



**URSULINE HIGH SCHOOL  
Wimbledon**

# **Prayer & Liturgy Policy**

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## **Prayer & Liturgy Policy**

### **1. Aims and Objectives**

- To encourage students to develop their gifts and talents for the good of others, especially the less fortunate and most needy.
- To help students live out the school motto “SERVIAM” – I will serve
- To help build a caring and supportive community within the school built on the Catholic values of love and respect for all and the Catholic Social Teaching Principles of The Common Good and Human Dignity.
- To promote the beauty and uniqueness of each person as a child of God
- To offer moments for all to stop, think and pray
- To facilitate faith and spiritual development
- To introduce a variety of formal and informal prayer settings
- To celebrate special moments of school life and the Church year
- To provide opportunities for all to be aware of God’s spirit at work today
- To develop an individual and social moral consciousness especially focused on justice and peace.
- To represent the richness, breadth and diversity of the Catholic tradition.

### **2. School Services, Prayers, Assemblies and Liturgies**

Worship has a central place in the life of the school community. A daily act of worship takes place during morning registration in Tutor Groups or Year Assemblies.

Students are trained to plan and lead a variety of forms of worship. In Year 7 all students have an RE lesson on planning a prayer service, in Year 8 students have an RE lesson on how to plan a service of reconciliation and the student chaplaincy team are trained in a variety of liturgical ministries including; welcome, extraordinary ministry of Holy Communion, reading and selecting suitable scripture, singing, visual media, writing prayers/reflections, altar serving and setting up the altar for mass

#### **Prayer:**

Most mornings, there are prayers in the chapel led by students according to key stage and form. Guidelines for the prayer services are made available by the Chaplain and classes are encouraged to be creative in choice of theme and form of presentation. Very often students in particular use their musical and IT skills here.

Voluntary prayer services are sometimes held during lunch break or after school in the chapel: All Souls’ Day, Remembrance Service, for Justice and Peace in the world, death of a student, etc.

Prayers are said at the start of all Parent Information Evenings and Year End Celebrations. Parents are also invited to participate in our school Masses and special assemblies.

Members of the RE Department, in co-operation with the lay chaplain, sometimes bring the students over to the chapel for prayer experiences. Reflective services are held for all KS3 students, class by class, during Advent and Lent.

Celebration of the Eucharist:

Masses are celebrated for all year groups at key moments of the academic year: in September – Masses of the Holy Spirit, in October – the Feast of St Ursula, in January – the Feast of St Angela and in May – Yr 11 and 13 Leavers' Masses, in July – Thanksgiving Masses linked to themes and virtues. Students prepare and lead the reflection and bidding prayers. Masses take place at school apart from the Masses of St Angela, which take place in our parish church. These masses are held at Sacred Heart church to ensure all students experience mass in church at least once a year. At times charity offerings are also brought up by students during the Masses. Various symbols are used according to the theme; these include candles, flowers, chosen objects, or foreign languages. The musical talents of the school community are drawn up and one of the school choirs takes part in these masses and/or a soloist. Voluntary lunchtime masses are held in the school chapel on Holy Days of Obligation or to mark solemn or joyful events in the life of the school. A number of sixth formers and staff members serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion as necessary. Refresher training is given yearly following commissioning.

A staff Mass takes place on the first day of the academic year and on special occasions. Staff pray together three times a week, and occasional services have also been held eg. for bereavement

### **Liturgical Services:**

Special assemblies/services for the whole school take place for Christmas, Ash Wednesday and Holy Week/Easter and for other key events in the school calendar such as Windrush Day, Earth Day and recently to mark COP Climate conferences to raise awareness of the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Stewardship. The Head teacher, Assistant Heads and Year Heads lead assemblies, sometimes with the participation of students. Hymn practice also takes place during assemblies in preparation for masses.

All students are given the opportunity of receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. This is done by sign up and the students are allocated a time. This allows the chaplaincy team to ensure sufficient priests/hours are allocated. Themed reconciliation services with an Examination of Conscience and an Act of Contrition are held in the hall and then students are able to approach a number of priests from the area and feeder parishes for the Sacrament of Reconciliation if they wish.

### **Retreats:**

All year groups have an annual retreat led by the Lay Chaplain liaising with the head of year and PSA. These are organised with different themes based on our Virtues Programme according to the year group.

Year 12 students who take part in a serviam enrichment activity take part in the Avila partnership retreat. This retreat day focus on faith in action and living out catholic social teaching, particularly Justice through workshops, speakers and times of prayer. This takes place on the 24<sup>th</sup> March – the feast day of St Oscar Romero

The chaplaincy team have a day retreat at Aylesford Priory in the Summer Term to reflect on the year and renew commitments for the new academic year. This retreat programme is devised and delivered by the chaplain in conjunction with the parish Faith Minister.

The chapel is open all day and students are encouraged to use it for their own private prayer during break and lunchtime. On Monday's the Sycamore programme is run from the chapel, Tuesday we have 'Time Out Tuesdays for guided prayer and reflection, on Wednesday we have 'Chats with the chaplain' and on Thursdays we have the chaplaincy team meeting.

During the second week of Lent this programme is suspended to allow for Eucharistic Adoration throughout the week

### **3. Responsibilities and Resources**

The responsibility for the provision of collective worship lies with all members of staff, especially the school leadership team, year heads and form tutors. The role of the Chaplain is to provide a theme and thought for each week and relevant prayer sheets are made available to staff and students in the staff room and registers each week. These take into account the Sunday Liturgical readings / theme, any significant religious feasts (including those of other religions) and any special anniversaries including current events in the news.

The chaplain can be consulted re the preparation of assemblies and Morning prayers, as well as all charity initiatives and SERVIAM opportunities. The Chaplain is also available to assist and advise form tutors and work with students when they are facing some difficult moments eg. Bereavement.

The Chapel is located on the ground floor of the main building. It is always open, easily accessible and used regularly by students and staff. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Chapel. The chaplain has an office that accesses the chapel directly and a wide range of materials for retreats/liturgies. Every classroom in the school has a crucifix and these were all updated in 2022 with each building having a unique design.

Students in Sixth Form are appointed Chaplaincy and Charity Prefects. Every class has a chaplaincy rep which come together every fortnight for meetings and to help organise the different liturgies and take on board any upcoming charity activities. They liaise with their form group and the Chaplain. Student volunteers then come together to organise specific liturgies or charity initiatives. Some of these activities are organised and led by the prefects from time to time.

Each year a number of Yr 12 students are prepared and commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers. Every few years staff members are also prepared and commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers. These help out with the distribution of Holy Communion during Masses and the distribution of ashes during the Ash Wednesday services. Training takes place at Sacred Heart parish and is facilitated by the parish Faith Minister in conjunction with the school chaplain.

The Head of Music is responsible for music liturgy and liaises with the lay chaplain. Decisions about liturgical music are made at the termly ethos operations meeting. The group consists of the Chaplain, AHT Ethos, Head of Music, Head of RE and any other interested parties. We aim to introduce one new piece of liturgical music per mass to promote the richness, breadth and diversity of the Catholic tradition. The school has a number of different choirs. Older students tend to come forward to sing as soloists or in small groups. Musicians also participate in the school small group liturgies.

Priests from feeder parishes celebrate the school masses and are very supportive of the work that the Chaplain does in school. The Chaplain keeps in contact with the local parishes. The Chaplain works closely with the Faith Minister at Sacred Heart Parish and also links with the Chaplain at

Wimbledon College and St Philomena's and the Ursuline Links Coordinator as well as Ursuline and Southwark chaplains through regular meetings and contacts. As a school we are a member of the Avila partnership with St Philomena's and work closely on formation with our joint assistant head teacher.

The Senior Leaders and Head of Years routinely give verbal feedback to the Chaplain re collective worship, masses and services. Some students fill in feedback sheets after chapel services, Masses, the Special Assemblies and the Reconciliation Services. This feedback is used to review the suitability of music choices, the quality of singing, students' understanding of the scripture used or reflection themes and the take away message.

Our link governor from the Ethos Governors' Committee come into school for three visits annually our current link governor is Lisa Thefaut. A number of Governors, members of the Senior Leadership Team and RE staff as well as the Chaplain each year participate in the Ursuline Education Conference to promote our Ursuline charism and share best practice. The Headteacher attends the termly meetings for Heads of Catholic schools and the yearly conference. The assistant head for ethos is a member of the Ursuline Education community and attends the working party meetings. The Chaplain attends the termly diocesan meetings for Chaplains, Ursuline Chaplains' meetings and the Annual ACCE Conference. These all offer elements of religious formation as well as aids to the professional undertaking of our roles.

Dominic Cunliffe  
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