



NEWMAN CATHOLIC TRUST

HEART SPEAKS TO HEART

Prayer & Liturgy Policy St Nicholas of Tolentine 2025-26

Review

Review Cycle	Date of Policy	Reviewed by	Review Date
Annual	September 2025		September 2026

Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of LGC	Colleen Collett		September 2025
Principal	Rachael James		September 2025

Commitment to Equality:

The Trust and its schools are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

"Rooted in faith, we ignite a love of learning, foster inclusive education and empower every individual to achieve their utmost potential."

At the Newman Catholic Trust, we stand united in our unwavering mission to nurture a transformative educational experience, where every child is seen, valued, and cherished as a unique gift from God. Rooted in faith, we ignite a love for learning that awakens curiosity, sparks imagination, and fuels a lifelong journey of discovery.

Guided by the teachings of Christ and inspired by the profound wisdom of our namesake, Saint John Henry Newman, we strive to foster a community where inclusion is lived, diversity is embraced, and every individual is empowered to fulfil their highest potential. As Newman said, *"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."* We believe that education is a sacred journey of continual transformation—intellectually, spiritually, and personally. We believe that true education is not just about knowledge, but about shaping hearts and minds, cultivating resilience, and nurturing the whole person.

Our vision is simple yet profound: to be a beacon of hope and excellence, where students are not only academically accomplished but spiritually enriched and personally empowered to make a difference in the world. In all that we do, we strive to embody our core values:

- **Christ/Child Centred:** Placing the Gospel values, the teachings of Christ and the well-being of each child at the heart of every action we take.
- **Inclusive and Consultative:** Ensuring open communication and engagement with all members of our community.
- **Caring:** Showing empathy, understanding, and support in navigating any challenges that may arise.
- **Transparent:** Fostering openness and honesty in all our interactions.
- **Strategic:** Approaching all matters with careful planning and consideration for the wider community.
- **Professional:** Maintaining the highest standards of conduct and integrity in our decision-making.
- **Accountable:** Taking responsibility for our actions and fulfilling our commitment to ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for all.

1. 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.)

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of Catholic education, forming the spiritual foundation of our schools. In accordance with "**To Love You More Dearly: The Prayer & Liturgy Directory**", this policy ensures that the celebration of prayer and liturgy is an integral part of school life, drawing pupils, staff and families into deeper communion with Christ.

Christian worship is **Trinitarian**, directed toward God the Father, through Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Rooted in the **Paschal Mystery**, the liturgical life of our schools reflects Christ's **life, death and resurrection**, forming pupils to be **active disciples** in their faith journey.

This policy provides a **Trust-wide framework** ensuring **consistent excellence in liturgical life** while allowing each school to adapt provisions to their local community.

2. Statement of requirement

Catholic schools are places where prayer and liturgy are woven into the fabric of daily life, forming pupils in faith and discipleship. As such, the legal and canonical frameworks governing collective worship ensure that every pupil is entitled to a deep and authentic experience of Catholic liturgy.

2.1 Legal and Canonical Obligations

Under Section 70 of the Education Act 1988, all maintained Catholic schools are required to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils, including those in the sixth form. This worship must be conducted in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church, as set out in:

- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Schedule 20)
- The Instrument of Government (Clause 2)
- The Mainstream Academy and Free School: Supplemental Funding Agreement (December 2020)
- Model Articles for Catholic Academies (February 2019)
- Canon Law (CIC 1983, can. 803)

2.2 Rights of Withdrawal

While Catholic schools exist to form pupils in faith, they must also acknowledge the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from prayer and liturgy up to the age of 16 (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1A)). Pupils in the sixth form have the legal autonomy to withdraw themselves from prayer and liturgy if they choose (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1B)).

However, it is the responsibility of Catholic schools to foster a culture of invitation rather than obligation. While the right of withdrawal must be respected, schools should actively engage with parents and pupils to articulate the value of prayer and liturgy as a means of spiritual and moral formation, ensuring that all members of the school community feel welcome and included.

2.3 Integration into School Life

Prayer and liturgy must be recognised as a sacred component of school life rather than an administrative requirement. This means:

- Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time and do not form part of the allocated teaching hours for Religious Education.
- Pupils must be given access to the full liturgical life of the Church, experiencing a rich repertoire of prayers, scriptural reflections, liturgical music and devotions.
- Schools must ensure that prayer and liturgy engage the whole person—mind, heart and soul—through active participation, reverence, and reflection.

This commitment to authentic Catholic worship ensures that every pupil is given the opportunity to deepen their relationship with God, encounter Christ through liturgy, and grow in understanding of the Church's prayer life.

3. Governance & Leadership Responsibilities

Effective leadership and governance are essential in ensuring that prayer and liturgy remain central to the Catholic life of each school within the Trust. This requires a **collaborative approach** involving Trust leaders, governors, principals, chaplains, clergy and individuals dedicated to coordinating prayer & liturgy.

(a) Role of Trust Leaders & Governors

The governors, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission. They have the responsibility to:

- Provide strategic oversight to ensure that all schools uphold the highest standards in prayer and liturgical practice.
- Monitor the spiritual and liturgical development of schools through visits evaluations and engagement with school leaders and chaplaincy teams.
- Support links between schools and the wider Church community including partnerships with parishes and diocesan initiatives.
- Ensure that all schools meet their statutory and canonical obligations regarding prayer and collective worship.

Therefore, they must 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
- resources training and support are available to enhance the quality of prayer and liturgy across the Trust and its schools.
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of A Catholic school.

(b) Role of Principals (or senior school leaders, e.g. Head of School/Executive Principal)

The Principal/senior school leader/s is the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community. It is their 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
- 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.

As part of their role, Principals/Senior School Leaders must:

- Model **spiritual leadership** by actively participating in and promoting the liturgical life of the school.
- Develop a **whole-school vision** for prayer and liturgy that aligns with the **liturgical calendar school mission and Catholic ethos**.
- Work in close collaboration with **chaplains, clergy and the Prayer & Liturgy Coordinator to ensure that worship is meaningful, inclusive and reflective of Catholic tradition**.
- Provide **professional development and formation** for staff to support them in leading prayer and liturgy effectively.
- Ensure that the school community— staff pupils and families—actively engages in **liturgical celebrations and faith formation opportunities**.

(c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

The Prayer & Liturgy Coordinator plays a vital role in fostering a spiritually enriching environment by ensuring that prayer and liturgical celebrations are deeply integrated into the daily life of the school. This individual is responsible for guiding and supporting the school community in its mission to develop meaningful and reflective worship experiences that engage pupils and staff in the richness of Catholic tradition.

- Lead the development and implementation of the **Annual Plan of Prayer & Liturgy Provision** ensuring that it reflects the **liturgical seasons key feast days and school charism**.
- Foster **pupil leadership in prayer and worship** ensuring that pupils are supported in planning preparing and leading liturgical celebrations.
- Work closely with **teachers, chaplains and parish clergy** to enhance the liturgical and spiritual formation of pupils.

- Oversee the **creation and maintenance of sacred spaces** within the school ensuring they reflect the **liturgical calendar and promote prayerful reflection**.
- Provide **ongoing training and support** for staff to ensure that all prayer and liturgical experiences are **authentic, engaging and theologically sound**.
- Monitor and evaluate the **impact and effectiveness** of prayer and liturgy using feedback from **pupils, staff, parents and clergy**, and that outcomes of monitoring is reported to the Principal/SLT and Local Governing Committee to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school

In achieving the above, it is important that 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 daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- pupils are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery 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 pupils
- induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities

4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

4.1 Daily Prayer

Each school will have **dedicated prayer time** daily including:

- **Morning Prayer** (staff & pupils)
- **Grace before and after meals**
- **End of day prayer**
- **Classroom liturgies**
- **Opportunities for Silent reflection and meditation**

4.2 Weekly Worship & Celebration

A typically week for whole school liturgy:

- **Monday:** Whole School Values Assemblies led by Principal.
- **Tuesday:** Class Prayer and Liturgy
- **Wednesday:** Celebration of Word
- **Thursday:** Praise and worship (hymns, music, creative expressions).
- **Friday:** Celebration assembly (recognising virtues, mission focus).

Whole school Masses take place each term and parents and carers are encouraged to attend. These take place in St Nicholas of Tolentino Catholic church.

5. Planning of prayer and liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in schools must be carefully planned, spiritually enriching, and deeply connected to the liturgical life of the Church. The planning process should ensure that prayer is not routine or mechanical but an opportunity for genuine encounter with Christ. Every act of worship should be an authentic experience of faith, leading to transformation in the lives of pupils, staff, and the wider school community.

5.1 The Principles of High-Quality Liturgical Planning

All prayer and liturgy must be:

- **Christ-centred** – Rooted in the Paschal Mystery, drawing pupils into the life, death and resurrection of Christ.
- **Communal** – Encouraging active participation, where pupils do not passively observe but contribute meaningfully.
- **Scriptural** – Grounded in Sacred Scripture, ensuring the Word of God is proclaimed, reflected upon and lived out.
- **Liturgical** – Reflecting the tradition and richness of the Church, using prayers, symbols and gestures that link to the liturgical calendar.
- Child-led – Inspiring pupils to take a lead on preparation and facilitation – fostering a commitment and deeper understanding of prayer.
- Inclusive – Ensuring all pupils, regardless of background, feel welcomed into the prayer life of the school.

Every act of prayer and worship should be distinctive and reverent, offering a moment of stillness and sacred encounter with God.

5.2 Structure of Liturgical Celebrations

All school liturgies, whether staff-led or pupil-led, should follow a clear and intentional structure, ensuring depth and meaning.

Gather

- There should be a sense of order and calm on entering (Pupils should enter the space reverently, fostering a sense of stillness and expectation).
- Music, lighting, and visual symbols (e.g. candles, icons, or liturgical colours) should be used to set the atmosphere.
- There should be a clear and appropriate focal point
- There should be different arrangements for different times of the liturgical year

Listen (Scripture)

- 'Hear God's word that lifts us up, instructs us, corrects us, trains us in holiness' (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- Share scripture, making sure it's the appropriate text, length and version for the children participating
- Consider how it will be shared: E.g. different methods of proclamation can be used:
 - Spoken word
 - Drama or tableaux
 - Multimedia (if appropriate and reverent)
 - Visual storytelling or sacred art
- Pupils should be taught to listen actively, using formal responses where appropriate (e.g. "The Word of the Lord" – "Thanks be to God").
- The aim is to remind us of God's loving kindness which surrounds us and continually leads us to God, that guides us in our actions

Reflect (Explanation and quiet time)

- The explanation should be brief and reinforce the key message of the scripture
- It should, where possible, relate to the children's own experiences
- It should respect the age and development of the children
- The reflection should contribute to children's living and understanding of the Christian way of life
- There should be an opportunity for those participating to reflect on the message of the scripture and how that message will help them be better Christians
- Children may benefit from a physical object to hold or look at as an aid to concentration

Response (Including prayer)

- This is the moment of encounter, where pupils respond to the Word of God in prayer and action.
- Responses may include:
 - Spontaneous prayer led by pupils.
 - Formal prayers such as intercessions, the Our Father, or Hail Mary.
 - Creative expressions (e.g. liturgical dance, symbolic gestures, or artwork).

- Liturgical music – Hymns and sacred songs that reinforce the theme of worship.
- Encourage a high level of participation
- Ensure children know how to respond and behave
- Provide an invitation for children to respond to – giving praise and thanks, saying sorry, acknowledging the needs of others, thinking of our own needs last

Going Forward

- Worship should always lead to mission, inspiring pupils to live out their faith beyond the act of prayer.
- Give a clear message/ task to take away, ideally linked to the living out of the message of the scripture in children's everyday lives
- This should be an integration of worship and life
- There should be a clear sense of order and purpose on leaving.
- Music may be used to set the tone
- Where possible, revisit the message later in the day or next time you com

6. Resourcing & Sacred Spaces for Prayer & Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's identity as a Catholic school and must be reflected in the strategic allocation of resources. This commitment ensures that prayer and liturgy are not just valued in principle but actively supported and prioritised.

6.1 Financial Commitment

- Schools must allocate sufficient funding to support the development of high-quality prayer and liturgical experiences.
- This includes budget provision for chaplaincy services sacred spaces liturgical resources and formation programmes.
- Investment in high-quality liturgical music scripture resources vestments candles and religious artefacts should be an ongoing priority.

6.2 Sacred Spaces & Religious Symbolism

- Each school must maintain dedicated prayer spaces that serve as focal points for personal and communal worship.
- These spaces should reflect the liturgical season with appropriate use of colours symbols and sacred imagery.
- The Catholic character of the school must be evident throughout the building with crucifixes statues religious artwork and scripture quotes placed meaningfully around the school.

6.3 Staff Formation & Training

- Schools must provide ongoing formation in prayer and liturgy to ensure staff are equipped to lead model and support worship effectively.
- Formation opportunities should be provided in collaboration with diocesan advisors to deepen staff understanding of the theology and practice of liturgical leadership.

7. Training & Formation for Prayer & Liturgy

Ensuring that all staff members are confident and well-prepared to lead prayer and liturgy is a fundamental priority in sustaining the Catholic identity of our schools. The Trust is committed to providing ongoing training, formation, and support to equip staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead meaningful and reverent acts of worship.

7.1 Induction for New Staff

- All newly appointed staff will receive comprehensive induction training to develop their understanding of their role in supporting and leading prayer and liturgy.
- Induction will include:
 - An overview of the liturgical year and key celebrations.
 - Guidance on leading classroom prayer and collective worship.
 - Understanding of the prayer and liturgical expectations of a Catholic school.
 - Support in becoming comfortable and confident in leading prayer, particularly for staff from non-Catholic backgrounds.

7.2 Ongoing Professional Development

- There will be opportunities for dedicated staff formation and CPD which focusses on enhancing the quality of prayer and liturgy in school.
- Regular CPD opportunities will be provided to:
 - Deepen theological knowledge and understanding of Catholic worship.
 - Develop confidence in leading reflective, engaging, and theologically sound prayer sessions.
 - Explore creative approaches to prayer, including music, silence, and meditation.
 - Ensure alignment with diocesan and Trust-wide expectations.

7.3 Support for Liturgical Leaders & Chaplains

- Staff with specific liturgical responsibilities, including chaplains and Prayer & Liturgy Coordinators, will receive specialist training to:
 - Foster pupil leadership in prayer and worship.
 - Lead and structure high-quality school liturgies.
 - Support other staff in their formation and development
 - Use a range of resources to encourage and spark creativity and variety in the delivery of prayer & liturgy.

7.4 Staff Confidence & Faith Development

- Recognising that not all staff members come from Catholic backgrounds, the Trust is committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where all staff can deepen their own faith journey.
- Opportunities will be provided for staff to:
 - Participate in retreats, reflection days, spiritual development sessions or Trust/school/Diocesan organised CPD.
 - Engage in dialogue and theological reflection to support their personal and professional growth.

- Be encouraged to model Catholic values and spirituality in their daily interactions with pupils.

8. Monitoring & Evaluation of Prayer & Liturgy

Ensuring the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy requires regular reflection evaluation and improvement. Schools must have a structured approach to assess the effectiveness of prayer and liturgical life ensuring that it remains meaningful engaging and transformative for pupils and staff.

8.1 Frequency & Scope of Evaluation

- Monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy will be conducted regularly and in a systematic and planned way.
- This process will involve all key stakeholders including pupils, parents, staff, clergy and governors.
- Areas for development will be identified actioned and evidenced ensuring that improvements enhance the spiritual and liturgical experience of the school community.

8.2 Methods of Evaluation

A variety of qualitative and quantitative strategies will be used to assess the impact of prayer and liturgy ensuring broad engagement and meaningful feedback:

- Pupil Voice: Use of pupil questionnaires focus groups and Chaplaincy Team/School Council discussions to gauge engagement and understanding.
- Parental Feedback: surveys/comment slips/feedback to assess parental perception and involvement in school worship.
- Staff Reflections: opportunities for teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of prayer and liturgy in their classrooms and across the school.
- Observations & Learning Walks: Senior leaders, chaplains and Prayer & Liturgy Coordinators will conduct formal and informal observations of collective worship and classroom prayer.
- Clergy & Diocesan Feedback: Engagement with parish priests and diocesan representatives to ensure alignment with the wider Church's mission and guidance.
- Behaviour & Participation Analysis: Assessment of pupil reverence attentiveness and active participation in acts of worship.
- Attendance & Engagement Metrics: Reviewing attendance figures for liturgical celebrations Masses and voluntary prayer groups.

8.3 Action Planning & Accountability

- The findings from evaluations will be shared with leadership teams governors, Trust RE leads and diocesan advisors.
- Areas for growth will be addressed through continuous improvement plans ensuring a cycle of reflection and enhancement.
- Governors will receive regular reports on the impact of prayer and liturgy supporting their role in safeguarding Catholic identity.

- Schools will celebrate successes in prayer and worship while maintaining a commitment to ongoing development and renewal.

8. Health and Safety

Ensuring the safety of all pupils, staff and visitors during acts of prayer and liturgy is of paramount importance. Schools must adhere to health and safety protocols while maintaining the reverence and sacred nature of worship.

General Safety Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of class teachers and liturgical leaders to follow school health and safety procedures during prayer and worship activities.
- Lighted candles should only be used under adult supervision and strictly during Masses and acts of worship.
- A safety lighter must be used and stored securely away from children.
- In classrooms and non-liturgical settings, battery-operated candles should be used (where possible) as a safer alternative.
- Real candles are permitted only in Mass and other formal liturgical settings and must be handled with care.

Managing Sacred Spaces & Worship Areas

- Prayer and liturgical spaces must be tidy, well-maintained and accessible to all pupils and staff.
- Any liturgical furnishings religious artefacts or sacred objects should be handled respectfully and stored securely when not in use.
- Dedicated spaces and resources in schools must be protected, revered and encourage/invite participation and use.

8. Review

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