



“The glory of God is
a human being fully
alive!”

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Collective Worship policy 2025-2027

St Joseph's Catholic High School

Prayer to St. Joseph the Worker

O God, the Creator of all things, You have laid the law of labour upon the human race. Grant, we beseech You, that by the example and protection of St. Joseph we may perform the work You command and attain to the reward You promise.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen

Our School Mission Statement

'Unlocking Belief in All'

Our School Vision is to become a...

Catholic Community. Christ presence comes through us - we have to love our students but more importantly, students should know we love them. If we are a school, it follows that we are a...

Learning Community. Learning is at the heart of what we do. We want our school to be a place where outstanding learning takes place. The students learn, the parents learn and we as staff learn. As professionals, we are responsible for setting the culture and the climate - their learning culture is down to us. We want to be the best school we can possibly be which means - the best in the country. To do that, it follows that we need to be a

Listening community. St Joseph was the man who listened to the angels - we listen to the students, the parents, each other. If we listen hard enough to them, we will know how to make this the best school we can possibly be.

Introduction & Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirements that there must be a daily act of worship for all students. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all students, or separate acts of worship in school groups. We believe that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said by either the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement; Catholic worship is where all members of the community participate in thought, word, and deed for the greater good of our Catholic community, in all uses of the meaning of the word "Catholic". We also acknowledge that collective worship and assemblies are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

Collective worship is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. It is concerned with the revelation of God's presence so that praise, honour and thanksgiving may be given to Him. We aim to strengthen this Eucharistic community, which is called together to give witness to Jesus Christ. Collective worship is the community's response to God, which invites us to enter into a loving relationship with Him, made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, "on a special occasion".

In this school, the responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Head Teacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship. However, given the importance of Collective Worship in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

Aims of Collective Worship

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

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Collective worship enables all members of the community to:

- Worship God and contemplate His mysteries
- Consider and celebrate our Christian values
- Develop a sense of enquiry and to encourage a search for human meaning
- Unite our worshipping Eucharistic community
- Develop an awareness of the presence of God in others and in oneself
- Consider spiritual and moral issues
- Develop a sense of belonging and a sense of community
- To foster and nurture relationships
- Grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding
- Develop the experience and skills of prayer
- Reflect upon our own individual faith journeys
- Extend our Christian understanding of scripture and applying to events in our British and international society.

Principles

Collective worship aims to be memorable and enjoyable. It is designed to actively engage students. It is resourced and well planned with the promotion of Christian values been at the heart of worship. It is also flexible, able to respond to special occasions and unforeseen events e.g. a time of disaster or of celebration. It should be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants. It should be clear in its liturgical focus and varied in its delivery. It should relate to the age, ability and cultural background of students.

We promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. Christian values are embedded in our school and in our worship and we teach and encourage students to respect one another and to respect and tolerate difference, especially those of a different faith or no faith. It is indeed our most fundamental responsibility to keep our students safe and prepare them for life in modern multi-cultural Britain and globally.

We recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for children and so should be addressed as a safeguarding concern. We also recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect our students and this must be taken into account in our approach to collective worship.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the policy is to reflect on how worship is an integral part of school life, central to the Catholic Tradition and aligns with the school mission of 'Unlocking Belief in All'.

St Joseph's offers an education with a solid foundation of Christian values. We expect the very best from each and every student and seek to be a community where all are valued. The school Mission statement and vision underpins all relationships in the school. We find God by the presence of each other.

The policy supports this vision as a community and ensures that all within it develop their personal relationship with God. St Joseph's provides many opportunities, both formal and informal, for private prayer and collective worship.

In St Joseph's, responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the governing body after consultation with the Head Teacher and Chaplain.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of St Joseph's

We endorse the belief that collective worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in Church
- Those for whom St Joseph's may be their first and only experience of Church
- Those from other Christian traditions, or none

- Those from other faith backgrounds who are part of our wider community, whether they are British or of other nationality

Organisation

All students are informed about the opportunities that are available to them, to learn about and from collective worship in all lessons particularly RE, tutor time and assemblies. They are also encouraged to consider how they can take an active role in collective worship.

Currently daily prayers are offered at the beginning of every day, during form time, before lunch and at the end of the school day. All R.E lessons will start with prayer. In tutor groups lead prayer is led by students and staff in accordance with the weekly prayer theme or prayer booklet.

On a weekly basis the staff briefing opens with a prayer and reflection led by different the Head teacher. There is a weekly year group assembly with the St Joseph's prayer theme and five whole school masses are celebrated each year with students. In addition all students will attend a House mass during the school year. We also aim to provide other masses throughout the year to celebrate other feasts or Holy Days of Obligations.

Staff meetings, CPD, Senior and Associate Leadership Team meetings and all examinations begin with a prayer or reflection. Middle Leaders meeting, reflections are led by Heads of Department or Heads of Year and relate to the theme of the week.

At the beginning of each month there is a prayer in the prayer booklet for students and staff to reflect on. During the year there are special liturgies, services and masses. Students and staff are also involved in outreach projects for example with SVP. Awareness of the Catholic Social Teaching Principles are promoted through regular events and activities. St. Joseph's continues to work for social and community cohesion through work with local and international agencies.

Spiritual growth is encouraged for both staff and students through retreat days at Holy Family Church. The school's Chaplaincy team leads one assembly per term.

St Joseph's PSHE/RSHE programme is another avenue where the collective worship within the school is nurtured and explored. Scheduled citizenship lessons

cover respectful and beneficial relationships where the Gospel values are permeated and central to our teachings.

Chaplaincy Opportunities

Students and staff are invited:

- To participate in various campaigns and be involved in Justice and Peace issues.
- To take roles in delivering school Assemblies with prayer.
- To avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation when the clergy are available.
- To plan, prepare and participate in a House Mass or House Liturgy at least once a year.
- To participate in prayer group.
- To serve our outreach centres in our local, national and global community through fundraising and generosity.
- Student production of a prayer booklet for daily worship at the start of each day.
- To be a member of our chaplaincy team and advise and participate on collective opportunities.
- To write articles in the school newsletter and prepare power points for our TV screens, enabling them to reflect on their spiritual experiences.
- To attend a retreat
- To participate in events that are run by our Diocese - (e.g. Diocesan Secondary Schools Mass/Pilgrimage).
- Staff are invited to participate in a weekly prayer group and lead weekly staff reflection at our school

Right of withdrawal

St Joseph's expects all students to attend collective worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the pupil during that time. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1998 Education Reform Act.

However, the school welcomes all members in collective worship regardless of faith, "for where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I with them" Matt 18:20. Therefore all actions in the school day reflect that God is present in all that we do.

Resources

Chaplaincy and collective worship budgets are well funded and supported by Leadership Group.

The local community are welcome to attend mass and liturgies. Prayer themes and liturgies can also be found on the school website. A prayer booklet for daily prayer is given to each tutor at the beginning of each academic year and a prayer sheet is given to teachers for the prayer during the school day. All departments have prayers for their respective subject. Training and a guide to working in a Catholic school is delivered to all new members of staff.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

It is the role of a named governor with responsibility for Religious Education and collective worship to regularly review this policy and to assess its implementation and effectiveness.

The Collective Worship Co-ordinator in collaboration with the Leadership Group and Head of RE, monitors the policy. It is evaluated and reviewed on a yearly cycle. Governors review reports on the prayer life of the school on a regular basis. This forms part of the Head of School's report to Governors. The following will be monitored as regards collective worship:

- Does it reflect the multi-faith nature of our community and the world?
- Are the resources used appropriate and of good quality?
- Are tutors supported in delivering collective worship in the classroom?
- How will the school ensure that there is balance and variety in the styles of collective worship?
- Will INSET time be used to share skills for the meaningful delivery of collective worship?
- If collective worship is carried out within assembly time, how will the 'business' and 'worship' elements of the assembly be made distinct?
- Will visitors help to deliver collective worship?
- Are governors actively welcomed to attend collective worship?

- How are 'withdrawn' students catered for during collective worship?
- Are both staff and students asked to complete an evaluation of the school's provision of collective worship?
- How are these findings recorded and how will they be used to further develop the quality of collective worship in the school?

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship:

The co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- Formulating a written policy in consultation with stakeholders
- Ensuring there is an improvement plan for collective worship
- Ensuring that collective worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of students
- Ensuring that collective worship takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the Catholic teachings
- Organising themes for worship
- Assisting the governors and Head of School in carrying out their legal responsibilities with regard to collective worship

Communication

This policy will be communicated to:

- All members of the school community
- Parish priests
- New members of staff and will form part of their induction
- New parents, to promote positive attitudes towards collective worship