

# **St Alban's Catholic High School**



## **Collective Worship Policy**

Approved by the Pupils Committee: 4th November 2019

Recommission Date: November 2022

## **Section 1 Rationale**

1.1 Catholic worship at St. Alban's Catholic High School, as in all Catholic schools, is concerned with the revelation of God's presence so that praise, honour and thanksgiving may be given to Him.

1.2 Collective worship should strengthen this Eucharistic community, which is called together to give witness to Jesus Christ as part of the Church in East Anglia. Collective worship is this community's response to God, inviting us to enter into a loving relationship with Him, made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1.3 Collective worship at St. Alban's Catholic High School should be inclusive, educational, spiritual, moral, social and cultural:

### **1.3.1 Inclusive**

St. Alban's Catholic High School requires its assemblies to:

- Have an atmosphere in which everyone feels safe and valued;
- Take into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in them, including those who form part of the worshipping community of the Church; those for whom school may be a rare experience of Church or their first and only experience of Church; those from other Christian traditions or none and those from other faith traditions;
- Focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the students;
- Include active participation by various members of the school and wider community;
- Be suitable for every student to attend unless withdrawn by his/her Parent/Carer.

### **1.3.2 Educational**

St. Alban's Catholic High School requires assemblies to:

- Reflect the aims of the school and foster a sense of shared values;
- Be valuable learning experiences;
- Enhance, complement and extend curricular work;
- Provide an opportunity to learn how to behave in a large formal gathering;
- Provide an opportunity to celebrate academic, social, personal and sporting achievements.

### **1.3.3 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural**

St. Alban's Catholic High School requires assemblies to:

- Provide a brief period of relaxation from the busy life of the school, when students have time to pause for thought in an atmosphere of peace and quiet;
- Provide students with an opportunity to contemplate the spiritual dimensions of their life through words, images and music;
- Provide an opportunity for quiet reflection and prayer;
- Have a sense of occasion that separates them from the rest of the school day;

## **Section 2 Aims of Collective Worship Policy**

2.1 Collective worship in our school provides a variety of opportunities to deepen our relationship with God. It offers the chance to:

- Contemplate the mystery of God and give glory and praise to God;
- Unite our worshipping Eucharistic community and develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values;
- Reflect on Christian values and on our own beliefs and to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- Develop skills of: reverence; contemplation; reflection; interpretation; empathy; meditation and listening, to enable our relationship with God to be deepened.
- Respond to the worship offered

2.2 Full participation in our faith will allow us to:

- Grow in understanding of our living faith traditions;
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Jesus Christ;
- Examine and reflect upon our own individual faith journeys;
- Grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding and in religious and liturgical literacy;

- Develop skills of prayer.

### **Section 3 Statutory Duty**

3.1 The school has a statutory duty to provide a daily act of worship and this is offered through the weekly assemblies and morning tutor time prayers.

3.2 Worship in St. Alban's Catholic High School is more than a legal requirement; it is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

### **Section 4 What constitutes an act of worship?**

4.1 An act of worship should be a spiritual experience, where the possibility for students to encounter something of God, in some brief way, is offered. This could include:

- A spiritual focus (candle, crucifix, Bible, icon, PowerPoint, music, Advent wreath or similar),
- Prayer and /or Scripture reading appropriate to the theme and appropriately used and integrated, and
- Moments for reflection, some stillness and silence.

4.2 In order to facilitate these moments of reflection, all notices from staff should be given prior to the assembly, so that students leave the hall with the message of the assembly being the last thing that they hear.

### **Section 5 Assemblies – practicalities**

5.1 As a rule each year group will have one assembly each week and on other days there will be a time of prayer in their tutor group.

5.2 Assemblies take place according to the published plan as far as possible.

5.3 Individual tutor groups may also come to the Chapel for prayer during registration time on a rota basis

5.4 Sometimes during examination periods one or other hall is out of use, but every effort is made to ensure assemblies are not missed as they are such an important element in the spiritual life of the school, even if it means the day or venue needs to be changed.

5.5 The Head of Year is a figurehead during assembly, supervising the quiet and well-ordered arrival and departure of students.

5.6 Form tutors are expected to be with their tutees throughout assemblies.

5.7 Assemblies are part of a coherent plan, with themes being guided by the Liturgical calendar (including seasons of the year e.g. Advent, Christmastide, Lent, Eastertide); Saints' days (including the House saints' days, St. Alban and other key saints); Holy Days of Obligation and special Feast days (including All Saints' Day, Pentecost, Saints Peter and Paul); Charity initiatives; Christian virtues (including forgiveness, friendship, charity, loyalty, perseverance, courage); responses to global disasters and events particular to the school community.

### **Section 6 Sacraments – the Eucharist**

6.1 The Celebration of Mass:

- Voluntary Mass is celebrated in our Chapel every Wednesday during morning registration time and all students are encouraged to attend.
- Each House has an annual Mass on or near the House Saint's feast day. Mass preparation takes place during tutor time so that students can feel involved in the Masses by contributing and is led by the House Captains supported by the Chaplain.
- Each year group has an annual Mass at an important time for their development. Mass preparation takes place during tutor time and RE lessons so that students can feel involved in the Masses by contributing.

- 6.2 Students participate in Mass in various ways. Examples are:
- Proclaiming the readings and joining in with the responses;
  - Sometimes choosing the readings and theme for the Mass (depending on liturgical feast or season);
  - Playing music and singing;
  - Writing and praying Bidding Prayers;
  - Bringing up the Offertory including symbols that express who they are;
  - Making posters to represent their form and the theme;
  - Operating a projector for images to aid prayer

### 6.3 Year 7 and 12 Welcome Masses

- In Year 7 the annual Mass is a 'Welcome Mass' and takes place around half-term in the Autumn term after each form has participated in their Reflection day.
- Parents are invited and refreshments provided for them and the students after Mass.
- Preparation takes place during RE lessons when 'Mass' is a key topic for the first half term in Year 7.
- Year 12 have 'Welcome Mass' around early October.

### 6.4 Holy Days

- When Holy Days fall on a school day school Masses are celebrated in various groupings to accommodate the whole school population.
- These Masses are celebrated with as much solemnity, dignity and prayerfulness as possible and reflect the feast day.
- Teaching staff accompany their groups to these Masses and supervise them, ensuring students are quiet and respectful throughout.
- Staff may also be asked to assist as ushers at Communion time.
- Some Catholic staff and students who have been commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist assist the priest in the giving of Communion or a Blessing.
- Where possible the Worship Music group enhances these celebrations.

### 6.5 Masses for other occasions

Because Holy Days rarely occur on school days, we look for other occasions to celebrate Mass. Examples are Mass for All Souls day, leavers' Masses for Year 11 and Year 13, Candlemas for Year 7

## **Section 7 Sacraments – Reconciliation**

7.1 During Lent students have a Reconciliation Service followed by the opportunity for sacramental confession or to talk to a priest.

7.2 Students study the Sacrament of Reconciliation in RE in depth in the Spring term in Year 8.

## **Section 8 Tutor group prayers on non-Assembly days**

8.1 Students have an entitlement to Collective Worship every day but it need not be delivered through assemblies every day. On non-assembly days it is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to provide a prayer during morning Registration time. The Form Tutor may lead the prayer themselves or appoint a member of the tutor group to do so. There is a comprehensive and varied electronic prayer resource on the network. Prayer folders are provided for each tutor group by the Chaplain, who also emails form tutors with additional prayers, readings and PowerPoint presentations that can be used as aids to prayer and reflection.

8.2 Form tutors may use prayers composed by students. In Year 7 in RE students write prayers which are put together into a book which is given to the form tutor for use. Form tutors may also ask tutees to compose prayers or sometimes students may wish to extemporize or to include personal intentions for prayer, in the style of bidding prayers. It is appropriate to pray for themselves and their

needs, the needs of friends and family members including the sick, and to pray for the needs of the world, especially when there are wars or disasters.

8.3 Form tutors may use prayers or readings at their own discretion too. On other days a short period of silent prayer followed by communal saying of the Our Father or Hail Mary or Glory Be can be a helpful way to pray. All students have the St. Alban's school prayer on a prayer card and this can also be used at tutor time. There is a selection of formal prayers in the Student and Teacher planners.

8.4 Classes can be brought to the Chapel for Morning Prayer with the Chaplain by appointment.

8.5 One of the benefits of these daily prayers is that the concerns of life and of the world are brought to God regularly and that to pray to God about any concern is a very normal response to any need. This will nourish the faith and prayer life of students and their relationship with God

## **Section 9 The Liturgical Year**

9.1 Students experience the special feasts and seasons of the Church e.g. Advent, Lent, Pentecost at Assemblies and through special activities in the Chapel such as Advent Experience, Easter Experience and Pentecost Experience, the Stations of the Cross, the Advent wreath, hymns and prayers.

9.2 The start and end of terms are marked with liturgies or special assemblies for the whole school.

9.3. Each year group until Year 11 has an annual Reflection day. For Year 8 instead they have the option of a week-long retreat, currently held at The Briars.

9.4 According to the liturgical season we offer different types of prayer– e.g. rosary (May and October), adoration (June) and praying for those who have died (November).

9.5 Staff start the day with prayer at staff briefing, and meetings begin with prayer.

## **Section 10 Support and Monitoring**

10.1 Staff inset training sessions are offered on how to lead collective worship and on teaching within the ethos of a Catholic school and the Chaplain and Head of RE are happy to help answer questions and talk through ideas.

10.2 Monitoring of Collective Worship includes:

- Observations of collective acts of worship;
- Discussions with those who lead worship;
- Monitoring is regularly undertaken by the Head of RE and members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Students and other members of staff present are also asked for verbal feedback.

## **Review Arrangements**

To be reviewed every three years.

---

Signed by J. McCall, Chair of Governors:

Date:

---