

St Thomas More Catholic High School



Collective Worship Policy

All members of our community are given equal opportunities in line with the Single Equality Duty.

Policy Written:

May 2024

**Adopted By Local Governing
Committee**

04/06/24

St Thomas More Catholic High School Mission Statement

St. Thomas More Catholic High School is a Catholic school, and as such we strive to follow the example of Jesus Christ in our work, worship and relationships.

Our aims are:

- To be a community based on Christian values, notably Love, Justice, Peace, Truth and Tolerance, and to encourage individuals in their commitment to these ideals.
- To provide a secure, welcoming and ordered environment in which individuals learn to value and respect both themselves and others.
- To give individuals the opportunities to develop their full potential as human beings, and to encourage and challenge them to do so.
- To encourage everyone to strive to do their best and to strive for the highest standards in all areas of activity. To help children grow into confident, open, resourceful young people with a sense of responsibility and of service.

An Overview of Collective Worship

First and foremost "St. Thomas More is a Catholic school and as such we attempt to follow the example of Jesus Christ in our work, worship and relationships."

As a Catholic school we believe that there should be regular opportunities for members of our community to join together in prayer and reflection. The school recognises that there are formal and informal occasions when this is possible and that there are many forms of prayer and worship. The school seeks to encourage new ideas in liturgy and prayer that will appeal to as many of our community as possible. Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. *In terms of the right of withdrawal by students from religious education and/or collective worship we follow the CES guidance titled "Guidance on the right of withdrawal from religious education and/or collective worship."*

Worship will also be informed by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory.

Collective Worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church;
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church;
- Those from other Christian traditions;
- Those from other faith backgrounds – or none.

Opportunities for Collective Worship

Registration/Form Tutor time

- Each day will begin with a prayer. Form classes are expected to pray together and this will be student led.
- There will be a moment for reflection on a topic or issue that prompts students to think about others and about their relationship with God.
- The School Chaplain co-ordinates with the Form Tutors the writing of the prayers by the students which are then shared for use throughout the school year.

Weekly Assemblies

- The weekly assembly for each year group is an important event as it symbolises our community and unity of purpose and is an opportunity for us to reflect and pray together.
- The assembly will be led by the Head of Year, School Chaplain, Form class or a senior member of staff. Occasionally, guest speakers will be invited to lead assemblies.
- The central purpose of the assembly is the opportunity for the year group to pray together, so Heads of Year have a responsibility to ensure that this is achieved.
- The assembly will include a prayer.
- Assemblies led by a Form class will cover a range of appropriate themes, and each of these should be linked to either the Mission Statement or the Liturgical Year of the Church.
- A more formal student led prayer time will take place within assembly approximately once per half term.

School Liturgy and Mass

- Throughout the year there will be opportunities for the community to come together in worship and participate in the Mass.
- Students will be given every opportunity to participate in the preparation and leading of Mass. The School Chaplain and relevant teaching staff will work together to realise this and have clear roles and responsibilities. The School Chaplain, and the teacher with whole school responsibility for Collective Worship will be responsible for leading and delegating these roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities are not prescriptive as they are subject to change depending on the nature of the liturgy. (See appendix)
- Special consideration will be given to key seasons of the Church's year e.g. Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter
- During the academic year, there will be occasions for larger attendance of Mass such as the Advent Mass in the week before the Christmas holidays and
- The feast day of St. Thomas More is celebrated with Mass and festivities at one of our local churches within Tynemouth Priory Partnership.

Weekly Mass during lesson time for Students

- The weekly voluntary Mass is offered to each half year group on a rotational basis. This is a voluntary opportunity held in the Chapel where possible. Mass will be offered unless it is not possible for a priest to celebrate the Eucharist.
- Those students volunteering to attend the Mass will work with the School Chaplain to plan the Mass which will naturally ensure student leadership of Collective Worship.
- This will usually take place in one of the Tynemouth Priory Partnership churches.

Staff Prayer

- On a weekly basis there is an opportunity for staff to attend a Staff Liturgy/Prayer.
- Staff are encouraged to lead, as well as participate, in these liturgies.
- There are various opportunities within these services for staff to "gather, listen, respond and go forth."
- Prayer and reflection also form part of the Headteacher's weekly Staff Briefing.
- There will usually be a period of extended prayer at the beginning of each INSET day and at the end of each term. Whenever possible, a staff Mass will also be arranged for staff INSET days

Retreat Experiences

- We aim to offer all students and as many staff and governors as practical an off-site retreat experience.
- The Chaplaincy Report to Governors will be used to evidence the most recent examples of these experiences.

Raising Awareness of Collective Worship

- As a Catholic School we recognise the importance of positive role models and examples in the school community. As such it is important to promote, inform and report to stakeholders about Collective Worship.
- Form tutors are expected to encourage students to attend and be involved where appropriate with Mass, liturgy, prayer and retreats. The School Chaplain will also advertise Collective Worship using ICT and media.

- The School Newsletter and Chaplaincy Report will be used as media to inform parents, governors and students when Collective Worship has taken place.

Wider Links

- The school will continue to support and encourage participation in opportunities for worship and witness of faith offered by the parishes of Tynemouth Priory Partnership and the wider Diocesan community.
- The school Chaplaincy team will annually develop and review a programme for Mass, Prayer and Liturgy.
- The School Chaplain attends the Partnership Co-Workers meetings and is involved with Partnership Youth Ministry, including the Confirmation Programme.

Appendix - Collective Worship - Roles and Responsibilities

All acts of Collective Worship will involve a mix of people (both staff and students) from the involved group. No act of worship can be led by the presenter alone.

Features of Prayer and Liturgy	<p>Our acts of Collective Worship will involve some or all of the following features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Focus or symbol 3. Sign of the Cross 4. Reading/Reflection 5. Response to reading/reflection 6. Prayer 7. Thought for the day 8. Music
Practicalities of Prayer and Liturgy	<p>Our acts of Prayer and Liturgy will involve some or all of the following practicalities:</p> <p>Liaise with, welcome and thank the Priest</p> <p><u>Publicise Prayer and Mass:</u> Assembly announcement/Posters/E-mail /Daily bulletin/Chaplaincy report/School Newsletter</p> <p>Check availability of relevant staff to attend liturgy and help generally with supervision.</p> <p>Set out altar, lectern, table at back of hall and microphones (priest and readers). Clear altar at the end.</p> <p>Choose readings/Select readers/Prepare Bidding prayers/Practice readers</p> <p>Arrange Eucharistic Ministers</p> <p>"Settle" students, welcome priest, introduce theme of Mass</p> <p>Liturgical Music and Drama</p> <p>Communion</p>
Staff involved	<p>Our acts of Prayer and Liturgy will involve some or all of the following staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaplain, (vast majority of practicalities), SLT, HOYS, RE, Music, ICT technicians, FT's

School Chaplain and their line manager will oversee liaison and arrange.