



St. Gregory's Catholic High School

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD POLICY

Monitoring

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Assistant Headteacher (Catholic Life).

Evaluation

The policy was reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher (Catholic Life), Chaplain, and Senior Leadership Team on 20th June 2024 prior to the submission of the policy to Governors' Community Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Board for approval.

Policy Review Dates:

Date last approved by Full Governing Board: 31st March 2021

Date submitted to Governors' Committee: 26th June 2024

Date submitted to Full Governing Board: 11th July 2024

Review Frequency: Every 2 years

Start date for policy review: January 2026

MISSION STATEMENT

Every member of St Gregory's Catholic High School will work together in solidarity for the common good of our diverse community. We have no better inspiration than the teaching of Jesus Christ. We believe that every person is unique and made in the image of God and should be treated with dignity, love and respect. We will follow Jesus by embracing our God given charisms to carry out our mission to serve. We are one family inspired to learn.

RATIONALE

Celebration of the Word at St Gregory's High School aims to provide opportunities for staff and pupils to come together to worship God and to respond to the invitation from God to be in relationship with him.

Celebration of the Word reflects the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, considering the spiritual and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in churches
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of Church
- Those from other Christian traditions, faith communities or none

Celebration of the Word is more than just a legal requirement at St Gregory's; it is an integral part of school life. Everyone in our community can contribute to it and gain from it, regardless of their level of belief and commitment.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998

This policy also has due regard to guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2012) 'Religious Education and Collective Worship'

We understand that assembly which simply consists of staff or student reading a prayer does not fulfil this requirement.

We are also aware and acknowledge that Celebration of the Word and assembly are distinctive activities. Where they may sometimes form part of the same gathering, the difference will always be made explicit by making the sign of the cross and saying together, "Let everything we do and say this day be . . ." at the start and end of Celebration of the Word.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including Religious Education. Dedicated time will be included in the structure of the school day for Celebration of the Word and prayer and liturgy from September 2024.

Through Celebration of the Word, we encourage positive attitudes and challenge negative stereotypes to encourage a common ethos and shared values amongst us all both in the school and the wider community.

Acts of worship will usually take place on school premises. However, the Governing Board has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere on specific occasions e.g. school residential trips.

In St Gregory's Catholic High School, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Celebration of the Word rests with the Governing Board after consultation with the Headteacher.

~~During the Covid-19 pandemic there will be times when pupils are not allowed access to the school premises and must learn from home. As a Catholic school, it is our responsibility to provide resources in keeping with our ethos and spirituality. Celebration of the Word will continue to be provided remotely via the Class Charts platform and be delivered through Microsoft TEAMS via their Form Tutor. The weekly whole year group Celebration of the Word will continue to be provided by the member of staff on the Celebration of the Word rota with a recorded presentation based on the themes provided, again delivered through TEAMS. Other reflections and resources will be provided via online platforms for pupils and staff.~~

AIMS OF CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Our aims are to provide daily opportunities for Celebration of the Word that will support the philosophy of our Mission Statement.

Celebration of the Word will be:

- Concerned with the greater glory and honour of God
- Central to our Catholic Education and form an essential part of our overall provision for prayer and liturgy
- Designed to have Christ at its heart, focused on his command to love one another
- Conducive to reflection on spiritual and moral issues

To fulfil the above aims, Celebration of the Word will:

- Ensure that glory and honour to God is central to all acts of worship
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of our school and its Catholic character
- Promote the four pillars of Catholic Social Teaching (Dignity, Solidarity, Subsidiarity and The Common Good) through our ten school charisms
- Give students positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age to prepare them for the spiritual life of the school and beyond
- Be memorable and enjoyable
- Be designed to actively engage students and elicit response
- Be resourced and planned
- Be flexible and able to respond quickly and suitably to any situation or occasion
- Be inclusive

ORGANISATION OF WORSHIP

- Staff reflection and prayer to take place after briefing on a Monday morning
- Weekly year group Celebration of the Word led by the Chaplain, SLT (Senior Leadership Team), Pupil Progress Managers, Pupil Leadership Team, and tutor groups.
- Daily form time Celebration of the Word as part of the Form Time Programme (FTP)
- Form group liturgies
- Provision for key liturgical celebrations when in school e.g. Ash Wednesday
- Staff retreat during the Autumn term
- Annual whole school Mass at the end of the summer term
- Welcome Mass for Year 7 and families
- Year 11 Leavers' Mass
- Annual Remembrance Mass and Parade
- Christmas and Easter, special Celebration of the Word
- Visiting speakers
- Eucharistic service once a month on a Friday
- Celebration events
- Beginning/end of year Mass for staff where appropriate
- Preparation for the sacraments e.g. confirmation

Celebration of the Word is planned:

- Following the framework of Gather/Listen/Respond/Leave
- Following a structure, rooted in the Catholic Church seasons
- Involving consultation with appropriate parties and with reference to school aims and policies
- With flexibility to respond to changing situations
- To develop pupils' skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship
- With a rota covering the whole school year and responding to the Gospel and the liturgical calendar

Celebration of the Word content and delivery will:

- Use a balance of silent reflection, prayers, responses, music, drama, and multimedia
- Set an appropriate atmosphere with a sense of order, expectation, and occasion
- Provide a focus using artefacts, candles, signs, and symbols which can be virtual or real.
- Focus on an area of Catholic Social Teaching and/or a school charism
- Respond to local and national events, as required
- Be led by staff, students, and visitors
- Adhere to this policy

Planning and Provision of Celebration of the Word

Overall responsibility for Celebration of the Word lies with the Governors and the Headteacher with daily planning and provision led by the Assistant Headteacher responsible for Catholic Life, Head of Religious Education and the School Chaplain.

All staff identified on the Celebration of the Word rota published at the beginning of every academic year have a duty to know when they are scheduled to deliver an act of worship. The staff will include members of the SLT, PPMs, form tutors with their form groups, as well as the chaplain and any visitors invited to St. Gregory's to deliver an act of Celebration of the Word.

RESOURCES

St Gregory's Catholic High School has:

- 1 full time Chaplain to support staff, students and the local community in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school
- The school chapel which is a facility open to the whole school. It provides a place of sanctuary, peace, quiet and space for personal and collective prayer
- Resources to support all staff in the delivery of Celebration of the Word. Books, bibles, prayer books, symbols, artefacts and information are available at any time from the chaplain.
- The support and experience of local Priests and parishioners of the Pastoral Area available when needed
- Access to other resources and updated by the Chaplain on a regular basis.
- Inset training on the preparation and delivery of Celebration of the Word available to all staff
- Induction sessions when required for new staff and ECTs

Monitoring and Evaluation of Celebration of the Word

Monitoring and evaluation of Celebration of the Word will be the responsibility of:

- Assistant Headteacher responsible for Catholic Life
- Head of RE
- School Chaplain

For St. Gregory's, Celebration of the Word is more than just a statutory requirement. It is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Celebration of the Word is also an important part of our distinct Catholic ethos. As such, the monitoring and evaluation of Celebration of the Word will focus on:

- The frequency of Celebration of the Word delivered by Form Tutors during registration
- The participation and engagement of pupils in their act of Celebration of the Word, taking into account the class environment, Celebration of the Word structure, the quality of prayer and reflection, resources and delivery
- The integration of key events in the Church's calendar, such as Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas, into the daily life of the school, all of which are integral to the Catholic identity and life of St. Gregory's.

This policy will be monitored and evaluated in line with the school's agreed schedule and procedures by the Assistant Headteacher (Catholic Life). The designated Community link Governor will also monitor the implementation of this policy during visits to the school.