The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Agreed by the DCET Trust Board on: 20.05.26

Review Date: May 2027

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments and Changes	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
2	04/06/25	Updated to reflect prayer and liturgy directory	07/07/25	Clifton Diocese	E&S
2.1	18/05/2026	Section 4 updated with additional guidance Addition of monitoring forms	20.05.26	Clifton Diocese	Trust Board

We love, we learn, we live together.

We are a community of Catholic schools together aspiring to give children an all-round education rooted in Christian values in a nurturing
environment where they flourish, become lifelong learners and fulfil their potential.

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 and Trust Board

The governors and Trust Board, 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
• 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

As a Catholic school collective worship plays a fundamental part of daily school life and enables us all to join together as one in prayer and worship.

Growing Closer to God
In its simplest form, prayer is defined as “talking to God.” Communication is the foundation for success in any relationship. When we communicate openly and freely with each other, we learn to know each other as individuals. This principle also applies to our relationship with God. By talking to God, we can learn more about who He is and what plan He has for us.

Children are invited to pray in different ways according to their age and personal development. The most important aspect of prayer for children is that they realise it is their way of communicating with God and is first and foremost a personal occasion. For children who do not partake in prayer, appropriate arrangements are put in place. This ranges from respectful quiet during class prayers and celebration of the word to alternative arrangements when whole school Mass takes place.

Children are introduced to a variety of different ways of praying:

- quiet reflection / meditation
- praying together
- writing own prayers
- prayers through music
- learning traditional Christian / Catholic prayers

Celebration of The Word
The whole school gathers together each week for collective worship linked to the liturgical season or other religious themes such as Catholic Social Teaching or the lives of Saints.

Child Led Celebration of The Word
Each week, a group of children from each class will lead a child led reflection. We use the resources provided by the Diocese linked with the RE teaching to support with this.

Musical Celebration of The Word
The whole school gather together to sing songs of praise to God and practise hymns and songs that we use for our collective worship and for Mass.

Mass
Throughout the year we have the joy of celebrating the Sacrament of the Eucharist in St Joseph and St Teresa's Catholic Church. We celebrate Mass on all Holy Days of obligation during term time in addition to: a start of year, end of year Mass and an Advent Mass. Children help to prepare and lead the Mass through Altar Serving, reading, writing prayers and bringing up the gifts during Mass. Parents, guardians and parishioners are invited to join us for Mass. Children are prepared for Holy Communion at The Parish of St Joseph & St Teresa's Catholic Church.

Other Celebrations of the Word
Other Celebrations of the Word take place throughout the year, to mark important events in the Church's liturgical year; these can include Candlemas, Epiphany, Reconciliation and the Crowning of Mary.

Chaplaincy
The Chaplaincy team and Chaplaincy lead take responsibility for inspiring and leading prayer life in the school. We have a group of passionate children who form our Chaplaincy team. They show true leadership as they work together with a named adult under the guidance of the Prayer & Liturgy Co-ordinator to deliver and support acts of worship throughout the school.

Daily Prayers
In each class the children start the day with a prayer, say a prayer of thanks before lunch and after lunch and a closing prayer at the end of the day. The morning and lunchtime prayers are different for children in different age groups; however, we all say the same prayer together at the end of the day with a slight variation for upper key stage 2.

Saints' Days
We celebrate the Feast of St Joseph and St Teresa by having Mass with the parish on the Saint's feast day.
The saints above all are our brothers and sisters *"who have welcomed the light of God into their hearts and have passed it on to the world, each one according to their own 'tone' "* - Pope Francis

Day	Prayer and Liturgy Provision	Lead
Monday	Celebration of the Word linked to the Gospel reading at the weekend	Head Teacher or Assistant Head
Tuesday	Celebration of the Word linked to the Trust values, other faiths and key events that happens during the year. This may also be our singing assembly.	Head Teacher or Assistant Head
Wednesday	Child led reflections in class	Children in the classes
Thursday	Teacher led reflection in class	Teachers
Friday	Celebration assembly – certificates	Assistant Head

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 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.

Review

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

Appendix 1 – Prayer progression

Appendix 2 – Skills Progression

Appendix 3 – Monitoring forms (Also available in the DCET RE Monitoring pack)

Appendix 1

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Prayer Progression</th><th colspan="4">Bold = introduced in that Year Group</th></tr>
<tr><td>Phase</td><td>EYFS</td><td colspan="2">KS1</td><td colspan="2">KS2 (3/4)</td><td colspan="2">KS2 (5/6)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Formal Oral Prayer</td><td>Sign of the Cross
Hail Mary
Our Father
Glory Be</td><td colspan="2">Sign of the Cross
Hail Mary
Our Father
Glory Be</td><td colspan="2">Sign of the Cross
Hail Mary
Our Father
Glory Be
Eternal Rest
Act of Contrition
Angel of God
Prayer of St Richard</td><td colspan="2">Sign of the Cross
Hail Mary
Our Father
Glory Be
Eternal Rest
Act of Contrition
Come, Holy Spirit
Angel of God
Prayer of St Richard
Magnificat
Act of Faith
Act of Hope
Act of Love</td></tr>
<tr><td>Liturgical Prayers</td><td>Simple responses e.g. and with your spirit, peace be with you, Amen</td><td>Simple responses
Bidding prayer responses
Responses to short litanies e.g. pray for us</td><td>Mass responses including Eucharistic acclamation
Bidding prayer responses
Responses to short litanies e.g. pray for us</td><td>Mass responses including Eucharistic acclamation
Bidding prayer responses
Responses to short litanies e.g. pray for us
Take part in Mass readings</td><td>All Mass prayers and responses including Eucharistic acclamations
Renewal of Baptismal promises
Take part in Mass readings</td><td>All Mass prayers and responses including Eucharistic acclamations
Renewal of Baptismal promises
Take part in Mass readings</td><td>All Mass prayers and responses including Eucharistic acclamations
Renewal of Baptismal promises
Take part in Mass readings</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gesture/ Action</td><td colspan="3">Sign of the Cross
Hands together for prayer
Begin using genuflection
Begin to use the Sign forehead, lips and heart to greet the Gospel</td><td colspan="4">Sign of the Cross
Hands together for prayer
Genuflection
Sign forehead, lips and heart to greet the Gospel
Fold hands across chest for blessing at communion or accept communion appropriately</td></tr>
</table>

Year	EYFS	1	2	3	4	5	6
Informal Prayer	Graces before meals Simple prayers e.g. thanksgiving	Graces before meals Simple prayers e.g. thanksgiving	Graces before meals Simple prayers e.g. thanksgiving	As for KS1 and… Bidding prayers	As for KS1 and… Bidding prayers	As for KS1 and… Bidding prayers	As for KS1 and… Bidding prayers
Silence/ Reflection	Take part in simple still exercises	Take part in guided meditation	Take part in guided meditation	Take part in guided meditation	Take part in guided meditation	Take part in guided meditation	Take part in guided meditation
Independent skills of prayer and worship	Be able to plan and deliver a simple liturgy for their peers with adult support choosing an appropriate scripture story, hymn/song Be able to understand the reasons for a focal point to aid prayer. Choose with support an appropriate coloured cloth and artefact	Be able to plan and deliver a simple liturgy for their peers with adult support choosing an appropriate scripture story, hymn/song Be able to independently choose artefacts and cloths for focal areas. Contribute a prayer of their choice independently when asked	Be able to plan and deliver a simple liturgy for their peers with adult support choosing an appropriate scripture story, hymn/song Be able to compile an appropriate focal area on a given theme Choose a hymn and contribute prayers independently	Be able to plan and deliver a simple liturgy for their peers choosing an appropriate scripture story, hymn/song Create focal area on a specific theme	Be able to plan and deliver a liturgy for their peers that incorporates meaning and links to questions of faith	Be able to plan and deliver a liturgy for another class/parents that identifies links with scripture and their faith. Begin to contribute to focal/prayer areas around the school	Be able to plan and deliver a range of liturgies for arrange of audiences that engages all participants in a thought provoking manner. Take responsibility for focal/prayer areas around the school. Thereby contributing to the chaplaincy of the school
Evaluation	To be able to say what they enjoyed.	With adult support to be able to say what they enjoyed and one thing that could be improved for next time.	With adult support to be able to say what they enjoyed and one thing that could be improved for next time.	Simply say what worked well and what could have been better in their prayer and liturgy	Start to evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy they have planned	Start to evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy they have planned	Independently evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy they have planned and say what went well and any improvements

Appendix 3

Monitoring of prayer corner/focus

Year Group: Year 1 Date:

Focus	Areas to celebrate	Actions Required
The prayer corner/area is prominent in the classroom		
It reflects the current religious education topic		
It looks clean, fresh and well presented		
The focus is changed regularly to reflect the liturgical time of the year		
Do pupils help to assemble and care for the area?		
The Bible is prominently displayed YES / NO (turned to the Scripture reading of the day/theme)		
A selection of religious objects, items for reflection and cloths are available and brought out at different times		
The prayer area is used interactively e.g. by using prayer intention cards		
The prayer area is used regularly by teachers and pupils		

Prayer and Liturgy Observation Record

Date and Time Observer

Present: Whole school / Key Stage / Class Leader:

Theme of Liturgy:

Setting the Atmosphere and Preparing for Worship:

Is there a plan available with content to meet the needs of all present?
Is there an appropriate focus? Are the resources used suitable? Are ICT / Music etc. prepared and ready?
Do all the readers / leaders have all they need? Have all support staff been briefed?
Have invitations been sent to members of the community (if appropriate)?
Is the accommodation suitable and ready?

Gathering:

How do participants gather – is there a sense or order and respect? Is there a procession / movement to another area?
How is a prayerful atmosphere created? Is there an invitation to participate? Does everyone feel welcome?
Is the purpose of the act of worship clear and the focus explained?

Listening:

Is the Scripture they are listening to suitable? Is the Word treated with reverence?
Has / have the reader(s) been well-prepared so as to engage the listener?
How is the 'reading' shared – role play, music, power-point etc.? Is it suitable for the participants?
Do participants listen attentively? Do they show good listening skills?

Responding:

Is there maximum participation? Is time given for individual silent reflection?
Do children pray / respond wholeheartedly? Are adults good role models? Do all adults present participate?
Are participants invited to respond in an appropriate manner? (in a variety of ways?)

Going Forth:

Does Worship conclude appropriately? Do participants leave Collective Worship in a suitable, orderly manner?
How are they enabled to take the message away with them?

Overall:

Was it a positive, enriching religious experience for all present?
Has this worship enhanced the spiritual and / or moral development of those present?
Was the time and content appropriate for the age, ability and background of the children?
Did all parts of worship help to develop the Liturgical formation of participants?
Was it well-organised, led and presented?
Was there a sense of community, common ethos and shared values?

Strengths to celebrate and action to be taken:	**Areas to develop and action to be taken:**

Pupil Conferencing – Prayer and Liturgy

What do you like about prayer, Collective Worship and assemblies in the school?	
What helps you to pray in school?	
Who leads prayer and Collective Worship?	
Are you given opportunities to pray and worship?	
How do you think Collective Worship or prayer could be even better?	

Parental Questionnaire – Prayer Life and Liturgy

My child enjoys prayer and liturgy in school	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
My pupil has had the opportunity to plan and deliver prayer and liturgy in school	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
My child has the opportunity to take part in worship throughout the liturgical year e.g. crowning of Mary, Penitential Services, Masses, Easter and Advent reflections	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
I am invited to be involved in the prayer life of the school	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

Staff Questionnaire – Prayer and Liturgy

Pupils work well with others to prepare engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
Pupils are involved un evaluating the quality of prayer and liturgy they have planned	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
I am a model of good practice to other staff and pupils as a participant of prayer and liturgy	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
I am a model of god practice to other staff and pupils as a leader of prayer and liturgy	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is useful to me	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
I am provided with professional development opportunities which enhance my understanding of prayer and liturgy	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know
Leaders effectively support me to plan and lead experiences of prayer and liturgy	Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know