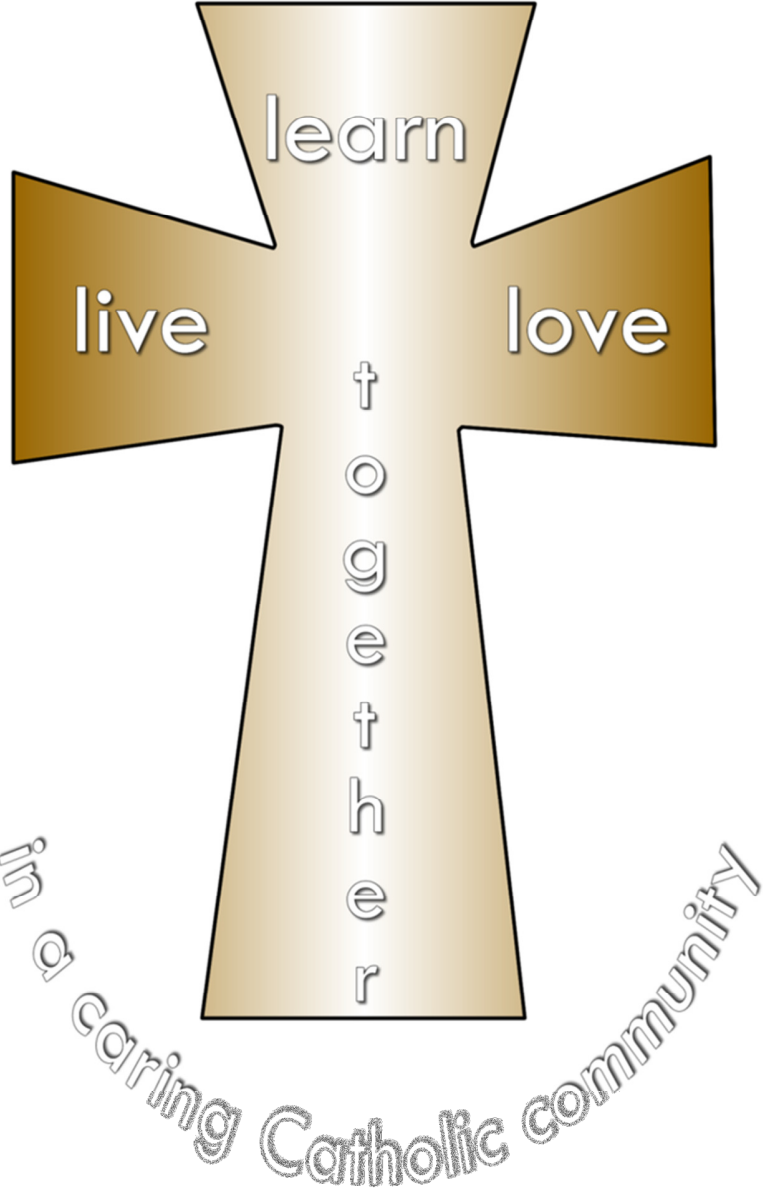


Our Lady's Catholic College Lancaster

Collective Worship and Prayer Policy

SEPTEMBER 2012





learn

live

love

t
o
g
e
t
h
e
r

in a caring Catholic community

OUR SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

Our Lady's Catholic College seeks to be an outstanding Catholic comprehensive school. It provides a happy but purposeful environment with a clear and unambiguous focus on teaching and learning. Standards of attainment are high across all key stages. In comparison with similar schools standards are high and students make very good progress.

The school's distinctive ethos is visible in the richness of its worship, in the quality of relationships at all levels and in its broad and balanced curriculum, which offers all pupils the chance to succeed and which places a premium on their spiritual and moral development. The school's atmosphere is inclusive, welcoming and conducive to learning. All members of the school community – including Chaplaincy understand their roles and responsibilities and clearly feel their contribution is valued.

Our Lady's is a school where children are nurtured but challenged to do their best. They are respectful and respected, enthused and enthusiastic. They are proud of their achievements and proud of their school. They are actively involved in its life, particularly in the many extracurricular activities which are a feature of the school.

The staff of Our Lady's are expert and dedicated. They are confident and assured, innovative and forward-looking. They readily celebrate success, displaying a high level of professional commitment to developing their own expertise. Everyone accepts his/her leadership role and welcomes the opportunity to play a part in moving the school forward. Committed to working together to meet the needs of their pupils, staff are empowered to exercise considerable autonomy to achieve this. They are able to work in attractive conditions and have access to high quality resources.

Parents are well informed about the school and about their children's progress. They are supportive of the school's distinctively Catholic ethos and active partners both in their children's education and in the school's development. This productive partnership is explicitly promoted and actively celebrated through formal structures and informal contacts.

Our Lady's is highly respected in its wider community. Strong links with its family of schools enhances the education of these pupils and ensure continuity and progression. In also promoting access to its facilities to local people the school has significantly enhanced the quality of life of its neighbourhood, where it enjoys an excellent reputation.

The Governors of Our Lady's are committed, well informed and display a high degree of expertise. Their committee structure works effectively to ensure that all areas of the school's operation are rigorously monitored and evaluated. They actively support the work of the Headteacher and the staff, with whom they form a very productive partnership.

Introduction

1. Collective Worship and Prayer (CWP) is at the heart of any Catholic school. This policy on CWP is thus central to the vision and mission of Our Lady's Catholic College and is to be regarded as of the utmost significance in its management at every level. Its effective implementation is of vital importance to the overall success of the school in its aims and purposes. The CWP policy is closely related to the SMSC document but is especially significant in embodying distinctive Catholic faith and practice amongst students and staff.

2. The CWP policy reflects the emphasis given to the "Christian" and specifically "Catholic" nature of the school as is stated in the Mission Statement and which will be reflected in the high priority given to prayer and worship in our college. It will also reflect the aims of the school as it enables pupils to grow in faith and in their relationship with God as well as deepening their understanding of liturgy and prayer.

3. Successful implementation of CWP will give students and staff ample opportunities to experience the spiritual dimension of human life and especially enable the holistic education of the young people who attend Our Lady's Catholic College.

Definition and Rationale

1. The nature and purpose of worship and prayer in the Christian tradition is to give glory and thanks to God the Father who has called us to be his sons and daughters through the life death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit who empowers us to do so.
2. Worship and prayer involves also asking God to make us holy, to forgive and heal our sins and weaknesses, to give us strength in our life and work to do our best, to bless us and spread his life and love to everyone.
3. Worship and prayer brings us into a close relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord and enables us to be more effective witnesses of the Gospel in both school and society as we become more like him through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Aims and Purposes of collective worship and prayer are to:

- give praise, glory and honour to God
- introduce and deepen the relationship that staff and students have with Jesus Christ
- encourage a deeper understanding and participation in the Mass and sacrament of Reconciliation and to make accessible the riches of prayer and spirituality of the Catholic tradition
- teach young people to pray
- encourage knowledge of and participation in the Christian liturgical cycle and to be aware of relevant and significant saints, persons, dates and events in Christian history
- enable students and staff to appreciate the spiritual dimension and to recognise that consumerism and materialism is insufficient to satisfy the deepest of human desires
- enable staff and students to be aware of and appreciate the richness of other religious traditions and the witness of people from those traditions
- stimulate self- reflection and self- awareness
- develop insight into contemporary moral and ethical problems and to stimulate a caring and compassionate response to those who suffer
- encourage wonder at and celebration of God's creation
- deepen a sense of belonging to a community
- encourage a culture of regular staff and pupil participation in liturgy and prayer.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

Foundation Governors are the Bishop's (Diocesan) representatives in law and have responsibility for ensuring that prayer and worship are in accordance with Canon Law, the Bishop's directives and Diocesan guidance.

The governors as a whole have responsibility in law for determining policy and for ensuring that appropriate arrangements for the implementation of the CWP policy is in place after consultation with the Headteacher and others.

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the organisation and implementation of the above policy in accordance with the decisions of the governors especially by their inclusion in the school development plan and by the lead that is given to the rest of the school community at every level.

School Staff (Teaching and Support Staff)

All staff but especially teachers have a key role in implementing the CWP policy by their leadership, example, encouragement and in their teaching. In particular; staff in the Leadership Team play a vital role in making the CWP effective by their high profile and example, by their input at staff and student gatherings, by ensuring that worship and prayer issues are kept high on agendas and by helping to develop school life in accordance with CWP e.g. by timetabling to ensure that CWP events are not marginalized nor relegated to unsuitable areas of the school.

Subject Leaders and Learning Coordinators, Form Teachers and PSOs also have a pivotal part to play in making sure that the worship and prayer policy is properly carried out, especially in assemblies and the daily act of worship.

Chaplaincy Team & Chaplains (Including Priest and Lay Chaplain)

Chaplains, by their witness and leadership, have a very special role in ensuring that the CWP policy is successfully carried out. Preparing and leading the liturgy, assemblies, prayer and other services are essential elements in the collective worship and prayer policy. The priest chaplain ensures that the Catholic dimension of worship, particularly the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, are regularly celebrated with joy and reverence and made available to all.

Students

If the CWP policy is to be successfully implemented, it is essential that our students are convinced of its significance and support it in practice by their involvement in preparation and delivery, and respectful participation in assemblies and other liturgies.

Parents' right to withdraw

Worship and prayer is integral to the life of the school and parents should be informed of this from the outset. It should be conducted in such a way as to be sensitive to the feelings and beliefs of pupils. There is provision, however, for parents, if they so wish, to withdraw their children from collective worship and prayer if they inform the Headteacher of their reasons for doing so. However, there may be occasions when prayer and worship is conducted in a more spontaneous setting and therefore cannot be timetabled so as to enable such students to be excused from it.

Relationship to other policies/initiatives

Collective worship and prayer should be read in conjunction with the SMSC, Chaplaincy, PSHE and other policies and the RE Handbook to see the full picture regarding worship and prayer in the college.

Guidelines

Collective worship and prayer should :-

- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude
- and faith background
- Be well planned and prepared and using a variety of resources
- Be of suitable length and duration
- Respect students' and staff freedom when inviting to pray and worship
- Highlight in an engaging way the liturgical life of the Church
-

Planning

A programme of collective worship and prayer is to be planned with the liturgical year, significant times and seasons in the life of the school and the curriculum in mind. Planning will be in consultation with the appropriate parties and with reference to the aims and purposes of prayer and worship as set out in this policy. It will ensure genuine acts of worship and prayer and will develop in pupils and staff the skills that enable them to participate, prepare, organise and lead worship and prayer.

Organisation

The chaplaincy team will oversee the prayer and worship programme indicating the days, dates, times, pupil groupings, leadership, practical requirements, venues and themes on a termly basis. The chaplains will communicate these arrangements to the parties concerned and see to their delivery. These arrangements, once agreed, should not normally be altered.

Guidance and support

Staff and students who are asked to take part in worship and prayer are to be given appropriate support by the chaplains. The chaplains are to receive the necessary support and resources from the School Leadership Team.

Resources

A bank of resources prayers, readings, DVDs, DVD player etc. for assemblies, prayers and other worship will be kept in the chaplains' room. The Desktop link has prayers and resources for daily Form Worship. Music resources will be located in the music department.

Recording

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that a record is kept on the collective worship planner provided. Other acts of worship and prayer will be recorded using photographs of displays, service leaflets and entries in the Prayer and Worship file in the chaplains' room.

Guidance

1. The Mass and Reconciliation will be voluntary except on special occasions when whole year or teaching / form groups are celebrating the Eucharist. At these times due sensitivity must be displayed towards children of other religious traditions who should also be given clear guidance as to what is expected and not expected of them during such services.
2. Retreats, residentials, away days and days with a difference offer important opportunities for young people to develop their spirituality and should be open to all regardless of their stage on the faith journey.
3. Some pupils may, however, not be selected to join such ventures if they have shown irresponsible behaviour etc. during the period prior to the residential. This is a decision to be made in conjunction with Form Teachers, Year Coordinators, PSOs etc. and those who will supervise such trips.

School Visitors

Visitors who are invited to lead worship and prayer in school should be made aware of and work within the school's distinctive Prayer and Worship Policy.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

1. Monitoring of Collective Worship and Prayer will be undertaken by the school Leadership Team on a continuous basis and reports given to the Headteacher who will conduct any follow up, including affirmation, encouragement and guidance.
2. Monitoring of other prayer and worship will be undertaken by the school chaplaincy team to ascertain information regarding variety of opportunity, leadership, practical support, appropriateness etc.
3. Both Priest and Lay Chaplain will meet with Headteacher / the Head of RE regularly to constantly review policy and practice.
4. Evaluation of all prayer and worship will be conducted, consulting pupils, staff, chaplains, parents etc. An annual review, both of provision and response, should be conducted and lead to any necessary revisions.

Guidelines for conducting assemblies

- All assemblies are collective acts of worship. Whilst there will also be times when it is appropriate to present information, celebrate achievement etc. this should never replace the act of worship.
- All assemblies should start and end with the sign of the cross
- There should be a suitable reading, preferably from Sacred Scripture
- There should always be meaningful and appropriate prayer.
- Wherever possible student involvement in presenting / leading acts of worship should be encouraged.