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**NDPS Prayer and Liturgy Policy**

**Mission Statement:**

As a Catholic school, we endeavour to nurture a love of God through Jesus Christ in our children. The School has an ethos of love and care and embraces children of all faiths and none. Children are treated as individuals, respected, nurtured and encouraged to embrace and fulfil their potential in all areas of school life. We foster positive relationships with peers and adults, looking for mutual respect. We provide a wide-range of extra-curricular activities in order to develop the talents of each child.

**Introduction:**

Our school is proud to have a close relationship with St John the Baptist Cathedral, where we celebrate Masses, visit for learning purposes and celebrate key moments in the academic year. The purpose of our school community is to recognise the worth and dignity of all and to fully develop the talents of each person. We recognise that each individual is on a personal journey of faith and as such, participation in worship and opportunities for prayer are essential for spiritual development and for deepening our relationship with God.

We believe that prayer and worship in our school has the purpose of giving glory, honouring and thanking God. We endeavour to respond, in word and action, to God’s invitation to enter into a relationship with God himself, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Worship in Notre Dame is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. We understand that assemblies and collective worship are distinct activities; they may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear to staff and pupils.

# The Place of Prayer and Worship in the Life of the Notre Dame

We believe that prayer and worship take 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 school may be their first and only experience of church.
* Those from other Christian traditions – or none.
* Those from other faith backgrounds.

We recognise that prayer and worship is an experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

# The Aims of Prayer and Worship

We believe that prayer and worship in our school aim to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff to:

* Contemplate something of the mystery of God
* Reflect on spiritual and moral issues
* Explore their own beliefs
* Offer opportunities for children to write/make their own personal prayers to share with others
* Respond to and celebrate life
* Experience a sense of belonging to a community
* Develop a common ethos and shared values
* Seize opportunities to consider the big questions
* Enrich religious experiences
* Grow in liturgical understanding and development
* Learn prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition
* Reinforce positive attitudes
* Participate fully
* Take time out to wonder at God’s wonderful world and consider stewardship
* Come to terms with change and loss

**Principles of Prayer and Worship**

All acts of worship in our school will:

* Give glory and honour to God
* Be a valuable experience for children, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character and appropriate to their age and ability
* Prepare children to develop their capacity to take part in the liturgical life of the Church

In order to achieve this, with the exception of a whole-school full celebration of Mass, celebrations are largely kept short, simple, child-led where possible and appropriately paced to personalise the experiences of prayer and worship.

**Organisation of Prayer and Worship at our School**

* Prayers are said by each class at the start/end of the day and before/after lunch and take the form of pupil written class prayers, Grace before lunch, pupil chosen prayers from published children’s prayer books, pupil-generated prayers and prayers written for specific times of need or world events.
* Each class has a designated prayer focus area with “prayer baskets” – to encourage personal prayer writing – along with regularly updated displays reflecting the seasons.
* Class prayers are often held around the Prayer Corner.
* Whole school assembly takes place each Friday morning to celebrate achievements in and out of school, and includes Bible readings, prayer and a hymn.
* Class Gospel Assemblies are held weekly on Mondays in classes from Pre-Prep to Prep 6, led by class teachers with participation of pupils including prayer chaplains.
* Additional school assemblies take place weekly on Wednesday mornings and are led by Class teachers or Classes and are planned according to the Liturgical year, special Feast Days and half-termly whole-school RE themes.
* A full Mass is celebrated by the whole school twice a term by the school chaplain, Fr Andrew Eburne, in order to enable KS1 children to experience a full celebration of the Mass. These are assisted by pupil-led readings, prayers and offertory.
* A shorter Children’s Mass is also celebrated by the whole school once a term, to enable the younger children to take a more active part in leading.
* Parents are invited to attend all celebrations of the Eucharist.
* KS2 children attend Mass on Holy Days of Obligation at St John the Baptist Cathedral.

**Resources for Worship**

Each classroom has its own focus area with a selection of resources in the form of crosses, statues, candles and rosary beads. There is a selection of books and resources for prayer corners/tables. Books for worship are stored either in the staff room or are on display in the library. These resources are regularly added to and updated when necessary.

# The Development of Prayer through the School

We recognise that in teaching children the words of prayers we are giving them the tools to help them to take the step of meeting Jesus personally in prayer. In giving them quiet personal reflection time, we enable them to be still in the busy school day and give them time to reflect on their actions and thoughts.

We provide children with opportunities to develop different kinds of prayer including formal, spontaneous, individual and group: silent, spoken, sung and meditative.

Prayer and Worship in class is appropriate to the age and stage of the child (as attention span is agreed to be roughly 1 minute for each year of their life): up 5-6 mins for Key Stage 1 and 7-10 mins for Key Stage 2.

Children’s class prayer journals have been introduced from Prep 2 to chronicle their personal journey of prayer, while children from Pre-Prep and Prep 1 are encouraged to write their own prayers and reflections for their prayer baskets.

# Meditation

In teaching this contemplative, prayerful practice, we offer children another avenue through which to experience a deepening of their spirituality and their relationship with the Lord. This is led using traditional methods such as a guided meditation with music and a prayer focus and Taizé.

**Liturgical Colours**

School believes in the importance of teaching children about the Liturgical Calendar and Liturgical Colours. Pupils enjoy changing vestments on classroom displays and are developing an understanding of important festivals. Pupils enjoy listening to Fr Andrew on this subject and he often describes his attire in great detail.

**Singing and Accompaniment**

School takes pride in the quality of its music for worship. The liturgy for whole school Mass in school tends to be formal and the school’s Schola Cantorum supports with sung Missal chants. As is appropriate and in respect of GIRM, on formal occasions singing is accompanied by the organ or the piano.

**Record of Prayer and Liturgy**

The RE Lead oversees the termly planning for Wednesday “Class” assemblies/liturgies in collaboration with staff at staff meetings. A record of larger group prayer and liturgy is kept on the school Shared Drive in a “Liturgies” folder. Staff plan and save the content of these. The purpose of this is:

• To ensure that a variety of themes are explored throughout the year

• To avoid repetition

• To assist in monitoring of prayer and liturgy

• To record evidence of prayer and liturgy

**Monitoring of Prayer and Liturgy**

Prayer and liturgy will be monitored regularly on a rota basis from Pre-Prep to Prep 6, by the RE Lead. This rota takes the form of one EYFS/KS1 class and one KS2 class each half term. Feedback is shared with staff individually, while a trends strengths and areas for development are shared with staff at RE staff meetings. Prayer and Liturgy is ultimately the responsibility for the governing body and sits as a standing item (for review by the Governor for Catholic Life) in formal meeting cycles.

**Reviewed September 2025 by S Smith**

**Approved September 2025 by K Laudan**

**To be reviewed no later than September 2026**