



## Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy

“Loving, Learning and looking forward with Christ.”

### St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Multi Academy Trust

#### Prayer and Liturgy Policy

***“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God.”***

St John Damascene

#### **Our Mission**

Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham and a member of St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Multi Academy Trust where we are *forming pilgrims of hope with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for justice*. Inspired by St Gabriel the Archangel, we live this mission by standing in God’s presence with confidence and humility, speaking with peace and courage, believing in the impossible, listening with love, and serving a mission greater than ourselves.

Our school is a Catholic school, founded on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Specifically, Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy, seeks to live as we grow and learn together in Christ’ as our guiding principle. This policy document should be considered in the light of our School Mission Statement which outlines all that underpins our work.

Our Lady and Saint Benedict is a caring, Catholic school community and we teach our children that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. We aim to foster an awareness and understanding of the presence of God in each individual child’s life and to encourage a personal response to that presence.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school is concerned with giving praise, thanks and reverence to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God’s invitation to enter into communion with Him, made possible through the human and divine work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer and Liturgy, however, should also be used as a vehicle to promote the teachings of the scriptures, consider how to care for and respect our environment, recognise our God-given gifts and talents and understand how to live as Christians in love and peace, by valuing the diversity and unity of humankind, through loving tenderly, acting justly and walking humbly in the footsteps of Christ.

***‘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.)

## **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.

At Our Lady and Saint Benedict the responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy rests with the Governing Body; however, in the life of the school, it is predominantly led and managed by the RE Lead and the Principal, with each staff member and child taking some ownership and responsibility for prayer and liturgy (See appendix A for responsibilities).

## **Rationale**

Prayer and liturgy will be an educational and spiritual experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. At Our Lady and Saint Benedict we will continue to foster and deepen our children's personal relationship with God our Father daily in prayer. We do this by helping them to become aware of God's presence in their lives and of His love for them, by leading them to respond to Him in a manner suited to their age. This may be in one of the following ways:

- Prayer of silence
- Spontaneous prayer
- Praying through gesture or action
- Formal prayer
- Guided meditations

Prayer will not be confined to an act of worship. Children are encouraged to pray in the morning and in the evening. Worship in Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition and faith system.

## **The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy**

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery and transcendence of God
- To reflect on spiritual, moral and ethical issues
- To explore, reflect upon and act on their own beliefs
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared Christian values
- To enrich religious experience
- To develop a liturgical understanding of the Catholic Church's context and structure
- To teach the meaning and purpose of prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition
- To take a full and active role in Prayer and Liturgy
- To value the wonder and awe of God's creation

*All acts of Worship in this school will:*

- Give glory, honour, thanks and praise to God
- Be a spiritual experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- Give children positive liturgical experiences appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.
- Be appropriately paced and offer a range of spiritual and reflective experiences offered in a variety of groupings and settings.

## **A Worshipping community**

Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy is a worshipping community: we place prayer, worship and liturgical celebration at the very heart of our expression of Catholic tradition. We actively strive to provide a varied experience of worship and to promote engagement through the creative contributions of both pupils and staff.

We understand that, through prayer and liturgy, we can develop our relationship with God and we can talk to Him in many ways. Therefore, it is our duty to provide every child with the opportunity to meet God through engagement in the spoken word, music, dance, drama, art and through silent reflection. We particularly value opportunities to nurture pupils in leading prayer and liturgy and developing prayer experiences of their own making.

We realise that, as one "instrument" of the Church, we cannot achieve this in isolation and therefore need to encourage a collaborative partnership between the home, the parish and the school. We recognise that each of these groups has a responsibility to fulfil its role and seek to support parents in this mission.

We believe that prayer and liturgy should take into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those that form part of the worshipping community in church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church

- Those from other Christian traditions, or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds

### **Linking Home-School-Parish**

Parents are acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their child, and are regularly welcomed into school to secure a strong partnership. They are invited to attend Mass, class assemblies, prayer workshops and other liturgical celebrations, along with opportunities for reflection in the form of a Class Saint prayer service. Emphasis is placed on helping them to understand the vital role they can play in teaching their children the importance of worship and developing the prayer life of their children.

Class teachers may set home learning tasks based on curriculum topics and religious learning. Parents are encouraged to support their children wherever possible; this includes sharing the Ten: Ten parent resources which reflect the weekly Sunday Gospel message. A link to the parent newsletter is sent to parents, alongside links to the parish newsletter and relevant prayers and reflections.

The Benedictines are well established within school and we seek opportunities to work with the parishioners of our parish and members of the community. Joint projects include working together to achieve the Live Simply Award, Each class has a Parish Prayer Partner that is invited to key school events and class events. The school and Parish also link together to support charities such as the Macari Centre for the homeless. We also have strong links with CAFOD and Fr. Hudson's, who come in to share assemblies, workshops and prayer services with our children.

### **Overview of prayer and liturgy provision at Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy**

In addition to the four formal prayer times throughout the school day (morning, grace before and after meals and home-time), prayer and worship is an integral part of the day at Our Lady and Saint Benedict's and is not separated from the rest of school life. Pupils all share in this important aspect of our daily experience. Children have a natural aptitude for prayer and are open to God. They respond in many ways to the world around them and their experiences at school should be full of opportunities for exploration and discovery. Teachers create an environment where these responses are developed, in recognition that they can form the beginnings of prayer. To this end, each classroom has a special prayer area that reflects the liturgical season. These spaces are intended to support pupils to initiate their own prayers. Prayer spaces in every class have age appropriate, relevant resources where children are encouraged to express their own prayer intentions, which can be shared with their class as the children wish.

The prayer and liturgy coordinator is responsible for producing an Annual Plan of Provision (APoP) before the start of each academic year. The APoP outlines the structured approach through which our Catholic school nurtures its spiritual identity and implements its faith-based mission. This document integrates the school's commitment to Catholic education by detailing the planned programme of liturgical celebrations, sacramental preparation,

prayer initiatives, religious education, and faith-based events. It aligns with the academic calendar to coordinate whole-school Masses, classroom prayer practices, liturgical training for students, and collaborative activities with the parish community. The APoP serves as a transparent roadmap, specifying timelines, responsibilities, and collaborative roles of staff, pupils, and parents in fostering an environment where Catholic values are lived and taught.

Each week pupils participate in:

- ✠ A Gospel-based Celebration of the Word to enable all children to access and reflect upon the weekend readings, planned and led by the Principal or Vice Principal (Mondays).
- ✠ Pupil prepared prayer based on class work, feast days (including Saints), liturgical season and/or virtues planned and prepared by pupils with the support of the class staff (Wednesdays) (See appendix B for progression in pupil prepared prayer).
- ✠ A whole school or Key Stage Assembly or Celebration of the Word based on the current virtues, feast days (including Saints) or liturgical season (Alternate Thursdays).
- ✠ Key Stage 'Songs of Praise' Hymn practice, led by the Music Leader and supported by Key Stage staff (Mass responses and hymns are practised and are linked to the forthcoming Mass and the liturgical calendar) (Tuesdays).
- ✠ A whole school Mass (Alternate Thursdays).
- ✠ A success assembly, recognising each child's God-given gifts and talents (Fridays).
- ✠ Daily opportunities for prayer in class and RE lessons.
- ✠ Opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the season of Advent and Lent for those children preparing to receive the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- ✠ During Advent and Lent, additional prayer services led by classes, to enable children to experience a fuller understanding of these seasonal times of preparation for Christmas and Easter.

## **Planning**

Prayer and liturgy at Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, significant liturgical dates and the curriculum.

Each act of Prayer and Liturgy follows a 4-part structure:

- 1) Gather
- 2) Word or listen
- 3) Respond

#### 4) Send

Staff and children are expected to follow this format and are encouraged to record this on the planning sheet.

- Scripture will be the focus for most acts of worship
- Prayer and Liturgy will relate to the school community in the light of the school's aims and mission, the virtues, curriculum, class saints and the liturgical calendar.
- There will be flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community.
- The school will aim to teach children the skills to enable them to prepare and evaluate worship.

### **Mass and the Eucharist**

The Mass is the source and summit of the life of the Church. The Mass, also known as the celebration of the Eucharist, is the most important action of the Church and from its celebration, the life of the Church flows. It is important therefore that the Mass is celebrated worthily and well.

Opportunities for children to participate in the Mass are given regularly (see Mass rota) parents and other members of the school and Parish communities are encouraged to attend.

Eucharistic celebrations will take the following forms:

- Fortnightly Whole school Masses and for Holy Days of Obligation and special feasts
- Children will be encouraged to participate in several school-led Sunday Masses throughout the year
- Masses for children preparing to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion and Confirmation
- Our school also take representatives from Key Stage 2 to the annual North Staffordshire Combined Schools Mass, Good Shepherd's Mass and the Deanery Vocations Mass and will take up opportunities to have an active involvement in these Masses.

### **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.

Resources are monitored by the prayer and liturgy co-ordinator and new resources are ordered, within the budget, where required. There are a wide range of resources available to aid planning for prayer and liturgy and prayer, such as assembly books, access to ten:ten resources (staff have their own log ins), artwork etc. Music resources/ CDs for prayer and liturgy are kept in the School Hall. There are also resources from the Birmingham Diocese Education Service and several Internet sites that are also a useful resource for planning; these links have been distributed to all teaching staff, with recommendations to support planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy (these are also saved for Staff's reference on the shared area of the school network). Each class has several artefacts for their prayer areas such as crucifixes, crosses, praying hands, rosary beads, statues, bibles etc. These may be share amongst staff as they wish.

### **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.

### **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.

Termly and annual monitoring schedules are completed and reviewed by the RE Lead prayer and liturgy leader, with input from SLT where required. Monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy takes place in a variety of ways: looking at class prayer, class Catholic Life Floor Books, scrutinising RE books and planning, formally and informally monitoring prayer and liturgy, pupil interviews and evidence of reflections on worship.

Termly meetings with the link governor, Teresa Hollins are scheduled and minutes from these meetings are reported and shared with the RE Lead prayer and liturgy leader, Principal, local governing body and Board of Directors. Actions from the previous minutes are discussed at the following meeting to ensure progress and impact.

The school's provision for prayer and liturgy is evaluated annually to consider how it meets the needs of pupils and whether it truly reflects the aims and mission of the school.

The RE Lead, Principal and prayer and liturgy leader, may evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy in the school by conducting informal evaluations, with the permission and consultation with staff members throughout the school year. Staff are always invited to

observe senior leader's assemblies, Celebrations of the Word and prayer times as good practice.

## **Inclusion and equal opportunities**

All children at Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy have a right to be included in accessible prayer and liturgy unless withdrawn at parental request. Inclusion of all is a cornerstone of Catholic belief and of our own school mission statement. Prayer and liturgy should play an active role in developing an inclusive attitude in the children themselves. Staff and Pupils who form our school Communities are drawn from a variety of cultural backgrounds and Religious Traditions.

Our schools are enriched daily by the diverse experiences and breadth of perspectives they bring. The respectful recognition of the common humanity which we all share, is the foundation for our life together. That recognition is expressed above all in a profound respect for the dignity and uniqueness of each human person which itself is rooted in the fundamental Christian belief that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and it is our shared humanity in which Jesus shared,

Times of Prayer provide a space for all to reflect on their spiritual journey, be nourished by what they see and hear and be encouraged to live life in the service of others. People from other Religions are drawn to our schools. Pupils and families of other Religious Traditions do make a vital contribution to the life of our school by broadening our world view and through integration. However, we should not invite students from other faiths to read the scriptures or to lead prayer or to make the sign of the cross as this is to ask them to step outside that which is believed and considered acceptable by their own Religious Tradition. Pupils from other faiths will bring to prayer joys, hopes and sorrows alongside Christian Colleagues and will make prayerful intentions of their own.. We should not ask Non-Christian students to say Mass responses, prayers or to perform gestures e.g. praying hands and genuflecting that do not correspond with their own faith. Instead we should say, it is now our time to spend in the presence of God, we ask you to reflect in silence together and show respectful presence at this time, you may ask to reflect on the experience what it means to them in their life and how they may take forward a message to respond to living a good a life. We ask all staff in our school, regardless of faith, to be witnesses to the living faith and to facilitate prayer. We must ensure that the texts and objects used in our prayer, liturgy and celebration of the word are purely Roman Catholic in nature. Whilst we might show children items from other Religions in Catholic prayer and liturgy must be purely Catholic. Therefore during Mass we must only ask that students who are Christian (followers of Christ) can read the Holy Scripture, lead intercessions and present the word of God. Students who are proclaiming the word of God must read clearly to ensure that the word of God is heard by all. This may require several practices and we would only ask pupils from y3 – y6 to read the Mass. This includes the first reading, second reading, psalm and bidding prayers. It is deemed inappropriate to ask a student from another faith to read from the Christian Holy bible.

## **Health and safety**

It is the responsibility of class teachers to follow school health and safety procedures. Lighted candles should only be used under adult supervision during Masses and acts of worship and a safety lighter should be safely stored away from children. Class teachers in EYFS, KS1 and lower KS2 should use battery operated candles in class, but real candles should be used at Mass. There is a risk assessment for Mass available on request.

### **RE Leader: Mrs Exon**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

This policy was agreed by the Directors in September 2025

This policy will be reviewed September 2028

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of the Board of Directors).

## **Appendix A**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

## **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.

## **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.

## **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
- 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.

**Appendix B**

**Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy**

**Progression in Child Led Prayer and Worship**

**See accompanying document attached**

## Appendix C

### Common Prayers

#### Prayers to be known by phase

Age Phase	4-5 (EYFS)	5-7 (KS1)	7-9 (Lower KS2)	9-11 (Upper KS2)	11 – 14 (KS3)
Prayers	<a href="#">The Sign of the Cross</a> <a href="#">The Lords Prayer</a> <a href="#">Hail Mary</a>	<a href="#">Morning Offering - KS1</a> <a href="#">Grace before meals – KS1</a> <a href="#">Grace after meals – KS1</a> <a href="#">Prayer at the end of the day – KS1</a> <a href="#">Glory Be</a>	<a href="#">Morning Offering – KS2</a> <a href="#">Grace before meals - KS2</a> <a href="#">Grace after meals – KS2</a> <a href="#">Prayer at the end of the day – KS2</a> <a href="#">The Apostles' Creed</a> <a href="#">An Act of Contrition</a> <a href="#">Angel of God</a> <a href="#">The Prayer of St Richard of Chichester</a> <a href="#">Act of Faith</a> <a href="#">Act of Hope</a> <a href="#">Act of Love</a>	<a href="#">The Rosary</a> <a href="#">The Magnificat</a> <a href="#">Come, Holy Spirit</a>	<a href="#">The Benedictus</a> <a href="#">The Angelus</a> <a href="#">Hail Holy Queen</a> <a href="#">The Memorare</a> <a href="#">Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you</a> <a href="#">Eternal Rest</a> <a href="#">Diocesan Prayer for Vocations</a>