



## Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Policy Agreed	July 2023
To be Reviewed	
Written by	Mrs Lockett
Signed	
Designation	

### ST MALACHY'S SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

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We will study, pray, play and celebrate together.

We will care for each other and look after each other, just like a big family. It is important to remember that we are all good and clever in different ways.

We will learn important lessons that will help us when we are grown up.

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This policy has been developed to ensure that all adults at St. Malachy's R.C. Primary Schools are working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Within this, children have the right to be treated equally in line with the equality duty was created under the Equality Act 2010. Additionally, all staff at St Malachy's aim to teach children about worship in order to promote a positive relationship between themselves and God as well as developing their full potential as part of the community. This is in order to promote tolerance and respect of different faiths, which in turn, promotes community cohesion now, and in later life. Through this policy, we aim to create and maintain a safe learning environment where all children feel safe, secure and valued and know they will be listened to and taken seriously. Additionally, under the Education Act 2011, schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils and are committed to the guidance set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023.' Our policy ensures that we comply with our Statutory Duties.

### The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy at St Malachy's

It is our belief that Prayer and Liturgy in a Catholic school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to the invitation to enter into a relationship with God, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

It is also our belief that Prayer and Liturgy is far more than a statutory requirement. It is a crucial aspect to the spiritual life of our school and to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Prayer and Liturgy is an important part of our distinctive ethos.

We believe that the undertaking of daily Prayer and Liturgy promotes community cohesion by creating a consistent structure around the core values of the Catholic Faith – at St Malachy's, our core values are faith, hope, joy, peace and love.

Throughout the year, we will come together to celebrate important events in the Liturgical calendar as well as the start and end of the academic year. Through regular prayer and liturgy, including Mass, the structure of the Church's year will become embedded within each pupil's life.

### Legal Requirements of Prayer and Liturgy

At St Malachy's, we recognise that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils as this is a legal requirement. However, we also recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their child from Prayer and Liturgy. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from Prayer and Liturgy, it is important that they are given the following information:

- It is an integral part of the school ethos.
- Prayer and Liturgy is not always undertaken during a specific slot.
- It can be undertaken in a variety of contexts at a variety of times.
- It could be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts of worship in school groups.

At St Malachy's, we recognise that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also recognise that Prayer and Liturgy and assembly are distinct activities, however, they may sometimes form part of the same gathering. It will be an educational activity or experience that all can contribute to and all can gain from.

### The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St Malachy's

At St Malachy's, we understand that Prayer and Liturgy is an inclusive activity, which takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- It is for all who are part of the worshipping community in church.
- It is for all who have experienced their first experiences of church through school.
- It is for all those from other Christian traditions – or none.
- It is for all from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

### The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy at St Malachy's aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God – to develop an awareness and understanding of the presence of God in each individual child's life and to encourage a personal response to that presence.
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues - allow each child to develop their conscience and make sound moral judgements based on their commitment to following Christ.
- To explore their own beliefs - offer opportunities to deepen their faith and foster attitudes of care and respect for each other.
- 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 enrich religious experience.
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development - live, experience and understand the Liturgical life of the Church through the Liturgical Year together with Solemnities and Feast days.
- 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.'
- Promote the sacramental life of Christian families and to encourage parents to take an active part in the preparation of their children for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion.
- Foster school-parish links to ensure that our children remain exposed and committed to the Catholic faith experiencing liturgy and worship within and beyond the school curriculum.
- Enable each child to participate, respond and lead liturgy and worship.

### The Principles of All Acts of Worship

At St Malachy's we strive to upkeep the following principles:

- Give glory and honour to God.

- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character.
- Worship will be at the heart of all school life. It will be a special time, which remains a distinct activity, separate from other school activities.
- It will remain age/child appropriate and will be differentiated appropriately so it remains an inclusive and positive activity.
- Promote positive liturgical experiences that prepare pupils for more complex liturgical experiences. These experiences will be appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church. In order to do this, celebrations will be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience, be short and appropriately paced and be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

### Prayer and Liturgy at St Malachy's

At St Malachy's, we recognise that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils as this is a legal requirement:

- Monday - We gather together in phases for Prayer and Liturgy on a Monday. This is led by class teachers in turn based on the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday.
- Tuesday – All classes choose a theme for their class-based Prayer and Liturgy. The service This may link to a particular Bible story; a feast day, it could be based on a word, such as 'friendship' or 'compassion' or it could be linked to the core values of our school.
- Wednesday – We celebrate and praise God through music and song at singing assembly.
- Thursday – All classes undertake their Prayer and Liturgy.
- Friday - We come together to celebrate our achievements and successes in our assembly.

### The Planning, Content and Delivery of Prayer and Liturgy

- It will be structured around the Liturgical calendar with reference to the Church's seasons, feast days and curriculum R.E.
- Prayer and Liturgy will have a scripture focus – this again will be dependent on the Liturgical calendar, the Church's season, feast days or from Come and See (curriculum R.E.).
- It will allow flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community.
- Each act of worship follows a fourfold action: gathering, hearing God's Word, responding to the Word and being sent forward with a Mission based on the worship we have participated in.
- It will develop skills that enable pupils to prepare, organise and lead worship in an active way.

At St Malachy's, we take a progressive approach to Prayer and Liturgy in order to ensure that it is appropriate and meaningful for all pupils:

### Prayer and Liturgy Aims - Early Years Foundation Stage

Within Prayer and Liturgy, children in EYFS will do the following:

- Begin to listen to scripture.
- Take part in prayers with prompts.

### Prayer and Liturgy Aims - Key Stage One

Within Prayer and Liturgy, children in KS1 will do the following:

#### Year One

- Lay out altar with help.

- Listen to scripture.
- Take part in prayers with prompts.
- Participate in short periods of silence.

### Year Two

- Lay out altar with help.
- Read scripture.
- Make up own prayers.
- Increasing comfort with periods of silence.

### Prayer and Liturgy Aims - Key Stage Two

Within Prayer and Liturgy, children in KS2 will do the following:

#### Year Three

- Lay out altar with some guidance.
- Select theme for scripture.
- Respond to a psalm.
- Make up own prayers.
- Spend time in silence.

#### Year Four

- Set up altar independently.
- Prepare reading and psalm (help may be given).
- Make up own prayers.
- Select prayers for use.
- Develop own responses to psalms.
- Use ICT to select image that can be used for reflection.

#### Year Five and Year Six

- Set up altar independently, becoming increasingly creative.
- Select readings and prayers from a variety of sources (Bible, books, websites etc)
- Compose prayers in different styles to match given needs.
- Prayers include increasing detail – what they are asking for, why, what they want the outcome to be.
- Create ICT aids (PowerPoints etc).
- Match prayers and readings to a given theme.
- Create own symbolic actions.
- Spend increasing amounts of time in silence.

### Prayer at St Malachy's

At St Malachy's, prayer consists of:

- A quiet and calm atmosphere where everyone shows reverence and respect, then:
- listening - being attentive to the voice/word of God.
- speaking - expressing our heart's deepest longings and desires to the One who knows and understands us better than we know and understand ourselves.
- reflecting - thinking about our relationship with God. Pondering on the actions of God in history and in the unfolding mystery of our lives.
- resting – simply being consciously in the presence of God, knowing that we are loved.

### Prayer Experiences

The forms and styles of prayer that children experience is varied:

- Traditional Prayers e.g. Hail Mary
- Repetitive prayer phrases

- Praying the psalms “I thank you for the wonder of my being.” (Psalm 139)
- Scripture – reflections on this
- Bodily prayer – genuflecting
- Prayer of the heart – stillness “Be still and know that I am God.”
- Contemplation
- Gestures e.g. the sign of the cross and the sign of peace
- Hymns, both modern and traditional
- Music – listening to quiet reflective music or other
- Litanies – e.g. Thanks be to God
- Processions – Gospel processions with sung acclamation
- Prayer services and liturgies
- Celebrations – gathering in prayer, song, scripture, sharing food and celebrating all aspects of life
- Use of visuals – art, banners, displays,

### Words for Prayer

Children are taught that prayer can be an everyday way of praising, thanking, asking and saying sorry. Children are taught to use prayer to ask for God’s help in times of difficulty e.g. if somebody is sick or dying. Over time, children learn formal prayers. Each key stage has age-appropriate prayers.

### Developmental Approach to Prayer

Knowing prayers by heart is a gift for life. Those prayers marked \* are ones that children will learn to say from memory:

Early Years Foundation Stage	Key Stage One	Key Stage Two
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sign of the cross *</li> <li>- St Malachy’s school prayer</li> <li>- Hail Mary</li> <li>- Our Father</li> <li>- Morning and Evening prayers</li> <li>- Prayers before and after meals</li> <li>- Simple responses at Mass</li> <li>- Greeting the Gospel (acclamation)</li> <li>- Simple litanies of thanks and praise</li> <li>- Prayerful reflection on the day</li> <li>- Prayers for the blessing of the Advent wreath</li> <li>- Prayers for the lighting of the Advent candles</li> </ul>	<p>All those listed previously, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sign of the cross *</li> <li>- St Malachy’s school prayer*</li> <li>- Hail Mary*</li> <li>- Our Father*</li> <li>- St Malachy’s School Prayer</li> <li>- Glory be to the Father*</li> <li>- Morning Offering*</li> <li>- Grace at Meals*</li> <li>- Act of Sorrow</li> <li>- Mass responses*</li> </ul>	<p>All those listed previously, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I confess*</li> <li>- Eternal rest*</li> <li>- Act of contrition*</li> <li>- The mysteries of the Rosary</li> <li>- Stations of the Cross</li> <li>- Prayers at Mass:</li> <li>- Penitential Rite</li> <li>- Glory to God (Gloria)</li> <li>- Offertory prayers</li> <li>- Lamb of God</li> <li>- Holy holy, holy*</li> <li>- Some simple phrases from the psalms</li> </ul>

### Recording

Prayer and Liturgy is recorded on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources. Evidence of pupils’ contributions, prayers, reflections will also be recorded and will be done so in a variety of ways (photographs, videos etc.)

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The provision of Prayer and Liturgy at St Malachy's will be regularly monitored and evaluated. Within this process, monitoring will ensure that Prayer and Liturgy continues to meet the needs of all pupils and adjustments will be made as necessary. Monitoring will also be undertaken to ensure that pupils are making progress in acquiring and developing the necessary skills to organise and lead Prayer and Liturgy.

#### Resources

- A display in the hall that is reflective of the Liturgical Calendar. There will also be focal points in each classroom that will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.
- Scripture and a range of commentaries.
- Prayer books and CD's.
- Candles.
- Crosses.
- Stones.
- Coloured cloths to reflect the Liturgical calendar.
- Bibles.

#### Voluntary Worship and Retreats

There will be opportunities for voluntary worship throughout the school year which will reflect the liturgical season:

- October – Rosary Lunchtime club.
- December – Advent Lunchtime club.
- Lent – Lent Lunchtime club, Stations of the Cross reflections.
- May – Worships that focus on devotion to Mary.

#### Parent/Parish/Community Links

Liturgies, celebrations and events related to the Catholic Life of our school are shared in school newsletters, the school twitter and are published on the school website. The Subject Leader will write a Catholic life of the school report which is shared with governors at the end of each term.

Parents and families are regularly invited to join the school community in Masses, assemblies, class liturgies and fundraising activities. Parents of children in Sacramental year groups are also invited to Sacramental Meetings, workshops and Masses as part of the Sacramental Preparation Programme. We have also established strong links with the Presentation Sisters and the Missionary of Charity Brothers, who support the school with liturgies, celebrations parish/school events and after-school clubs.

#### Big Question Books

Each class has a big question book to develop critical thinking about Religion and other subjects.

#### Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy coordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years.

#### Evaluating the Impact of Prayer and Liturgy

The impact of worship is evaluated by children and adults after each session and points for development are considered, making worship an evaluative process.

#### Safeguarding

Use of any staff and volunteers will be in line with the school's policy on Safeguarding and DBS/staffing checks. Please also refer to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Section Nine – Recruitment).

#### Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate access prayer.