

Prayer and Liturgy

Policy

Policy implementation date	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2027
Who reviewed this policy?	Natasha Casely Deputy Head Teacher



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Our school Mission Statement at St. Edward's is:

"Following Christ we reach our goals."

1. Introduction & Legal Framework

At St Edward's Catholic Primary School, **Prayer and Liturgy** is the heartbeat of our school day. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into a relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

As a Catholic school within the **Diocese of Brentwood**, our provision is deeply rooted in the gospel values, the living tradition of the Catholic Church, and our close partnership with the parish of **Our Lady of Compassion Church** under the pastoral care of **Fr Britto**. The school's **Mission Statement** is dynamically reflected through all acts of prayer, reflection, and liturgical celebration. We anchor our practice in the words of Jesus (**Matthew 18:20**):

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Legal Requirements

The Governing Body, in accordance with the **Diocese of Brentwood Diocesan Protocols**, acknowledges its statutory responsibility to ensure that a **daily act of Prayer and Liturgy** takes place for all pupils.

- **Distinct Activities:** Prayer and Liturgy is legally and structurally distinct from a standard school assembly. While they may occasionally form part of the same gathering, the transition to liturgy will always be explicitly clear to both staff and pupils.
- **Curriculum Separation:** In line with the **Prayer and Liturgy Directory (PLD)**, acts of worship are **not designated curriculum time**. They are funded and timetabled separately, and are never subsumed under curriculum hours allocated for Religious Education.

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2. Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy aims to provide opportunities for all pupils, staff, and the wider community:

- **To contemplate** the mystery of God, enabling *"To Know You More Clearly"* to transcend the academic curriculum and enter into personal spirituality.
- **To reflect** on spiritual, moral, and ethical choices in light of Catholic Social Teaching.
- **To explore** their own faith journeys and respond to life's celebrations or challenges.
- **To experience** a deep sense of belonging to the parish of **Our Lady of Compassion**, the Diocese of Brentwood, and the universal Church.
- **To grow** systematically in liturgical understanding and development.
- **To internalize** traditional Catholic prayers and devotions rooted in Church tradition.

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3. Curriculum Integration: The RED Framework

Having fully implemented the **Religious Education Directory (RED) framework**, our communal prayer life directly mirrors the theological themes explored within classroom learning.

The Liturgical Structure

All planned acts of worship are explicitly structured around the standard **four-part liturgical framework**:

[GATHER] -->	[PROCLAIM / LISTEN] -->	[RESPOND] -->	[GO FORTH]
How we create a prayerful space and environment.	Proclaiming the Word of God from a physical Bible or Catholic Lectionary.	Communal prayer, quiet reflection, or a ritual action/response.	Taking the message out into daily life and the community.

- **Gather:** Preparing the mind and heart using music, traditional signs, liturgical colours, and visual focuses.
- **Proclaim / Listen:** Centering the liturgy on Scripture. In line with RED guidelines, the Word of God is always proclaimed directly from a **physical Bible or Lectionary** rather than printed sheets or digital slides.
- **Respond:** Active response to the Word through ritual actions (e.g., placing intentions, liturgical movement, sacred art), intercessory prayers, or collective responses.
- **Go Forth:** Providing the children with a tangible mission, thought, or action to manifest the scripture message in their daily lives.

4. Progression in Prayer: The "I Do, We Do, You Do" Framework

In alignment with the **Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI) framework** and the developmental steps of the RED, we foster a gradual shift from teacher-directed prayer to autonomous pupil leadership:

- **EYFS & Key Stage 1 ("I Do" - 10–15 mins):** Liturgies are structured and modelled directly by teachers. Focus is placed on learning traditional prayers, listening reverently to scripture, and experiencing short, simple ritual actions (such as tracing the sign of the cross or utilizing holy water).
- **Lower Key Stage 2 ("We Do" - 15–20 mins):** Teachers and pupils collaborate closely to plan and prepare liturgies. Children take on active ministries, such as selecting the focus cloths, leading the bidding prayers, or choosing appropriate hymns.
- **Upper Key Stage 2 ("You Do" - 15–20 mins):** Pupils independently plan, deliver, and evaluate class liturgies, particularly during the "**Relate**" phase of each RED branch. Pupils use planning templates to structure independent worship for their peers.
- Every classroom maintains a **Class Prayer and Liturgy folder** that serves as a sequential record of these pupil-led sessions. Year groups maintain a progression of traditional prayers advised by the Diocese to ensure spiritual vocabulary grows year-on-year.



5. Annual Plan of Provision (APOP) & Liturgical Spaces

The school maps its prayer life against an **Annual Plan of Provision (APOP)**, which is organized in accordance with the Church's liturgical seasons (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time) and significant feasts within the Diocese of Brentwood.

To enrich the spiritual experiences of our pupils, the school utilizes unique sacred indoor and outdoor environments:

- **The St Edward's Room:** This dedicated sacred space is prioritized for class liturgies, localized reconciliation services, and voluntary devotions. It also serves as the focal space for staff spiritual reflection days and termly staff Masses.
- **The Outdoor Mother Mary Grotto:** A dedicated outdoor sanctuary designed to nurture the prayer life of our community outside the formal classroom. The Grotto is highly utilized for **spontaneous, pupil-led prayer**, providing a serene, natural environment for personal reflection. It acts as a focal point for communal Marian devotions during the months of October (The Holy Rosary) and May.
- **The Celebration of the Eucharist:** Eucharistic celebrations highlight major school milestones and Holy Days of Obligation. Masses are celebrated in school and at **Our Lady of Compassion Church**, planned in close collaboration with **Fr Britto** to maximize active pupil participation and ministries.
- **Staff Prayer:** To maintain the spiritual leadership of our community, all staff meetings, briefings, and governors' meetings begin with a dedicated time for prayer and reflection.

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6. Recording, Monitoring, and Evaluation

To ensure rigorous self-assessment under the CSI inspection framework, our provision is tracked systematically:

- **Recording:** Every act of class Prayer and Liturgy is recorded using a standardized liturgy planner detailing the scripture focus, student leaders, themes, and resource needs. Class folders serve as a living record and must remain accessible within the class prayer space.
- **Monitoring:** The **RE Leader** and **Senior Leadership Team** carry out formal observations of liturgies across all key stages. They utilize a standardized evaluation template mapped directly to CSI descriptors.
- **Evaluation:** At least once per year, governors and leaders evaluate the overall impact of our provision, analysing student survey data to measure how confidently pupils can prepare, lead, and evaluate independent worship.

7. Resources and Inclusion

- **Liturgical Environments:** Every learning space features a high-quality prayer focus table that reflects the current liturgical season through correct fabric colours, a crucifix, a candle, and an open Bible. Central seasonal textiles and alternative artefacts are managed via the hall resource cupboard (outside Head Teacher's office).
- **Inclusion of All Faiths:** Non-Catholic or non-Christian pupils and staff are welcomed and encouraged to actively participate by maintaining respectful silence and postures. To preserve their religious integrity, they are never forced to make gestures or say responses that conflict with their personal beliefs. Leadership of Christian liturgical ministry is delegated appropriately to Catholic staff and pupils.



8. Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored continuously by the **RE Subject Leader, Deputy Head and Head Teacher**. It is formally evaluated, reviewed, and signed off by the **Governing Body** on an annual basis in accordance with Brentwood Diocesan guidelines.

Date of Policy Approval: September 2026

Date of Next Review: September 2027

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