



Prayer and Liturgy Policy



Date of Review: July 2026

Date of Next Review: July 2027

1. Context

'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.)

Worship, prayer and liturgical celebration are central to the Catholic nature of St Angela's school and the religious journey and experience of the students.

The place of prayer is of high importance in our school and through prayer we uphold, and maintain the Catholic ethos. Prayer is part of everyday life in St Angela's, and is performed in several different realms of school life, permeating all aspects of the school. The school has a chapel in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. We encourage its use by all, for prayer and reflection and to celebrate Mass in the chapel on a weekly basis.

At St Angela's we are called at Baptism to be pilgrims on our journey of faith, and as a school we are guiding and supporting the students' spiritual journey as they make their way through school life with us and as they enter the wider world on their own life mission.

2. Mission statement and ethos

Through our curriculum and community life, we seek to meet the needs of the whole person and to enable all to achieve their full potential. We offer to all the challenge of building and living in a Catholic Christian community in which all members are equally valued. We share with St Angela a commitment to the service of young people, which will empower them to play their full part in society.

In the light of this we aim to:

- recognise and respond sensitively to the talents and needs of every student and provide the most appropriate means of developing their full potential;
- ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all;
- welcome, value and respect all who come to the school;
- provide opportunities for experiencing the fullness of Catholic and Christian life with understanding and respect for all people, cultures, traditions and faiths;
- build a community based on justice and a sense of personal responsibility while acknowledging the power of healing, reconciliation and forgiveness;
- promote dialogue and co-operation with the wider community.

St Angela's School is a Christian community of prayer and worship that follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church and of St Angela. Prayer and worship are an integral part of school life with an emphasis on the Eucharist. Whilst distinctively Catholic, and distinctively Ursuline, the school is also welcoming of those of all faiths, including those who do not believe. The spiritual life of the school permeates every aspect of the community and every part of the day and is therefore at the very heart of what we are and what we do.

The prayer and liturgy directory summarises this perfectly when it says

‘Just as Our Lord Jesus Christ is at the heart of all our prayer and liturgy, so too he is at the centre of every Catholic school. His Gospel is the reference point for its ethos and values; he offers the definitive example of the educator.’

3. Statement of Requirement

St Angela’s Ursuline, as a Catholic school, provides an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all students, including those in the Sixth Form (Section 70, 1988 Education Act) that is in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20; Instrument of Government, clause 2).

St Angela’s Ursuline recognises that Sixth Form students can choose to withdraw themselves from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1B)), and parents of students up to the age of 16 can withdraw their child from prayer and liturgy.

The school’s provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil students’ entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which pupils in the school will be familiar. Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school, this means that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education

4. Responsibility

Governance: The Governors, as guardians of the Catholic school’s life and mission, have a 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
- There is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator/Lay Chaplain)
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- There is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

Headteacher: The Headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

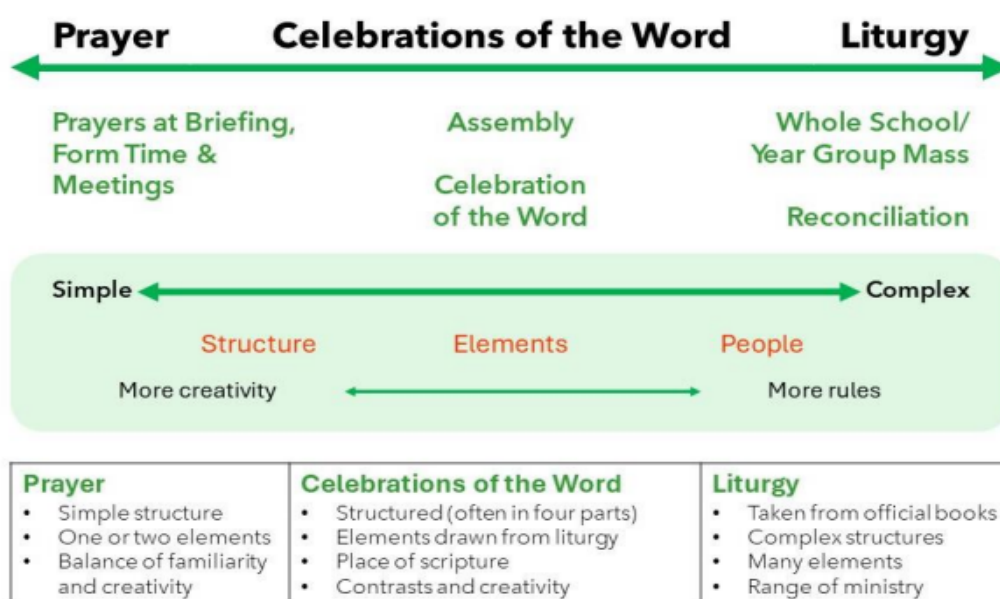
- Prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- They work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
 - Those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- There are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator: The Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator nurtures and develops an expression of spirituality, the school has a Chaplain whose role is to maintain the broad aims of liturgy as set out in this document.

The role is to organise:

- All school Liturgical Masses, Celebrations of the word and many Assemblies are developed in conjunction with the liturgy representatives
- The use of the Chapel, including lunchtimes groups for vulnerable students
- The use of the grotto as a prayer space and for rosary
- The booking of priests and speakers
- Create material during form periods linked to canonical events, holy days of obligation and Saint/feast days
- Creation of resources for staff involved in assembly preparation
- Inset for staff
- Monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- Monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the headteacher and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- Liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.
- Retreats/days of reflection for students and staff

St Angela's Ursuline school is in line with the guidance provided below, and the prayer and liturgy directory which states 'participation should be 'full, conscious and active'.



5. Participation and Impact

We invite all who are present to engage in four related actions:

1. To be present: pupils bring themselves to the celebration, with all that is going on in their lives and in the world. Being alert to this is the first step in engaging with any form of worship.
2. To experience: to engage in what is happening through the senses – at the most basic, to see and to hear.
3. To reflect: to ask what has been experienced, and what it means to their lives.
4. To respond: to ask how to take forward what has been experienced into living a good life. Taken together, these actions map out the way in which a liturgical celebration can mark a stopping-point on a spiritual journey.

Depending on their religious faith, Catholics, other Christians, members of other religions and faith communities, as well as non-believers, will engage in these actions in different ways, and the explicit religious content of the event will assume different meaning and weight.

6. Prayer:

“Prayer unites us; it makes us brothers and sisters. In prayer, God keeps calling us, opening our hearts to charity.” Pope Francis

Prayer has been traditionally described as ‘lifting up of the hearts and minds to God’, which means it involves our whole person – our head as well as our heart. Communal prayer forms an essential dimension of daily life in our school. Each prayer time has a clear, simple structure, giving space for an appropriate time of silence.

Staff begin each lesson with a prayer, which are often student-led and with an intention. During RE lessons the students learn specific prayers and their deeper purposes and meanings such as the Our Father, Hail Holy Queen, the Magnificat and the prayer of St Francis along with an understanding of the importance of spontaneous prayer and special intentions.

‘Communal prayer forms an essential dimension of life in a Catholic school. Staff and pupils are invited to recognise God’s action in their lives and the life of the school, and in response to express together their needs and those of the whole human family, and to offer thanks for all that is good.’ (PLD)

Prayer is an important reinforcement of the nature of the school, as well as allowing our young people to express their faith in a variety of ways. They therefore understand the nature of the Catholic faith and develop spiritually throughout their time at the school.

Purposes:

- To bring students and staff closer to understanding God and the message of the Gospels in their daily lives.
- To enrich the spiritual life of both staff and students at St Angela's.
- To reiterate the Catholic ethos of the school.
- To open students to a variety of ways of praying, therefore, exposing them to the spectrum of prayer available in the Catholic Church.
- To allow students to question their faith and take an active role in developing the liturgical life of the school.
- To help students understand the importance of prayer in their lives and personal faith journey.
- To reinforce our mission statement based on Romans 10:1.
- To provide an environment where prayer is accepted and encouraged.
- To give spiritual support for all of those in the school community.

In addition to the prayer at the start of every lesson, the most concrete way in which we provide opportunities for prayer and spiritual growth include Assemblies, Mass, Prayer Groups and Form Group prayer, these are all developed by students with staff mentoring. Every week assemblies are led by a member of the senior management team, head of year, or by our pupils themselves. All assemblies/class prayers encourage student and staff participation either through active involvement in the preparation and presentation or by listening and participation. Each Form Group has a Friday Mass in which they prepare the Bidding Prayers supported by their Form Tutor. Readings of the Day and the Bidding Prayers are then read by Liturgy Leaders.

Month	Prayer
September	Ursuline Prayer Angel of God - Feast of the Archangels/Feast of the Guardian Angels
October	Rosary, Magnificat, Angelus, Hail Holy Queen, The Memorare - Month of Mary
November	Eternal Rest
December	Richard of Chichester Prayer - new Liturgical Year
January	Ursuline Prayers Jesus, Mary and Joseph
February	Act of Love
March	Act of Contrition - Lent The Benedictus - Annunciation of Jesus
April	Act of Faith Act of Hope
May	Rosary, Magnificat, Angelus, Hail Holy Queen, The Memorare - Month of Mary
June	Come, Holy Spirit - Pentecost Morning Offering - Pentecost
July	Richard of Chichester Prayer - Renewal

In addition to the above, the following prayers are said throughout the academic year:

- Sign of the Cross
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Ursuline Prayer
- Glory be to the Father
- Grace Before Meals
- Grace After Meals

Grace Before and After Meals can be said spontaneously by students during lunchtime. The Apostles Creed will be taught by the RE Department.

St Angela's has many staff of different faith backgrounds, however all staff are inducted into the catholic life of the school and receive a session on catholic ethos. They are encouraged to facilitate opportunities of prayer as well as being led in prayer by SLT in briefings and meetings.

The Prayer and Liturgy Directory states *'Praying and celebrating liturgies together on a regular basis offer staff an opportunity to deepen their own spiritual lives and experience different types of prayer'*.

7. Celebrations of the Word

Whole school assemblies follow liturgical and secular themes in a cyclical pattern e.g. Advent, the Jubilee Year of Mercy, The Diocese Centenary Year Celebration, the Prevent agenda. Our daily Acts of Worship takes the form of either an assembly or class prayers and reflection.

These assemblies regularly focus on the Gospel message taught during the previous Sunday Mass, to make the connection to the wider faith journey. Prayers are taken from the planner or the Prayer booklets given to each member of staff at the beginning of the year.

Whole school Celebrations of the Word take place at key times in the Liturgical year such as Christmas, Easter, and the end of the summer term. Each Celebrational service is centred on the appropriate theme; with the Easter liturgy being a solemn focus in preparation for the remembrance of Christ's. Catholic social teaching is also embedded and recognised through these celebrations with reading and reflections linked to these teachings. The End of term services/liturgies are celebrated by the whole school and are developed by the liturgy representatives to reflect world issues and that of the community. In a similar way to Mass, individual pupils contribute.

8. Liturgy

'The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer. The invitation to respond 'Amen' in prayer is the invitation to enter into the same dynamic of affirmation, faith, and offering, whether that prayer is one of adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, or praise. 'Amen' is a Hebrew word which means 'so be it'. The saying 'Amen' also expresses a desire and willingness to engage in the missionary activity of the Church. (Sacrosanctum Concilium)

The most familiar form of the liturgy celebrated in our school is Mass. They are led by a priest and follow liturgical books such as the Roman Missal and Lectionary. The readings are said and the hymns are led by staff or students who receive Holy Communion at Mass. Staff and students of other faith traditions and non-believers support the liturgy through their respectful presence.

The weekly mass is on a Form Group rota basis and attended by the Form, their Form Tutor, the Chaplain, Head of Music (to play accompaniment for the hymns) and the Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour and Welfare. St Angela's school encourages priests from our Deanery to come into school regularly.

Our Masses are celebrated by one of the four priests of the Community of St John, in the St Antony's, Forest Gate, parish. Hymns are an integral part of the Mass. Form Classes are provided with readings, and the students write the bidding prayers and the liturgy representatives develop the themes for the offertory and songs. They may perform a drama to the gospel or a post communion reflection on the theme of their mass.

During the year, there may be other occasions when the Eucharist is celebrated for a particular reason e.g. bereavement, and the welcome Mass for Year 6.

Year 13 has a Leavers Mass in May. This is a focal point in our school year when we come together to thank God and celebrate the collective achievement of the school and praise pupils for their contribution to the life of the school and the community.

There are three whole school Masses during the year (The opening at the start of our school year in Autumn, the Feast of St Angela in the spring term and End of Year Celebration Mass in the summer term. Individual members of each Form are asked to contribute music, readings and to objects for the offertory.

The Sacraments are fostered in St Angela's. The Eucharist rests at the heart of the school and is reserved in the Tabernacle in the school chapel which is celebrated every Friday at mass as well as revered through Eucharistic adoration. Many of our students make their Confirmation in the parishes, this is something that is celebrated within the school. A celebration mass is said in the spring term and they are encouraged to speak to their RE teachers about their Confirmation name choices.

St Angela's has a rich history of music excellence with many students keen to take an active part in the school choirs and instrumental groups. These groups add a richness to the liturgical celebrations in the school. Students are encouraged to sing communally as well as students having solo roles as cantors during liturgical celebrations. The Hymn selection is tailored to the liturgical calendar and adds spiritual value and richness to worship in the school.

Hymn Repertoire				
Here I am Lord	Our God reigns	Servant king	We are one in the Spirit	Walk in the light of the Lord
The Lord of the Dance (Easter)	Were you there (Lent)	Sing Hosanna	As I kneel before you (May/October)	Christ be our light (Easter)
Abide with me (November)	Amazing Grace	Oh come oh Come Emmanuel (Advent)	Gifts of bread and wine	Here I am to worship

9. Student Faith Journey

Journey of faith, reflective sessions take place for all students in the school chapel. For example, sessions explore the Rosary in October and May and in November remembrance of those who have gone before us. The sessions follow the Catholic Liturgical Calendar and the Papal Cyclical Year, throughout the academic year. Students have a key role in planning all of the reflective aspects of the sessions.

The Chapel rests at the heart of the school and is a place for students to engage with their own faith journey. It is also used for small class worship which occurs within the RE curriculum. We have dedicated Liturgy Representatives in each form group from Year 7 to Year 11. Each form class is given the opportunity to celebrate a collective mass throughout the year. Marian devotions take place during October and May and special Saint's Days are acknowledged. During the Lenten period the Chapel is also used for Stations of the Cross and also Eucharistic adoration.

Retreats

Years 7 to 11 are given a full one day retreat which explores a relevant theme. Activities are a combination of decisions, action, reflection and creativity. They are also centered around themes linked to Catholic values and Catholic social teachings. The retreat either starts with mass or closes with Mass. Allowing the student to embrace the power of the Liturgy with their year group.

October	October	November	March	April	May	June	June
Year 11: Rise theatre: <i>'Masterpiece'</i>	Year 7: I am Serviam	Year 10: Being voices for Justice	KS4/5 Voluntary Flame conference 2027	Year 9: Fan the flame- Women of God	Year 10: Voluntary Abbotswick Residential retreat	Year 12 Voluntary Ursuline retreat- Farm Street	Year 8 Rise Theatre: <i>'The Happiness show'</i>

The importance of dialogue:

St Angela's is in a diverse and multicultural community of Newham. The Prayer and Liturgy directory reminds us that *'The Catholic Church is committed to dialogue with members of different religious traditions at all levels. Where schools have pupils from other traditions, it is important that there is dialogue with the families, and local religious leaders where possible. Such dialogue helps the school articulate and implement a clear position on the presence and involvement of members of other religious traditions in its prayer and liturgy'*

As a school we are involved with the wider religious education in Newham through the SACRE programme which offers students opportunities to have wider dialogues and gives a space to share faith journeys and experiences.

The Ursuline Sisters are an integral part of the school. The school is actively engaged at Post 16 with the Ursuline Links Programme and key staff attend our annual Ursuline conference.

10. Resourcing and Budgeting

Resourcing Prayer and Liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated space for prayer and liturgy in our Chapel. It is open to staff and students to pray and/or be in a place of calm throughout the day. Our main hall in Brescia has been appropriately equipped to facilitate celebrations of the word and liturgies. Religious artefacts and images are on display throughout the school and every room displays a crucifix. Our plasma screen displays throughout the school provide reflections on the weekly Gospel theme and important celebrations of the Liturgical Year. Staff training and formation costs are funded to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

11. Training and Formation

All new staff are supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading Prayer and Liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs are identified, especially for staff who have not worked in a Catholic school before and are provided with appropriate training and formation. Whole-staff professional development is provided at least once a year, so that all staff understand the importance of Prayer and Liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required. This is centered about core Catholic beliefs and practices and also a presentation is delivered on Catholic social teaching which explores ways that CST can be embedded in the lessons and around the school. The Lay Chaplain will receive ongoing formation by attending the termly Diocesan Chaplains' meetings, the annual Ursuline Conference and the Ursuline Chaplaincy meetings.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy takes place regularly and involves all key stakeholders including students, parents/carers, staff, clergy, and governors. Areas for development are identified and issues raised are to be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

Monitoring

This Policy is monitored by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team of St Angela's Ursuline School. Specialist staff related to the policy area also monitor its use and suitability making recommendations for development when the need arises.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy is undertaken by the Governing Body of St Angela's Ursuline School as set at Governing Body meetings within a framework of annual/biannual compliance checks