



# Prayer and Liturgy Policy

<b>Approved by:</b>	PWG	<b>Date:</b> 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	10th January 2023	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	November 2026	
<b>SLT Lead:</b>	David Walford	

## 1. Context

- 1.1 St George Catholic College is in the Trusteeship of the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth and maintained by Southampton City Council Local Authority. Our school leaders and governors are entrusted by the Bishop with the ministry of school leadership and will always act in recognition of the love of Christ for all members of our college community and one another.
- 1.2 We share a vocation for the common good in our world and we are committed to working together as a family. All of our policies and procedures are formed to enable all members of our St George family to be safe and cherished, feel happy and fulfilled and be treated with fairness and equity in a positive environment founded on mutual respect and shared values.
- 1.3 All our teaching and learning at St George is rooted in the love of God, shaped by our Christian values and underpinned by our concern for the common good and the wellbeing of all. This search for social justice is rooted in respect for the dignity of every human person.
- 1.4 This policy is part of the foundation that enables everyone to **aspire to become all that God has created us to be.**

*“An education in the fullness of humanity should be the defining feature of Catholic Schools”.*  
Pope Francis

## 2. Our Aims

- 2.1 To seek to enable students and staff to experience the presence of the living God who, in Jesus Christ, reveals his transforming love and truth.
- 2.2 To encourage spiritual development and understanding of the faith handed down to us by the church
- 2.3 To put Jesus Christ at the centre of all that we do because then we are enabled to redirect our focus of life towards an understanding of the world in which we live that is geared towards the promotion of human dignity and the common good.
- 2.4 At St George our Catholic education ‘is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full’ (Pope Benedict XVI). We strive to enable our students to develop a religious, spiritual and moral conscience alongside their academic life so that this experience and understanding continually interrelates to deepen their learning and enhance their future achievements and success.

## 3 Our objectives:

- 3.1 To create an environment in which students can develop as they mature in understanding their faith and their relationship with Jesus Christ, in such a way as to help them find purpose and meaning in their lives.
- 3.2 Prayer is a gift from God and is central to the life of the Christian. We seek to facilitate the growth of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by ensuring that prayer remains central to the life of the school and forms an integral part of each day for every student.

*“The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us. Whether we*

*realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him". (Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2560)*

- 3.3 To provide engaging and meaningful forms of prayer and worship, giving students positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age. With the aim of students and staff leading prayer.
- 3.4 To ensure that all forms of collective worship support the spiritual and religious aspect of students' development, informing and interrelating with their understanding of Catholic Social Teaching which is embedded across our academic curriculum.
- 3.5 To involve and encourage all staff and students to become active participants in our prayer and liturgy, in ways which use their skills, talents, experiences and interests.
- 3.6 To provide regular opportunities to enable students and staff to engage in the sacramental life of the church.

#### **4. How do we achieve our objectives?**

##### **4.1 Regular Prayer times**

- 4.1.1 Daily prayer and spiritual reflection take place during morning registration, led either by the teacher and/or student(s) (*See appendix 1*). The Chaplaincy team will provide tutors with a weekly collection of prayers and reflections. Morning prayers, readings and reflections are taken from the scripture for that day which is based around the liturgical calendar. The staff handbook contains common prayers such the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the prayer of St George, which should be used in conjunction with the weekly collection of prayers and reflections as necessary.
- 4.1.2 The Angelus prayer is offered in each classroom at 12:15pm every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at College as a regular reminder during our work, for us to call to mind God's love for us and to respond to his call.
- 4.1.3 Various forms of prayer take place in the Chapel in conjunction with the liturgical year, for example in October the Rosary takes place on Thursday lunch time.
- 4.1.4 Weekly staff briefings and other whole school staff gatherings will always begin in prayer
- 4.1.5 Wherever possible and where logistics allow, we begin our wider events and meetings with our school prayer, asking for the intercession of St George, to which all attending are invited to join in.
- 4.1.6 All prayers in school will end asking for the intercession of the two college patrons, Our Lady of Guadalupe and St George.
- 4.1.7 Students and staff, although welcome at any time, are invited to attend the chapel to pray together in times of bereavement or other occasions of particular need.
- 4.1.8 Senior leaders, lead prayer with students before exams.

## **4.2 Year Group Assemblies**

- 4.2.1 All students will have a weekly year group Assembly in the school hall. These assemblies have spiritual/moral content, supplementing the daily prayer.

## **4.3 Celebration of Masses**

- 4.3.1 Year group Masses take place at the start and end of each academic year and on other feast days and Holy days of Obligation. As a Catholic school community, all students and tutors are welcome and encouraged to attend these Masses.
- 4.3.2 Specifically, a Welcome Mass at the start of Year 7 and a Leavers Mass at the end of year 11 are important occasions organised between pupils, heads of year, the school Chaplain and RE staff to ensure a memorable experience for those who are both joining and leaving us.
- 4.3.3 Mass takes place in the school chapel once a week, before the start of the school day, to which any staff and students are welcome to attend.

*Although children from other Christian denominations and other faiths cannot receive Communion at the Masses, the school has always wished to involve them as fully as possible in all our liturgical services. All children are therefore encouraged to come forward during Communion to receive a blessing from the priest or Eucharistic Minister.*

## **4.4 Other Liturgies and services**

- 4.4.1 A Carol Service is held during December, highlighting the importance of Advent as a time of preparation, to help members of our immediate and extended community prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ.
- 4.4.2 St George has developed a tradition of holding services as required to mark significant life events e.g. the retirement of long-serving members of staff, memorial services for members of the community who have died. The school considers the bringing together of people in prayer and worship at these significant life moments an important part of its mission and always seeks to respond to these occasions of joy and sorrow
- 4.4.3 Other liturgies take place throughout the year, providing an opportunity for all students and staff to take part. This includes Ash Wednesday and Stations of the Cross during Lent and the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.

## **4.5 Retreats**

- 4.5.1 A retreat/away day for staff takes place bi-annually

## **4.6 School Chaplaincy Support**

- 4.6.1 The school Chaplain supports the Senior Leadership Team, the R.E. Department, Year Heads and Form Tutors in the organisation of the many areas of the liturgical life of the school.
- 4.6.2 The School Chaplain in turn is supported by a chaplaincy team made up of other staff who assist in the planning of collective workshop and related activities. The School Chaplain is also supported by the Priest chaplain and a team of Parish Priests who assist in acts of worship when required, for example the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- 4.6.3 Students are trained up by the Chaplaincy team in different areas and ministries, such as Altar Serving, preparing prayers or as Readers, depending on their gifts and experience of service. The GIFT team (student chaplaincy team) also assists in this role of supporting others to carry out their ministry.
- 4.6.4 The school chapel is open before and after school, at break and lunch times. Students are able to drop in as they wish. The Priest Chaplain is available in school at specific times to give advice, information and support as needed to both students and staff and the school lay Chaplain is available throughout the week.

## **5 Participation of Students and Staff**

- 5.1 We fully respect the beliefs and traditions of students and staff of other denominations and faiths and will endeavour to facilitate any specific practices required of their faith during the school day in a way which respects their custom, where this is important to them. As we live out Catholic social teaching and the teachings of Jesus, we believe every person has dignity and we make them feel welcome in our school.
- 5.2 As a Catholic School we share some common values with other denominations and faiths, such as dignity of the human person, stewardship of creation, helping the poor and vulnerable, peace and justice and we actively encourage all students and staff to participate in any such activities which unite us as a community.
- 5.3 As a Catholic School we expect all staff to uphold the values and beliefs of Catholic teachings in their engagements and discussions with students, and where there is difficulty, to use the direction of the School Chaplain.
- 5.4 All staff and students to attend all forms of collective worship and actively participate, unless their own faith background prevents this. In such instances we expect staff/students to be present, but without taking part, and to be respectful to the faith of the school which they have chosen to join, or parents/guardians have chosen for them.

## **6. Roles & Responsibilities**

### **6.1 The Governing body:**

- Ensures the Catholic ethos of the school is maintained to a high level
- Maintains an overview of the various forms of collective worship in the school by attending events from time to time and by meeting on a regular basis with the leadership team, and chaplain.
- Reviews the performance of the school against the section 48 and the areas identified for development.
- Governors monitor and visit the school regularly to triangulate (via direct observation) what they hear from leaders and what they read in reports and survey results.

### **6.2 The Leadership team:**

- Maintains the Catholic ethos so that it permeates across all aspects of the curriculum
- Ensures staff have access to appropriate support, guidance & training through Inset days and staff training.
- Oversees the planning and organisation of the activities required to fulfil Section 48
- Liaises with relevant staff to support the further development of collective worship where appropriate.

- Monitors and set targets each year for further development as required of Section 48.
- Updates the governing body on progress towards requirements of Section 48

### **6.3 The Chaplain**

- Works with staff and students to plan and provide appropriate resources for all forms of liturgy and collective worship as well as the general Catholic life of the school
- Liaises with local clergy to arrange for the sacraments to be celebrated in school and for any other relevant involvement.
- Maintains the upkeep of the school chapel
- Provides support to students to enable them to develop leadership skills in the various aspects of collective worship.
- Liaises with outside agencies and the Diocese for updates and opportunities which will support the Gospel values of the school.
- Arranges other opportunities both inside and outside of school, for staff and students to gain experiences that help to develop their faith and put faith into action.
- The chaplain monitors the quality of Tutor Prayers, Collective Worship, and The Angelus via direct observation and feedback from students.

### **6.4 Progress leaders:**

- Ensure that tutor time prayers are being said regularly by their tutor teams as directed by the Chaplain and the Leadership team.
- Lead prayers in assembly as guided by the Chaplain.
- Encourage students to engage with the Catholic life of the school
- Monitor tutor prayers, and collective worship in assembly to make sure they take place in line with our prayer and liturgy policy.

### **6.5 Teaching and support staff:**

- Organise daily morning prayers in tutor times
- Accompany and supervise tutor groups throughout collective worship.
- Encourage students to join in prayer and liturgy
- All tutors support students in writing and leading prayers.

### **6.6 All staff**

- Engage in and support the Catholic ethos of the school
- Conduct themselves in a Christian manner
- Lead by example by participating in Collective worship within the school

## APPENDIX 1

### Organisation of Tutor Group Worship

The organisation of Tutor Group worship is arranged by the Form Tutors. It may either be led by the Form Tutor themselves or by the students, either individually or in groups on a rota basis with guidance from the Form Tutor, Progress Leader or Chaplain.

The format of Tutor Group worship may differ from group to group but may involve a number of the following activities. Prayers for tutor groups are via our prayer platform; this has a variety of prayers and readings which students and staff can choose from:

- Prayers written on the board, scripture, poems, short stories, drama or Prayers from books
- Personal prayers written by students on topics of immediate concern in the world (e.g. natural disasters)
- Prayers for sick or dying relatives;
- Psalms or silent personal prayers
- A short reflection (e.g. based on newspaper story/piece of music)
- Themes (e.g. forgiveness, understanding, sharing). Themes selected may be either of a religious, moral, or humanistic nature and students explain the message which they wish to put across. Themes selected should relate to the Liturgical Calendar of Advent, Lent, Saints Feast Days, etc. wherever possible. The Chaplain also distributes relevant material for Progress Leaders e.g. Faith Unity Week.
- Staff may also select their own material or use traditional well-known prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be to The Father etc.) Some Departments have put together prayer resources specific to their subjects.
- Students are encouraged to become involved in the organisation of a tutor group worship with guidance and support from the Tutor. The school Chaplain is also available for both students and staff to seek further advice and guidance on resources and support in leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy.
- On rota-basis, tutor groups visit the Chapel during registration for Morning Worship, facilitated and led by the School Chaplain.