



## ST MARY'S RC HIGH SCHOOL

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

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#### **1. OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

1.1 St. Mary's exists to serve the Catholic communities of Hereford, Ross, Ledbury, Leominster and surrounding areas.

1.2 We are here to educate the children in a community which has Gospel values, traditions and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Faith as the kernel of its ethos.

1.3 The mission of the school is:

To develop an understanding and love of the Catholic faith in our school community, enabling all to grow in the appreciation that the school is a community of believers;

To value the contribution that all staff bring, knowing that together we strive to build the Kingdom of God;

To foster the integration of various aspects of human development – spiritual, moral, emotional, social, physical and intellectual;

To maintain practical support, guidance and affirmation for all in the school community;

To prepare pupils for their future life in today's world.

1.4 To achieve these aims the School will:

Have an R.E. Programme which encourages faith development and meets the directives of Church authorities;

Have opportunities to experience what it is to be part of a Worshipping Community;

Develop appropriate systems whereby each individual feels a sense of justice, love and value;

Support initiatives which train pupils to develop as independent young adults able to take responsibility;

Co-operate in the formation of meaningful cross-curricular links.

1.5 Our mission statement is at the heart of collective worship at St Mary's Roman Catholic High School.

## 2. THE NATURE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2.1 Christian worship in St Mary's is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response to God's invitation to enter into a relationship, made possible through Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. It is important to be clear about our use of terminology when dealing with the whole area of 'Collective Worship' in schools. 'Collective Worship' is a term used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase we use readily in a Catholic context. 'Prayer' and 'Liturgy' are terms more commonly used in our context and are explored in greater depth in the guidelines.

2.2 The theme of all assemblies needs to direct our staff and pupils towards a greater understanding of self and of how God is at work in our lives. We aim to explore Gospel Values and virtues by which we try to live at St Mary's.

2.3 Collective Worship at St Mary's may not only take place within a timetabled slot. Prayer and liturgy are a vital part of the life of the school and may take place in a variety of contexts other than those that are specifically structured. There are also bespoke and unique opportunities created for prayer and worship in response to the needs of the school and those within our community.

## 3. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This can take place as a Year/House assembly or in smaller groups, as a time for reflection within the registration period.

3.2 On those days when there is not a Year/House assembly, pupils are encouraged to consider the particular virtues taken from the '*Jesuit Pupil Profile*' that are the focus for the half-term. These are pre-published on the weekly bulletin together with thought-provoking

questions or themes to explore. Some staff may wish to prepare their own reflections and this is perfectly acceptable.

3.3 At St Mary's, we understand that holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Collective worship and assemblies are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering but the difference should be made clear.

3.4 In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided school, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the governing body after consultation with the Headteacher.

#### **4 THE PLACE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN THE LIFE OF ST MARY'S**

4.1 We firmly believe that Collective Worship must take into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

Those who form part of the worshipping community;

Those for who school may be their first and only experience of worship;

Those from other Christian traditions, denominations - and none;

Those from other faith backgrounds.

Collective Worship at St Mary's will be an experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Worship at St Mary's is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

#### **5. THE AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

5.1 We want Collective Worship in our school to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

To contemplate something of the mystery of God;

To reflect on spiritual and moral issues;

To explore their own beliefs;

To respond to and celebrate life;

To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit;

To develop a common ethos and shared values;

To explore virtues such as: Grateful, generous, attentive, discerning, compassionate, loving, faith-filled, hopeful, eloquent, truthful, learned, wise, curious, active, intentional and prophetic;

To enrich religious experience;

To grow in liturgical understanding and development;

To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition;

To reinforce positive attitudes;

To participate fully;

To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

## **6. A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSEMBLIES AND LITURGIES**

6.1 Many liturgies follow a framework laid down by the Church.

6.2 For all liturgies and assemblies, the following guidance is provided. All Acts of Worship in this school will:

Give glory and honour to God;

Be a quality experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;

Give young people positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.

6.3 Celebrations will be short and appropriately paced.

6.4 Senior School and Lower School Assemblies are held on alternating Tuesdays. These assemblies are delivered by the headteacher or a member of the SLT to whom responsibility is delegated. One day a week, a year group assembly also takes place in the hall or gym. Once a month a house assembly takes place. When there is no assembly, each form class has a daily Act of Worship with their form tutor including a form-led prayer.

6.5 In some cases, the assembly may have another purpose. It should be clear to all present when the spiritual part of the assembly has finished, before moving on. On occasion, outside speakers and representatives from charities such as Cafod or organisations such as St Michael's Hospice are invited to lead the assemblies above.

6.6 Collective Worship is planned:

Following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, significant dates and the curriculum and the Jesuit Pupil Profile. Scripture will be the focus in most Acts of Worship;

Involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies;

With flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community;

To develop in pupils, skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than simply participating or contributing in a limited way;

To allow for appropriate outside visitors to contribute to pupils' understanding of examples of faith in action.

#### 6.7 The key principles are:

Participation - Pupils are encouraged to name prayer intentions, to lead prayer and to prepare prayer time;

Structure - Prayer begins and ends with the sign of the cross, which is a reminder that we are gathered together in the name of God and that God is present. Prayer time contains opportunities to:

Hear the Word of God;

Reflect with reverence and silence where appropriate;  
Respond in thought, word or action.

The Church's year - As far as possible the school's cycle of prayer follows the Church's year of feasts and seasons in order for the school to be united with the prayer life of the whole Church;

6.8 These principles inform all acts of worship. The Chaplain will prepare additional resources which are offered as guidance to help staff and pupils arrange and facilitate morning prayer

6.9 The Chapel is open each day for prayer and reflection. Every day at St Mary's begins with a voluntary morning prayer service in the chapel from 8.30-8.40 am.

6.10 Whole school Mass is typically celebrated at the beginning of the school year and at the end of each term. Voluntary Mass takes place in the chapel each week. The Church's year is followed throughout as the school witnesses and follows the mission of the Church. Whole school Masses, House Masses and Penitential Services provide opportunities for the whole community to give thanks and express sorrow. All Holy Days of Obligation are celebrated in school with a whole school Mass.

6.11 Special services during the Seasons are provided as part of our commitment to nurturing prayer and spirituality on every possible occasion eg year group Reconciliation Services in Lent.

6.12 Provision is made to ensure pupils have the opportunity to fulfil their Sunday Mass obligation whilst attending extra-curricular trips/activities etc.

## 7. MONITORING THE DAILY ACT OF WORSHIP

7.1 Members of the Senior Leadership Team will visit classrooms and attend assemblies during the course of an academic year to monitor the effectiveness of the daily act of worship. The quality and effectiveness of Collective Worship is evaluated using pupil and parental feedback.

This policy was drafted by the headteacher.

This policy was approved at the meeting of the Safeguarding Committee on 12 June 2023.  
It is subject to 3-yearly review.

Signed:  Pete Fawcett Chair of Safeguarding Committee