at another time) on how their 'mission' has impacted on others.
- Find a few moments in the day to say thank you to God.
- Tell your mum/dad you love her/him
- Care for God's world by picking up a piece of litter
- Remember to say please and thank you
- Greet someone with a smile
- Do something helpful at home
- Invite someone lonely or isolated to join you at break time.
- 'Go forth!' Serve! Proclaim! Witness!
- Make an internal promise
- Make a vocal promise
- Contribute to class book of ideas

Inspire to Action

All who are members of the school community are invited to constantly rediscover what it is to follow the example of Christ and to give witness to the centrality of Gospel values. The school continues the mission of Christ entrusted to the Church to 'go and teach' and seeks to foster and promote Christian spirituality within an ethos of inclusivity and pastoral care. The vision that underpins all aspects of life in the Catholic school is the dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God.

Pupils readily reflect on their experience of prayer and liturgy with confidence and in detail. They can articulate clearly the ways in which these experiences have shaped how they think about themselves and the world and how this has inspired them to action.

Prayer Progression

As part of our Catholic faith life, the children at Our Lady and St Kenelm's pray daily. As the children move up the school from Pre School to Year 6 , the prayers they learn develop and help to deepen their understanding of the power and spiritual enrichment attributed to daily worship.

Year groups have their own prayer books which are used to learn and remember a growing number of prayers.

Class prayer books can be found on the Liturgy and Prayer area of the website: https://www.our-lady.dudley.sch.uk/liturgy-prayer

Celebration of the Eucharist

The celebration of the Eucharist is given a place of great importance in the life of OLSK Catholic School.

The Eucharist is celebrated every Thursday in school & during special liturgical feasts and celebrations. It should not be merely seen as a liturgical highpoint at certain times during the year, but as an essential ingredient to the life of a Catholic community.

We also celebrate the Eucharist in Family Mass throughout the year, on a Sunday. In planning when the celebration of the Eucharist should take place the following is considered:

- The beginning and end of the academic terms and school year as moments of dedication and thanksgiving to God.
- The major liturgical seasons of the Church year especially Advent, Lent, Eastertide and Pentecost.
- Holy days of Obligation and other Feasts of the Lord
- Patronal or School Feast days
- Opportunities to participate in a ferial (weekday) celebration of Mass from time to time

Whole school Masses are celebrated mainly in school with the whole school coming together. Other Masses take place at Our Lady and St Kenelm Church. These masses

include Family Masses every half term, Reconciliation services, Holy Communion and Confirmation Masses.

When the Eucharist is celebrated in school, this means that the hall will be used for the celebration. Care and consideration will need to be given to the layout of the room, the positioning of the altar, lectern, cross and the seating arrangements. All the appropriate symbols associated with the celebration of Mass will need to be present. These will include candles, lectionary, altar cloths, sacred vessels, vestments and appropriate liturgical books.

Planning the Celebration of Mass

Which Mass should be celebrated?

In making preparations for the celebration of the Eucharist in school consideration should always be given to when the celebration is actually taking place within the liturgical year. The choice of readings and the prayers used for the Mass should take into consideration the season of the year, whether the day for the celebration of Mass is a solemnity, a feast day, a memorial of a saint or an ordinary weekday.

What Readings should be used?

On a day designated as a solemnity or feast the readings and prayers should always be proper for that day. This enables the community gathered together to appreciate that the Eucharist is being celebrated within the liturgical time of the year. Memorial days provide an opportunity to honour the lives of the saints and seek their intercession. The use of liturgical prayers associated with these saints is encouraged. On ferial days there is an opportunity to consider the use of other prayers and readings. However, we should never simply ignore the readings that have been set aside for the current day of the week.

The Directory for Masses with Children indicates that the Apostles Creed can be used at Masses on Solemnities where children make up the majority of people participating in the celebration of Mass.

The General Intercessions that accompany the Liturgy of the Word at Mass should follow the formulae outlined in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

- The intention should be for the Church, the world, other needs and local needs.
- The intention to pray should be announced followed by a period of silence and the response then made.
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What Music should be used?

The use of music during the celebration of Mass needs serious consideration to be given to it. Planning music for Mass should not begin with favourite hymns known

by the students, but by singing the parts of the Eucharistic Liturgy that should always be sung. These always include the Gospel Acclamation, Holy, holy, Memorial Acclamation and the Amen at the end of the Doxology. It is also desirable that the responsorial psalm is sung as psalms are a book of songs and not simply poetry that is to be read. Against this background other music for the celebration of Mass can be chosen.

- If a gathering song is used at the beginning of the Mass it should be appropriate to the season and reflect what is being celebrated in the Mass.
- Different forms of hymns, songs should be used reflecting our cultural heritage as well as those which students find easy to sing.
- The Gloria should be sung on Holy Days of Obligation, Feasts of the Lord and other important feast days. It should not simply be sung at any Mass.
- The Lamb of God can be sung especially when it covers the fraction of the sacred host for Holy Communion.
- The choice of hymn and music at Holy Communion should always reflect what is taking place at this time and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
- Adding music and hymns to parts of the Mass where it has not been appointed should be avoided as this can detract from the gesture and prayer of that moment.

What Ministries should be used in School Masses?

The Eucharistic Liturgy demands the full, conscious and active participation of everybody gathered for the celebration. It does not mean that everybody has an individual task to do, but that they are able to participate in the celebration at an appropriate level.

- The priest should exercise his ministry of presiding over the celebration of the Eucharist and teaching through the homily.
- Ministers of the Word should be appropriately prepared and should understand the Word that is being proclaimed. The text of a reading should be read by one reader unless it is split up in different voice parts.
- The Gospel should be proclaimed by the deacon or the priest. It should never be omitted and should never be replaced by a dramatisation.
- Appropriately trained and commissioned extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist may assist in distributing Holy Communion.
- Altar servers and musicians are encouraged to exercise their ministries to the full in School Masses.
- Sometimes symbols, artefacts and students work are brought to the altar. These should never be placed on the altar where the Eucharist is to be celebrated as this should be left clear for the gifts of bread and wine alone.
- Other symbols could be brought to the altar at the beginning of the Mass.

- It is advisable that the procession of gifts at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist emphasises the offering of bread and wine as the sign of the offering of the people. Sometimes this symbolic action is lost when many additional items are brought in the procession of gifts.
- As part of the procession the altar cloths and candles may be brought forward to emphasise the Eucharist that is about to be celebrated.
- Everybody should be prepared to join in the responses of the Mass.
- Children will be introduced to the different responses at an appropriate level through their work in Religious Education.

How does Prayer and Liturgy Contribute towards Provision for SMSC?

Spiritual Development

- Reflecting upon, celebrating and practicing their own individual and shared beliefs and acknowledging their personal identity before God.
- Relationships with others. The worth of others, belonging to a community, trusting God and other people, sharing in the communion of the saints, recognising that everybody is made in the image and likeness of God.
- Self Knowledge. Coming into the presence of God and being aware of our self worth before the one who loves, creates and redeems us.
- Recognising strengths and weaknesses in our relationship with God and others.
- Feelings and Emotions. Prayer and Liturgy awake a variety of feelings and emotions within us. We bring the emotional and personal side of our lives as individuals and as a community of faith to Prayer and Liturgy.
- Sense of Transcendence, Awe, Wonder and Mystery. Liturgy and Prayer raise our minds and hearts to God who is ever close to us and known by us, and yet is ever beyond us. In Prayer, we enter into a relationship with the known and unknown. In the Eucharist, we celebrate the wonder and awe of God who created the entire universe coming to us and remember that we are always seeking him who is seeking us.
- Quality of the Inner Life – Being rather than doing. In Liturgy and Prayer we are invited to come into the presence of God to be still, reflect and mediate on the presence of God and the mystery of our lives.
- Appreciation of the Aesthetic, Imaginative and Expressive in life. The use of art, music, dance, song and symbol can capture something of the beauty, transcendence and mystery that we find in our relationship with God. The symbols of the Eucharistic liturgy can speak of this particularly well if they are appropriately used.

Moral Development

- Reflecting on individual values and those held by the Catholic community at large.
- Recognising the tensions between grace and nature, goodness and evil and the tension of sin in our lives tempered by the mercy and forgiveness of God.
- The support of prayer and Liturgy in the formation of conscience
- The support of the worshipping community on decision making and building up the values and attitudes of the individual.
- The action of the Holy Spirit leading, guiding and informing the actions of the community and individuals.

Social Development

- Considering individual and communal roles in Prayer and Liturgy
- Praying for the needs of others
- Recognising our belonging to a Universal and Local Church
- Recognising a shared "communion and mission" with others.

Cultural Development

- Recognising different cultural traditions reflected in Prayer and Liturgy including our own.
- Importance of belonging to a multi-cultural Church
- The provision of art, music, language, dance and symbol to build up the Body of Christ.
- The Eucharist – Though many parts, we make up One Body.

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