



# CATHOLIC LIFE POLICY

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Mission Statement

LEARNING TO LIVE OUT OUR CALLING WITH  
COMPASSION AND LOVE

# Our Mission

Learning to live out our calling with compassion and love

This mission statement is the foundation stone on which we build The Catholic Life of the School and we aim to achieve our mission by:

- Establishing, maintaining and developing a Catholic ethos which is permeated in everything we do and is apparent to all those who enter our school.
- Modelling the image of Christ in the way we lead and manage the school.
- Creating a place of learning where Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church are evident in everything we do.
- Providing an enriched curriculum, which is creative, inspiring and inclusive for all pupils, which is fundamentally based on the teachings of Jesus and his Holy Church.
- Engendering the culture of vocation by educating pupils to be active in their faith, living out the principles of Catholic Social teaching and by reaching out to those in our community and beyond.
- Ensuring that the Gospel values and Jesuit Virtues are permeated through all policies, which include inclusion, behaviour, curriculum etc.
- To be an outreaching centre of God's mission on earth in promoting the virtues of faith, hope and charity.
- Providing frequent opportunities for conscious and active participation in collective worship through Holy Mass and other services/celebrations in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church to all in the community.
- Providing a supportive Sacramental Programme in collaboration with the Parish in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church and diocesan policy.
- Developing the prayer and spiritual life of all members of our school and the community it serves.

## **Caring and meeting the pastoral, spiritual, moral and social needs of the children:**

- Providing good Catholic role models for the younger citizens of the future so that they may follow in Jesus' footsteps.
- Maintaining, working with and developing successful links with the home, parish, archdiocese, community and the wider world.

It is our hope that by working towards the above we play our part in the mission of Christ and his Holy Church on Earth.

- To provide opportunities for daily collective worship.
- To provide a caring, inspiring and creative environment

# The Spiritual Life of the School

Prayer occupies an important role in our Religious Education as a means of expressing, fostering and nurturing faith. Children have a natural aptitude for prayer, they are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world round them. We, at St Mary's Catholic School, aim to create and maintain an environment where this is fostered and developed. Our classrooms, work areas and school entrance are welcoming, bright, colourful and creative so that our Mission Statement is being lived out through our surroundings.

Children are encouraged and helped to discover the many different ways in which to pray, formally and informally, privately and communally. They are encouraged to be still and listen to God. We aim to teach and develop a variety of prayer methods to the children such as:

- Teaching the traditional prayers of the church alongside new prayers.
- Allowing the children to develop their spiritual awareness by giving them the skills to create asking, thanksgiving, praising and sorry prayers.
- Through the reading of the Gospels and the Holy Bible (liturgical prayer).
- Through the teaching of traditional hymns alongside new style hymns.
- Through the teaching of drama, sacred music and prayer.
- Meditating and reflecting in silence whilst being inspired by liturgical music and religious art.

## **Prayer in the classroom:**

Each classroom in the school creates a prayerful environment by each having a prayer focus/area.

It is required that this focus is dressed in the liturgical colours of the year as a visual sign to the children to show the change and the mood of the liturgical calendar.

This prayer focus should have a bible which shows the previous Sunday's Gospel readings, a reading associated with a feast day, or a reading relevant to the current unit of work being studied.

Teachers are encouraged to be creative when creating an interactive display on this focus this could include using objects, images, candles which reflect the liturgical year and feasts.

Each room in the school has a crucifix which reminds us all of Christ's sacrifice for all of humanity; it reminds us that Christ is the foundation stone of Catholic education and that Christ is at the centre at everything we do.

## **Providing class collective worship on a daily basis:**

It is required by law to provide daily worship in the classroom. Teacher and pupils pray at least four times a day:

- At the beginning of the school day (morning prayer)
- At Lunchtime (Grace before meals)
- After lunch (Grace after meals)
- At Home time (End of the day prayer)

## **Garden of Prayer**

The Prayer Garden offer pupils a quiet place to contemplate and reflect.

## **Chapel**

The Chapel provides a space for reflection for liturgy groups, Mini Vinnies and the Bible Study group.

## **Collective worship at whole school level:**

In addition to the daily requirement of collective worship in our classrooms, we provide collective worship at a whole school level and for the different educational groups in the school (see table i).

Monday – Whole school assembly led by Mrs Mellor/ Student Leaders/Students

Tuesday – Whole school mass/class mass/ Minnie Vinnies/Rosary club

Wednesday – Hymn Practice/Bible Club

Friday – Good work and special mention KS1 and KS2 alternate weeks.

Each of these gatherings are always based on or linked to a Catholic Christian theme. When we plan for these occasions, we keep the following points in mind-

Structure – Gather, Listen, Respond and Go Forth (based on the Holy Mass model)

Is the language being used suitable for the age group?

Are the symbols being used relevant and meaningful?

Can everyone identify and join in with what is happening?

Can this celebration be related to the lives of the children?

Is it meaningful?

In addition to whole school level worship, each class holds an extended period of class worship once a week. This is child led and focusses upon a chosen theme/piece of scripture:

Reception – Monday (2:30-2:50pm)

Year One – Tuesday (12:45-1:05pm)

Year Two – Friday (1:45-2:05)

Year Three – Friday (1:15 – 1:35)

Year Four – Friday (9am-9:20)

Year Five – Friday (2:15-2:35)

Year Six – Friday (12:15-12:30)

During Holy Week the timetable is as follows:

Monday - Passover

Tuesday - Palm Sunday

Wednesday - Last Supper

Thursday - Garden of Gethsemane

Friday - Good Friday

### **Providing opportunities for Holy Mass to be celebrated:**

We acknowledge and revere the most Holy Sacrament of the celebration of the Eucharist.

We believe it is central to our roles as members of the Body of Christ and the redeeming life graces and blessings it provides. We firmly believe in the importance of celebrating the Mass by:

- Encouraging all our school members to go to Mass on a weekly basis.
- Attending the parish mass on a Friday morning at Holy Trinity Church
- Providing opportunities for School, parish and home Masses throughout the academic year.
- Celebrating Holy Mass on Feast Days and Holy days of Obligation.
- Celebrating Masses as part of the Sacramental Programme.
- Celebrating Mass at the key times of the school year each new term and a Leavers' Mass for Year 6.
- By teaching the structure of the Mass to the children within RE lessons.
- By basing all of our assemblies, meetings and gatherings on the four part model of the Mass.

We are all part of the Eucharistic Community. This is not just a matter of saying that Mass is important in our school but rather that it has a profound effect on our life as part of the community, The Church's Liturgical Year and Traditional Devotions.

By using the ancient tradition of the Liturgical year as a framework, we draw on the wealth of the whole church to teach our children who God is and what they are. We follow the development through the Curriculum Directory, introducing children to the lives of saints, to the changes of season, the mood and colour expressing these changes. Children are given the associated language, signs and symbols. This involves progression, some repetition and deepening of a soundly based devotion to Our Lady, as Mother of Jesus and our Mother, is encouraged. A simple form of the Rosary is introduced in October across the school. Marian prayers and songs are nurtured in May having a procession and celebration for the Crowning of Mary's statue. Celebration of house saints takes place on or near the saint's day. Learners explore the life of their house saint and celebrate the life of their saint with cake and sweets. Prayers for the deceased are encouraged in November.

The liturgical seasons of Advent and the Christmas season are observed and celebrated through the diocesan curriculum programme of study and through a variety of collective worship gatherings such as Advent assemblies, Stay and Pray sessions with children and parents, Nativities, Carol Service and Mass. After the Christmas Holidays, the season is continued up to its official ending with a celebration service based on the Epiphany which either includes the saying of Holy Mass.

**Holy Week** preparations take place in school and ends with a special assembly where the events of Holy week are re-enacted throughout the week by KS2 culminating in the Passion.

**Giving to Others** We aim to bring about an awareness of the needs of others. This is an on-going process and those less fortunate than us are remembered in daily prayer.

During the autumn season, children and the community are encouraged to bring in food for those less fortunate during the Harvest Festival celebrations. The food is taken to a local food bank. There is also a non-uniform day where the children donate money and the proceeds are sent to CAFOD for Fast Day. Each class also selects their own personal charity to raise money for and such projects are driven by the children.

During the seasons of Lent and Advent, we raise funds for various charities at home and overseas e.g. Father Hudson Homes and CAFOD. Children are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, teachers and other people in our community. It is our aim that our whole school ethos is one that will foster and nurture a generous giving of self, an appreciation and respect for one's own property and that of others. The children also listen to the call of Pope Francis to remember all Christian martyrs by wearing red on Red Wednesday.

Our learners are encouraged to give to their parish through the call to be an altar server to maintain the high level of contribution which are learners provide, with one third of the servers being current learners and a further third being past St Mary's pupils.

Our Curriculum is formed around 'The Big Kingdom' idea. This means that Catholic Life and theology run through the curriculum and that SMVSC can be enriched for all learners. Opportunities are provided for learners to think deeply and apply their knowledge of the bible to help them to think through the moral dilemmas faced by Catholics today. Such lessons support the development of all our learners.

## **Parental Involvement**

We believe that if our Religious Programme is to be effective, we must at each stage seek to involve parents and give them the confidence to play their part in the Spiritual formation of their children. The school supports and develops the primary task of parents as the first teachers of their children in the ways of Faith. We aim to involve parents by:

- Inviting them to celebrate Holy Mass and Reconciliation services at different times during the school year.
- Parents are invited to our Advent and Lent 'Stay and Pray' services which are celebrated prayer in the school Chapel.
- They are invited to parent meetings and workshops, Religious Education is discussed e.g. as their children enter school in Reception, at Curriculum Open Evenings and later as they begin their immediate preparation for the Sacraments.
- Inviting them to special celebrations e.g. Nativity, Carol Service and Leavers' Mass and Assembly.
- They are encouraged to bring their children to the Holy Mass on either Saturday evening or Sunday (personalised invitations sent out).
- They are encouraged to support Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks and discuss the work being completed with their children when preparing to receive the Sacraments.
- Providing information evenings on the Sacramental Programme and The Journey of Love (SRE) meetings.
- Inviting them to share their views through curriculum evenings, Sacrament meetings, Life to the Full

- Communication to parents and parishioners through our Catholic Life newsletters.
- Prayer bags taken home by one person per class each Monday and then shared with the class.

## Responsibilities of All Stakeholders

The development of Catholic Life for our school community is the responsibility of all, including:

- School Leaders to provide the vision and opportunities for the flourishing of each child's involvement in creating and living out the school mission so as to develop personally and spiritually. To support learners in understanding their own vocation and how this will support the Catholic ethos and the school community.
- Learners by taking full advantage of the opportunities which the school provides for their personal and spiritual support and in supporting and developing the school community as a whole.
- Teachers and Learning Support Assistants to be a role models of living out the Catholic values of the school in how they implement school policies and develop the curriculum and in how they offer support to the local parish and school families.
- Chaplaincy to develop learner's spirituality so that they are prayerful and reflective.
- Student Leadership Team to support the school leaders in implementing changes to develop the Catholic Ethos of the school.
- The MAC Directors and The Governing Body to ensure that policies reflect the Catholic Ethos of the school.
- Parents to support the spiritual and personal development of their child's spirituality in mirroring the messages of the school community.

Policy Reviewed by:

Leader

Date: November 2022

Signed:



Headteacher: Mrs D Mellor

Date: November 2022

Signed:

Chair of Academy Committee:

Date: November 2022

Policy to be reviewed: November 2024