



OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL
AND
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

With delegated responsibility from the
Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust

**COLLECTIVE ACTS OF WORSHIP
 POLICY**

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MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE	DEPUTY HEAD
STATUTORY / NON-STATUTORY	STATUTORY



Community

Unity



Opportunity

COLLECTIVE ACTS OF WORSHIP AND THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Matthew 18:20

1.0 Philosophy

1.1 Why is collective worship important in Catholic schools?

In schools with a designated religious character, like Catholic schools, collective worship is far more than a statutory requirement. It is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Collective worship is an important part of a Catholic school's distinctive ethos.

- 1.2 Taking part in daily collective worship helps build community cohesion by creating a consistent structure around the core values and symbols of Christianity. In Catholic schools, pupil participation and engagement in worship are important criteria in the diocesan inspection of Catholic education, not least during the daily act of collective worship. From Reception to Year 13, pupils are invited to play an active part in collective worship.
- 1.3 Throughout the year, Catholic school communities come together to celebrate important events in the Church's calendar, such as Lent and Advent, as well as the start and end of the academic year. Through regular prayer and worship, including Mass, the rhythm of the Church's year becomes a normal part of school life and each pupil's life.
- 1.4 These activities are integral to the Catholic identity and life of the school; they would take place in all Catholic schools, whether or not schools were required by statute to provide collective worship. (CES statement on Collective Worship)
- 1.5 Collective Acts of Worship and Liturgy are closely related and are important integral parts of the Catholic Christian Life at Oaklands. They are key elements in helping the school achieve its central aim of the promotion of the spiritual, intellectual social and personal development of each child. The Oaklands Vision and Strategy Document states that one of its key visions is to be: **An integral member of the Catholic community in the Diocese by being an authentic witness to the power of Christ's message.**
- i. To ensure that the spiritual development of all in the Oaklands community is fully integrated into learning, management and support.
 - ii. To build a vibrant and energetic liturgical life to celebrate the living presence of Christ in the school.
 - iii. To build a culture of equality and openness to the richness of all humanity and its differences.
 - iv. To work with the community so that all appreciate the relevance of Christian values.
- 1.6 The Liturgical Life of the school acknowledges the importance of the spiritual and moral growth of each child in its care.
- 1.7 The school prospectus states: “The School also recognises its responsibility to foster a Christian atmosphere, to equip the young students in its care to face the adult world with confidence and to play a responsible part in a society which is rapidly changing and holds a variety of different standards. This confidence is shaped through a deep understanding of the relationship between faith and culture. Students are encouraged to further their faith journey. To this end Religious Education, Form and Year Assemblies, Year Masses and Liturgical services, Full School Masses, Residential Experiences, and Community Service are all important aspects in the life of the School.”

- 1.8 Oaklands is a Catholic School which emphasises strong Christian values and reinforces this unique character:
- i. To offer both students and staff an experience of Christ in this community in such a way as to challenge and support their whole lives.
 - ii To create an environment in which children 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.
 - iii To enable each child to grow towards spiritual maturity, based upon the values of the Gospel, and to prepare each one for his or her role as a responsible Christian citizen in society.
 - iv To give students an experience of living according to Christian principles based on the two great commandments of Christ: Love of God and Love of Neighbour: and through this to develop in each child a greater awareness of and a strong respect for moral values.
 - v To give students the opportunity to grow in the awareness of their role in the Church.
 - vi To help each child develop fully those gifts given to him or to her by God.
 - vii To create an environment in which an understanding of the outward looking and caring nature of Christ's teaching automatically incorporates the idea of a need for a strong respect for other races and religions, preparing each child for the multi-cultural society in which we live.
 - viii To encourage partnership between the home, school and the parishes, in order to bring about wider mutual knowledge and understanding for parents, clergy, students and teachers alike.
- 1.9 The Liturgy of the Word permeates every aspect of the life of the school and is central to what we are about and provides a firm basis, which helps the school to strive towards these important aims. At Oaklands we have a shared responsibility towards the upbringing of the young people of the Church who represent the Church's future.
- 1.10 "In many countries of the World, half the entire population is made up of young people. This proportion holds true of the Church in these countries. Young people present a potential and a challenge to the Church's future. Vatican II referred to them as "the hope of the Church".
- 1.11 "Young people can and should be inspired to lead in the evangelisation of society and to share in its renewal. Youth is a time for self-discovery for a choice for life and for growth".
Christifideles Laici (Grail Version) Ch.4 P.63 Pope John Paul's Apostolic Letter.
- 1.12 As staff in a Catholic School, we have a duty to acknowledge the potential of our young people and to guide and develop this potential. We must always strive to create an environment in which our children may grow, may discover themselves, and may make the right choices so that they may truly become the hope and the future of the Church. It is through the development of the Liturgical life of the school that we may continue to acknowledge our duty towards the young and the challenge which the Church presents us with today as teachers at Oaklands.

2.0 Practice

- 2.1 The Liturgical Life of the school encompasses a whole range of curricular and extra-curricular activities and involves the participation of all members of the Oaklands community, which includes students, staff, parents, governors, parish priests and ministers. Some of this is implicit, however, and less overt and not easily measurable but should nevertheless be clearly manifest in our relationships towards each other.

- 2.2 Relationships between staff, between students, between students and staff, the way we talk to each other, show respect for each other, care for each other should be reflected in the caring ethos of the school. These important elements in the life of the school form the basis of the prime rule in the school. “The prime rule which underlines all others is that Oaklands students are expected to act at all times in a sensitive and responsible manner, showing kindness, consideration, honesty and respect for others, for their dignity and also their property.
- 2.3 In this way the school can foster its Christian atmosphere and also develop further the Christian aims of the School” (Behaviour Policy). This prime rule, which stems from the Gospel, is part of the “hidden curriculum” of Oaklands and permeates through every activity in which all members of the Oaklands community are engaged and have a duty to foster. Liturgy and ethos are closely intertwined, but play as equally an important role as the more overt, measurable liturgical activities which are outlined below.
- 2.4 **Masses**
- 2.4.1 The School celebrates its feast day, the end of autumn and summer terms with mass.
- 2.4.2 These Masses are celebrated by local Priests from neighbouring parishes. At other times in the year, the whole school comes together to worship on a specific occasion, such as a Holy Day of Obligation and at other times specific groups join in worship such as year masses.
- 2.4.3 There are monthly staff masses and monthly student masses in the chapel and there is regular Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Adoration is open to students before school on Mondays and Fridays (8.15–8.45am) and during Wednesday Worship at lunchtime.
- 2.4.4 There is also a Mass to celebrate our Year 7 Romero days, the Year 7 Pilgrimage and other occasions as they arise during the year
- 2.5 **Year Assemblies**
- 2.5.1 Each Year Group has one assembly per week either in the Hall or the Chapel.
- 2.5.2 The calendar is arranged as follows:
- i. The Assembly may be taken by the Year Head, Assistant Head of Year, one of the Form Tutors or the Form Group under the leadership of the Form Tutor (this is done on a rotational basis), one of the SLT or a visiting Minister from another Christian denomination who holds a pastoral responsibility for some students in the Year, or the School Chaplain.
 - ii. The theme of the assembly is chosen by the person or group presenting the assembly based on the Liturgical Calendar, and hymn singing is a feature of worship at Oaklands.
- 2.5.3 House assemblies are held once a year for each House Saint group and provide an opportunity for students to focus on an aspect of the life of their saint which is relevant for prayer and reflection.
- 2.6 **Form Worship**
- 2.6.1 One of the important aspects of Form based worship is that it enables the Tutor Group to come together and to pray together and to share together.
- 2.6.2 Form worship forms part of the Daily Collective Act of Worship, but in smaller groups, namely the Tutor Group, throughout the school.
- 2.6.3 Except on the day when the Year is in the Hall, the worship takes place in the Form Base, led by the Form Tutor. For these four days, the Form Tutor organises a short Form worship-based on the guidance offered by the weekly Oaklands prayer sheet which is produced by the School Chaplain. This is based on the *lectio divina* and may reference topical issues of the day, but always with scripture and reflection at the heart of the worship. It is made available both in hard copy and electronically for the use of tutors. There is also a PowerPoint sent out electronically to all staff, that can be used. This is a more interactive resource, often including video clips, Church teaching, music and worship. It should be used before the calling of the register and the reading of notices.

2.6.4 This daily Act of Collective Worship is again important and an integral part of the school day and general life of the school.

2.7 **Organisation of Form Worship**

2.7.1 The organisation of the Form worship is arranged by the Form Tutors and may either be led by the Form Tutor or by the students themselves, either individually or in groups on a rota basis with guidance from the Form Tutor, Head of Year or Chaplain.

2.7.2 The format of Form worship may differ from tutor group to tutor group but may involve a number of the following activities led by a group or the Form Tutor in all years:

- Prayers from the leaflet prepared by Chaplain
- Prayers written on the board, Bible stories, 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.
- Students are encouraged to become involved in the organisation of a Form worship whether it is by choosing a theme, reading or writing a prayer, or sharing in any drama being presented. In this they are guided and supported by the Form Tutor. Students can also go to see the Chaplain for guidance and further extensive resources are made available there. Staff also sometimes seek greater guidance in leading prayer. This is willingly provided by the Chaplain and RE staff. The Chaplain also distributes relevant material for Heads of Year e.g. Faith Unity Week.
- On rota-basis, tutor groups also visit the Chapel during registration for Morning Worship, facilitated and led by the School Chaplain. This worship takes its form from the Liturgy of the Hours to introduce students to the Prayer of the Church. This includes Scripture, Praise and Worship, intercessory prayer and a short period of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

2.8 **Afternoon Prayer**

2.8.1 The subject teacher for lesson 5 is tasked to finish with a short prayer following the completion of the afternoon register. Time has been allocated to lesson 5 for this purpose.

2.8.2 Some staff may select their own material or use traditional well-known prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be To The Father etc.) whereas others may simply finish with the Sign of the Cross. Some Departments have put together prayer resources specific to their subjects.

2.9 **Year Masses**

2.9.1 Each Year Group has at least one year Mass per year. This is celebrated by one of our priest chaplains and takes place in the Hall on the morning of the day allocated.

2.9.10 There is also each year a leavers mass for Year 11 and Year 13, held respectively in the Hall and the Chapel. Both of these occasions are very much a joint venture between pupils, Heads of Year, Chaplain and RE staff to ensure a respectful yet memorable experience for the pupils who are leaving.

2.9.11 We have a "Teaching Mass" for each Year 7 tutor group in the autumn term, in order to develop and deepen students' understanding and participation in the Mass. These Masses are prepared with the chaplain and the Priest in liaison with the Head of Year for year 7 and the RE staff.

2.9.12 The Chaplain and RE staff prepare readings, prayers, altar servers, etc in lessons so ensuring that the students are fully involved in their class Mass.

- 2.9.13 The Chaplain is also involved in preparing the students by leading small group sessions for all year 7's in the chapel to help students from all Christian denominations and other faiths to increase their understanding of the Catholic Mass.
- 2.9.14 The introduction of our new Romero days programme for Year 7 culminates in a joyful celebration of Mass in which all Year 7 groups contribute to the gifts brought up in the Offertory based on the activities they have experienced. Parents of Year 7 students are also invited to this Mass.

2.10 **Chaplains**

- 2.10.1 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.
- 2.10.2 The School Chaplain in turn is supported by the Priest chaplains, a team of Parish Priests who assist in acts of worship when required, for example the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent.

2.11 **Ministers**

- 2.11.1 The school encourages and welcomes the involvement of Ministers from other Christian denominations in the liturgical life of the school. These Ministers attend and lead assemblies.
- 2.11.2 In addition there have been an increasing number of non-ordained individuals who have shared their own life experiences and given witness to their faith during acts of worship.
- 2.11.3 Staff from the Anglican tradition have been able to receive Communion from their own minister in the school Chapel immediately after school Mass.

2.12 **Inter Faith**

- 2.12.1 Aiming to respond to the needs of our community and wider society, recent years have seen a significant development of Inter Faith activity within school.
- 2.12.2 Statements from different recognised religious traditions that seek to promote racial and religious understanding are used within the school. Tutors may be asked to use this material as part of their tutor time thus increasing awareness of the true nature and guiding principles behind different faiths traditions and cultures.
- 2.12.3 Where students and staff from different faiths and traditions wish to practice during the day the school will endeavour to facilitate this in a way that respects their custom.

2.13 **Chaplaincy Team**

- 2.13.1 During the academic year 2018-19, the Chaplain will form a School Evangelisation Team, to support with whole-school worship, liturgies, Mass and celebrations.
- 2.13.2 Students will be invited to join the team throughout the Year as the Chaplain, with the support of the Head Teacher, SLT, Heads of Year and the RE Department, see leadership qualities arise in individuals.
- 2.13.3 Students will be trained up in different areas and ministries depending on their gifts and experience of service.
- 2.13.4 A team of student Eucharistic Ministers will be trained and commissioned by the Parish Priest.
- 2.13.5 The School Evangelisation Team will also include Parish Representatives, who will work with the Chaplain their Parish Priest to strengthen and develop the school links with the local parishes.

2.14 **Blessing**

- 2.14.1 Although children from other Christian denominations cannot receive Communion at the Masses, the school has always wished to involve them as fully as possible in all our liturgical services.
- 2.14.2 All children are therefore encouraged to come forward during Communion to receive a blessing from the priest or Eucharistic Minister.
- 2.14.3 The response to this is very positive and nearly all children come forward to receive this blessing.

- 2.15 Sacrament of Reconciliation**
- 2.15.1 During Lent the Chaplain organises a whole school programme, prepared at a different level for each year, to enable all students to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation or simply to talk with the priest.
 - 2.15.2 The model which is in use has been successful in ensuring that all who wish to avail themselves, have access to the sacrament in school.
 - 2.15.3 A Penitential Service is held for each year group which helps to prepare students to receive the sacrament and/or reflect on the relevant themes covered.
 - 2.15.4 The Sacrament of reconciliation is voluntary and the success of this relies on the involvement of a large number of priests.
 - 2.15.5 Reconciliation is also available to students on a monthly basis prior to voluntary Mass during lunchtime.
- 2.16 Christmas Carol Service**
- 2.16.1 The school holds a Christmas Carol Service to help members of our immediate and extended community prepare for the birth of Christ at Christmas.
 - 2.16.2 By tradition not only are members of our immediate school community invited, but also those in the wider local community.
 - 2.16.3 The Christmas Carol Service highlights the importance of Advent as a time of preparation for the incarnation at Christmas. At the end of the service, a special collection is taken
- 2.17 Voluntary Lunchtime Liturgies**
- 2.17.1 Every Tuesday lunchtime in the Chapel, Form Groups take it in turn to prepare the Voluntary Lunchtime Liturgy.
 - 2.17.2 This is prepared by the students with support from the Form Tutor, Chaplain or RE teacher for the group.
 - 2.17.3 These activities are purely voluntary and the group preparing the liturgy extend an invitation to all students who would like to attend.
 - 2.17.4 During Lent, in addition to these liturgies, Stations of the Cross are also presented, with the support of the Chaplain.
- 2.18 Prayer Groups**
- 2.18.1 In addition to the Liturgies, Prayer Groups take place in the Chapel.
 - 2.18.2 Staff pray together at Briefing on a Monday morning and on a voluntary basis in the Chapel on Tuesday mornings at 8.40am.
 - 2.18.3 Students and staff are invited and frequently attend the chapel to pray together in times of bereavement or other occasions of need.
 - 2.18.4 During 2018/2019 the Chaplain will reintroduce Youth Alpha and develop a Discipleship Group to meet regularly and journey together in faith.
 - 2.18.5 There is a parent prayer group that meet on a Friday morning at 9.15am. This is made up of parents of Oaklands students and St Peter's students.
- 2.19 Music and Liturgy**
- 2.19.1 There is a dedicated member of staff to lead music for worship, supported by other musicians and singers.
 - 2.19.2 Music and Liturgy are synonymous at Oaklands, with hymn practises being held at the start of each year to ensure new material is introduced.
 - 2.19.3 Wednesday Worship is a further opportunity to learn new praise music and an opportunity to creatively explore worship.
- 2.20 Residential Experience**
- 2.20.1 The liturgical life of the school has been further developed at Oaklands with the adoption by the Governors of Residential Experience as an integral part of the curriculum in Years 10, 11 and Sixth Form.
 - 2.20.2 In October Year 11 go to Soli Retreat Centre in Alton, Staffordshire for their residential experience which is led by the team at the Centre, supported by Oaklands staff.

- 2.20.3 Year 12 and 13 students go to St Cassians, Kintbury in November.
- 2.20.4 Year 10 students go to the Spec Centre in Westminster diocese in February/March.
- 2.20.5 Year 8 and 9 have a day of reflection led by the TenTen Theatre Company in the summer term, with a particular focus on valuing self and forming loving relationships.
- 2.20.6 Year 7 go on pilgrimage to Portsmouth Cathedral in June/July for a day to explore their Mother Church and to reflect upon the first year of their journey at Oaklands.
- 2.20.7 The school chaplain and RE staff prepare and lead a reflection lesson at the end of each of these days in which students and relevant staff are fully involved.

2.21 **RE Department and Related Activities**

- 2.21.1 In addition to Year and whole school activities all members of the RE Department, plus other interested staff arrange a variety of extra-curricular activities which support the Christian life of the school.
- 2.21.2 Each week the Fairtrade group meet to organise stalls, sell Fair Trade products and co-ordinate out of school activities.
- 2.21.3 In addition, there is now also a St John's group who are following up on the visit to Kenya by seeking to continue to raise awareness of the issues there and raise funds for the children to attend school in St John's, Korogocho.
- 2.21.4 There is a 6th Form CAFOD group who meet in school to plan events and travel to other schools to provide leadership guidance.
- 2.21.5 Although still in its infancy, there is also a Romero award for not just Oaklands but all Catholic schools (initially in the Portsmouth diocese, but ultimately nationally – we already have schools in London, Ireland and Wales) to celebrate the successes they have had in putting Catholic Social Teaching into action.

2.22 **INSET Days**

- 2.22.1 INSET Days have given us the opportunity of bringing staff together to celebrate a Liturgy.
- 2.22.2 In addition to these set days, we as a staff also celebrate the special times in the lives of individual staff through the organisation and leading of liturgies and Masses for those who are retiring or leaving Oaklands.

2.23 **Special Services**

- 2.23.1 Oaklands 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.
- 2.23.2 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.