

# NOTRE DAME SENIOR SCHOOL PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

NOTRE  
DAME  
SCHOOL



This prayer and liturgy policy is based on the model policy of August 2024 produced by the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Education Service. It has been approved and adopted by the governing body on 11 October 2024 and will be reviewed in October 2026.

## **1. Mission Statement and Ethos**

Our Mission Statement is: In the spirit of St Jeanne de Lestonnac, foundress of the Company of Mary Our Lady:

'We are all educators ... accompanying young people in their efforts to build their lives for today and tomorrow.'

The school has five ethos statements, taken directly from the charism of St Jeanne de Lestonnac. These statements are displayed prominently throughout the school.

*At Notre Dame we:*

*Keep the flame alive*

*Stretch out a helping hand*

*Live up to our name*

*Serve in a way that is always new*

*Keep friendship among us.*

## **2. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy**

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.' (Marcus Stock (2012), *Christ at the Centre*, Catholic Truth Society, 23.)

In addition to the formal and planned nature of prayer, which is the primary focus of this policy, prayer being 'the raising up of the mind and heart to God' permeates the day in many small ways. Prayer can take place in any place and at any time. All prayer contributes subtly to helping us to live our lives 'before God'.

## **3. Statement of Requirement**

The legal requirement pertaining to maintained schools and academies, for an act of collective worship to take place daily, is not applicable to Notre Dame School. However, 'Prayer and liturgy are ... an important part of a Catholic school's distinctive character. They are integral to the Catholic identity and life of the school, and they would take place in all Catholic schools, whether or not schools were required by statute to provide collective worship.' (Prayer and Liturgy Directory).

## **4. Responsibility**

### **(a) Governance, including the governors' Lestonnac Committee**

The governors, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission, have a responsibility to ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator)
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

### **(b) Headmistress**

The Headmistress, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
- those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

### **(c) Chaplain and Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator**

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is an Annual Plan of Provision for prayer and liturgy across the school year which identifies liturgical seasons and key celebrations, as well as opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments
- there is daily planned prayer for all students, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- students are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and leading of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation
- resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and students
- induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the Headmistress and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- there is collaboration with local clergy and parishes

- liaison with the Diocesan Education Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

## **5. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision**

### **Whole school**

Annually on 15 May (or a suitably close alternative date) – Mass to celebrate the feast of St Jeanne de Lestonnac

Annually on 21 November (or a suitably close alternative date, if 21 November falls at a weekend) – Mass to celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Child Mary in the Temple.

Annually for all staff – Mass at the beginning of the Autumn term, the Spring term and the Summer term.

Weekly invitation for all staff – Examen

Weekly invitation for all staff – Morning Prayer (Thursday mornings)

Daily – the La Mothe Prayer Garden and the Chapel are accessible for private prayer

### **Senior School**

#### **Annually:**

Mass – the beginning of the Autumn term

Mass – the beginning of the Spring term

Mass – Year 13 Leavers and parents

Carol Service

Ash Wednesday liturgy (unless Ash Wednesday is during half-term)

#### **Weekly:**

Monday Headmistress' assembly

Wednesday form-led Celebration of the Word assemblies

Wednesday form-based Chaplain-prepared prayer and reflection

(On Wednesdays: Week A – Years 7-9 Celebration of the Word assembly in chapel; Years 10-13 form-based prayer; Week B Years 7-9 form-based prayer; Years 10-13 Celebration of the Word assembly in chapel.)

Friday Examen

**Daily:**

Prayer at the beginning and end of the day, and before lunch

**6. Our school context**

According to information provided by parents at the time of admission, approximately 25-30% of students in the school are Catholic. The percentage of staff who are Catholic is approximately the same.

**Mass**

It is the Chaplain's responsibility to liaise with clergy for the celebration of Mass. The first port of call will be the Parish Priest of Cobham; in case of his unavailability then other local priests will be invited to celebrate Mass in the school.

All students and Senior School staff are expected to attend Senior and whole school Masses. All are invited to participate in the way most appropriate to them.

All students and staff are invited to come forwards to receive a blessing or to receive Holy Communion during Mass. Prior to the distribution of Holy Communion it is the Chaplain's responsibility to ensure that students know whether or not they are able to receive Communion by saying to students: 'You will know if you are able to receive Holy Communion because you will have made your First Holy Communion in a Catholic Church'.

Altar servers will be chosen from amongst students who have made their First Holy Communions. Eucharistic Ministers will be Sisters of the Company of Mary Our Lady or members of staff who have been commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers in their own parishes. Students will be invited to read and to participate in the offertory procession; it is the Chaplain's responsibility to prepare them.

**Celebration of the Word assemblies**

The Chaplain sets the dates and themes for all Celebration of the Word assemblies, and will assist form tutors with their preparation. The theme for each assembly will generally be linked with the previous Sunday's Gospel reading, although there will also be occasions during the year when the ethos statements from the charism of St Jeanne are taken as a focus.

Every Celebration of the Word assembly will include prayer and a hymn. Students will be consulted regarding the hymns taught and sung in the Senior School. The hymn for each assembly will then be chosen by the Chaplain and Senior Head of Music, in consultation and from a list compiled following student consultation.

In any event of a Wednesday Celebration of the Word assembly not being led by a form it will be led by the Chaplain.

Every Celebration of the Word assembly is evaluated by a randomly selected group of students who will complete a Firefly task set by the Chaplain. A summary of student evaluations will be presented to the Lestonnac committee each term and linked to the annual plan of provision.

### **Form-based prayer**

School prayers for the end of the day and the grace before meals are to be said in each form every day. A prayer is to be said in each form during tutor time at the beginning of the day. This may be the school morning prayer, or alternatively may be a prayer or prayers composed or offered by students. Students should be given every opportunity to compose and share their own prayers.

The Chaplain will produce and make available a prayer and reflection resource for every Wednesday. This resource will include teacher notes, a reading from scripture, some questions or prompts to aid student discussion or individual reflection, a non-scriptural piece of interest or information and a prayer. A random group of students will evaluate the resource every week and the evaluations will be linked to the annual plan of provision.

Every Friday morning during tutor time the Examen is to be used. Form tutors are expected to lead the Examen having provided a calm and focussed environment. This may include the playing of suitable quiet music, and the display of a suitable image on the whiteboard. Examen will be evaluated by a random group of students responding to a Chaplain-set Firefly task, at least once every term.

### **Other liturgies and events**

The Head of Music and Chaplain are responsible for collaborating to prepare the Senior School carol service. The carol service may include some secular text, but the amount of secular text will always be outnumbered by the amount of scripture.

An Ash Wednesday liturgy will be planned and led by the Chaplain each year (unless Ash Wednesday falls during the half-term holiday). This liturgy will be for all students and will include imposition of the ashes for all students who wish to receive them.

Every year all students will participate in a Reflection Day; one day will be organised per year group. Each Reflection Day will begin and end with a period of prayer, focussed on the particular theme for the day.

### **Music**

Hymns for Masses and other liturgies are chosen by the Chaplain and Senior Head of Music together. Hymns for assemblies are chosen by the Head of Music and Chaplain in consultation, wherever possible to link with the liturgical season and with the themes for assemblies and taking account of suggestions from students, who will be consulted. To support the learning and singing of hymns, the hymns to be sung in assemblies and Masses are taught as part of Year 7 to Year 9 Music lessons.

For all Senior Masses and whole school Masses the parts of the Mass will be sung using an appropriate setting. Liturgical music and hymns will be led by the Head of Music and a choir.

## **7. Resourcing**

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in high-quality religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. The chapel will be furnished and maintained as a sacred and consecrated space and updated to reflect the Church's liturgical season. Staff training and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

## **8. Training and formation**

All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development at least once a year, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy within the context of the ethos of the school and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

## **9. Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, and at least annually, and involve all key stakeholders: students, parents, staff, clergy, and governors. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

## **10. Review**

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.