



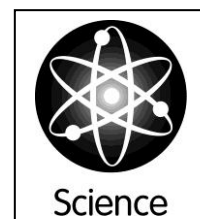
OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL
AND
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

COLLECTIVE ACTS OF WORSHIP POLICY

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS	OCTOBER 2010
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MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE	HEAD OF R.E, SCHOOL PASTORAL LEADER & CHAPLAIN
STATUTORY / NON-STATUTORY	STATUTORY



Community



Unity

Opportunity

COLLECTIVE ACTS OF WORSHIP AND THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Part 1 Philosophy

Collective Acts of Worship and Liturgy are closely related and are important integral parts of the Christian Life at Oaklands. They are key elements in helping the school achieve its central aim of the promotion of the spiritual, intellectual social and personal development of each child.

The Oaklands Vision and Strategy Document states that one of its key visions is to be:

An integral member of the Catholic community in the Diocese by being an authentic witness to the power of Christ's message.

1. To ensure that the spiritual development of all in the Oaklands community is fully integrated into learning, management and support.
2. To ensure there is a strong student voice in the school.
3. To build a vibrant and energetic liturgical life to celebrate the living presence of Christ in the school.
4. To build a culture of equality and openness to the richness of all humanity and its differences.
5. To work with the community so that all appreciate the relevance of Christian values.
6. Recognising that being a Catholic school means we go the extra mile and provide the best possible outcome for our students.

The Liturgical Life of the school acknowledges the importance of the development and growth of each child in its care. The school prospectus states:

"The School also recognises its responsibility to foster a Christian atmosphere, to equip the young students in its care to face the adult world with confidence and to play a responsible part in a society which is rapidly changing and holds a variety of different standards. This confidence is shaped through a deep understanding of the relationship between faith and culture. Students are encouraged to further their faith journey. To this end Religious Education, Form and Year Assemblies, Year Masses and Liturgical services, Full School Masses, Residential Experiences, and Community Service are all important aspects in the life of the School."

Oaklands is a Catholic School which emphasises strong Christian values and reinforces this unique character:

- i. To offer both students and staff an experience of Christ in this community in such a way as to challenge and support their whole lives.
- ii To create an environment in which children can develop, as they mature, in understanding their faith and their relationship with Jesus

Christ, in such a way as to help them find purpose and meaning in their lives.

- iii To enable each child to grow towards spiritual maturity, based upon the values of the Gospel, and to prepare each one for his or her role as a responsible Christian citizen in society.
- iv To give students an experience of living according to Christian principles based on the two great commandments of Christ: Love of God and Love of Neighbour: and through this to develop in each child a greater awareness of and a strong respect for moral values.
- v To give students the opportunity to grow in the awareness of their role in the Church.
- vi To help each child develop fully those gifts given to him or to her by God.
- vii To create an environment in which an understanding of the outward looking and caring nature of Christ's teaching automatically incorporates the idea of a need for a strong respect for other races and religions, preparing each child for the multi-cultural society in which we live.
- viii To encourage partnership between the home, school and the parishes, in order to bring about wider mutual knowledge and understanding for parents, clergy, students and teachers alike.

The Liturgy of the Word permeates every aspect of the Life of the School and is central to what we are about and provides a firm basis which helps the school to strive towards these important aims.

At Oaklands we have a shared responsibility towards the upbringing of the young people of the Church who represent the Church's future.

"In many countries of the World, half the entire population is made up of young people. This proportion holds true of the Church in these countries. Young people present a potential and a challenge to the Church's future. Vatican II referred to them as "the hope of the Church".

"Young people can and should be inspired to lead in the evangelisation of society and to share in its renewal. Youth is a time for self-discovery for a choice for life and for growth".

Christifideles Laici (Grail Version) Ch.4 P.63 Pope John Paul's Apostolic Letter.

As teachers in our Catholic School, we have a duty to acknowledge the potential of our young people and to guide and develop this potential. We

must always strive to create an environment in which our children may grow, may discover themselves, and may make the right choices so that they may truly become the hope and the future of the Church.

It is through the development of the Liturgical life of the school that we may continue to acknowledge our duty towards the young and the challenge which the Church presents us with today as teachers at Oaklands.

Part II Practice

The Liturgical Life of the school encompasses a whole range of curricular and extra-curricular activities and involves the participation of all members of the Oaklands community, which includes students, staff, parents, governors, parish priests and ministers.

Some of this is implicit, however, and less overt and not easily measurable but should nevertheless be clearly manifest in our relationships towards each other. Relationships between staff, between students, between students and staff, the way we talk to each other, show respect for each other, care for each other should be reflected in the caring ethos of the school. These important elements in the life of the school form the basis of the prime rule in the school.

“The prime rule which underlines all others is that Oaklands’ students are expected to act at all times in a sensitive and responsible manner, showing kindness, consideration, honesty and respect for others, for their dignity and also their property. In this way the school can foster its Christian atmosphere and also develop further the Christian aims of the School”. (Behaviour Policy)

This prime rule, which stems from the Gospel, is part of the ‘hidden curriculum’ of Oaklands and permeates through every activity in which all members of the Oaklands community are engaged and have a duty to foster. Liturgy and ethos are closely intertwined, but play as equally an important role as the more overt, measurable liturgical activities which are outlined below:

Full School Masses

The School celebrates, wherever possible, the beginning and end of each term with a full school Mass in the Hall. These Masses are celebrated by our Priest chaplain, together with other local Priests from neighbouring parishes who are invited to concelebrate on special occasions, eg the end of Year Mass and the special Mass for the Papal visit to the UK in September.

At other times in the year, the whole school comes together to worship on a specific occasion, such as a Holy Day of Obligation, Christian Unity Week, or Ash Wednesday.

The difficulties in organisation of Collective Acts of Worship for the whole school at one time, as well as the need to relate many liturgical activities more closely to the chronological, psychological and spiritual maturation of the

individual have brought about a move towards Year –based or Form-based liturgical activities which take place on a weekly basis. Full School Masses aim to engage and involve students in active and creative expressions of worship and prayer through a variety of forms including drama, dance and music.

Year Assemblies

Each Year Group has one assembly per week either in the Hall or the Chapel. The calendar is arranged as follows:

Year 11	Monday (Hall)	Year 8	Thursday (Hall)
Year 10	Tuesday (Hall)	Year 7	Friday (Hall)
Year 9	Wednesday (Hall)	Year 12/13	Tuesday

The Assembly may be taken by the Year Head, Assistant Head of Year, one of the Form Tutors or the Form Group under the leadership of the Form Tutor (this is done on a rotational basis), one of the SLT, the Year Chaplain, or a visiting Minister from another Christian denomination who holds a pastoral responsibility for some students in the Year, or the School Chaplain.

The theme of the assembly is chosen by the person or group presenting the assembly based on the Liturgical Calendar, and is usually followed by prayers relating to the assembly and a hymn selected from the Oaklands hymnal.

Form Assemblies/a.m. Registration

One of the important aspects of Form based assemblies is that the Assembly enables the Tutor Group to come together and to pray together and to share together.

The Form Assembly forms part of the Daily Collective Act of Worship, but in smaller groups, namely the Tutor Group, throughout the school.

Except on the day when the Year is in the Hall, the Assembly takes place in the Form Base, led by the Form Tutor.

For these four days, the Form Tutor organises on a daily basis, a short Form Assembly based on the guidance offered by the Oaklands Prayersheet which is produced weekly by the School Chaplain and relates to topical issues of the day. The new colour illustrated prayersheet offers a scripture, reflection and prayer for each day and is made available both in hard copy and electronically for the use of tutors. It should be used **before** the calling of the register and the reading of notices. This daily Act of Collective Worship is again important and an integral part of the school day and general life of the school.

Organisation of Form Assemblies

The organisation of the Form Assemblies is arranged by the Form Tutors and may either be led by the Form Tutor or by the students themselves, either

individually or in groups on a rota basis with guidance from the Form Tutor, Head of Year, Chaplain or even parents.

The format of Form Assemblies may differ from tutor group to tutor group but may involve a number of the following activities led by a group or the Form Tutor in all years:

- Prayers from Leaflet prepared by Chaplain
- Prayers written on the board
- Bible stories
- Poems
- Short Stories
- Drama
- Prayers from books
- Personal prayers written by students
- Topics of immediate nature in the world (e.g. earthquakes)
- Prayers for sick or dying relatives
- Psalms
- Silent personal prayers
- A short talk (e.g. based on newspaper story/piece of music)
- Themes (e.g. forgiveness, understanding, sharing)

Themes selected may be either of a religious, moral, or humanistic nature and students explain the message which they wish to put across. Themes selected should relate to the Liturgical Calendar of Advent, Lent, Saints Feast Days, etc. wherever possible.

Students are encouraged to become involved in the organisation of a Form Assembly whether it is by choosing a theme, reading or writing a prayer, or sharing in any drama being presented. In this they are guided and supported by the Form Tutor.

A large number of prayer books and resources e.g. cds, are available in the Staff Workroom for staff to borrow. Students can also go to see the Chaplain for guidance, and further extensive resources are made available there. Staff also welcome greater guidance in leading prayer. This is addressed on relevant INSET days.

The new 'in-house' prayersheet is produced each week and is distributed to all staff. The Chaplain also distributes relevant material for Heads of Year e.g. One World Week; Christian Unity Week.

Afternoon Prayer

The subject teacher for lesson 5 is asked to finish with a short prayer following the completion of the afternoon register. Time has been allocated to lesson 5 for this purpose. Some staff may select their own material or use traditional well-known prayers (**Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be ToThe Father etc.**) whereas others may simply finish with the Sign of the Cross.

Year Masses

Each Year has one Year Mass per term. This is celebrated by our link priest chaplain and takes place in the Hall on the morning of the day allocated. There is also each year a leavers mass for Year 11 and Year 13, held respectively in the Hall and the Chapel. Both of these occasions are very much a joint venture between pupils, Heads of Year, Chaplain and RE staff to ensure a respectful yet memorable experience for the pupils who are leaving. It is planned for 2010/11 to have a regular 'Teaching Mass' for each new year 7 tutor group in the autumn term, in order to develop and deepen students' understanding and participation in the Mass. These Masses will be prepared with the chaplain and our link Priest in liaison with the Head of Year for year 7 and the RE staff.

Chaplains

The school Chaplain supports the Senior Management Team, the R.E. Department, Year Heads and Form Tutors in the organisation of the many areas of the liturgical life of the school.

This year, a strong link has been established with our Priest chaplain who celebrates all the Masses in School. He has also been involved in supporting other liturgies and contributing to RE lessons.

The School Chaplain in turn is supported by the Priest chaplain, and a team of Parish Priests who assist in acts of worship when required.

Ministers

The school encourages and welcomes the involvement of Ministers from other Christian denominations in the liturgical life of the school.

These ministers have a number of children at Oaklands from the various churches who are from families who have specifically asked for an education within a structured Christian environment.

These Ministers regularly attend and lead assemblies and also play a significant contributory and leadership role to the services for Christian Unity which take place on an individual Year Group basis each year.

Chaplaincy Team

The Chaplaincy Team was formed in September 2001. Its focus is the Liturgical Life of the School and renewal of our worship.

In 2009 – 2010 it has been involved in:

- organisation of whole school masses
- liturgy, including the Holy Week service and Easter Assemblies
- review of the Spiritual and Moral life of the school (Section 48)
- Review of the Collective Acts of worship policy
- Review of the School Mission Statement
- The preparation and presentation of special liturgies held in the chapel during Advent and Lent
- Preparation of resources in connection with the papal visit in September

The membership of the Chaplaincy Team includes:

- Chaplain
- Priest(s)
- Teaching and non-teaching staff
- Governor
- Students (2 from each year) from Years 7-13

Blessing

Although children from other Christian denominations cannot receive communion at the Masses, the school has always wished to involve them as fully as possible in all our liturgical services.

All children are therefore encouraged to come forward during Communion to receive a blessing from the priest or Eucharistic Minister. The response to this is very positive and nearly all children come forward to receive this blessing.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

During Lent the Chaplaincy Team organises a whole school programme, prepared at a different level for each year, to enable all students to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation or simply to talk with the priest. The model which is in use has been successful in ensuring that all who wish to avail themselves, have access to the sacrament in school. A Penitential Service is held for each year group which helps to prepare students to receive the sacrament and/or reflect on the relevant themes covered.

Christmas Carol Service

Since December 2008 the school has held a Christmas Carol Service to help members of our immediate and extended community prepare for the birth of Christ at Christmas. By tradition not only are members of our immediate school community invited, but also those in the wider local community. It is usual for the Hall to be full to capacity and for the congregation to leave with a clear understanding of what and why we celebrate at this time of year.

The service takes the form of Music, Readings, Prayers, Dance and Drama and involves many areas of the curriculum, including the School Choir, Band, Drama Department, PE Department (dance) and R.E. Department plus individuals from each year.

Prior to this, a reflective display on the theme of Advent as a time of preparation for the joy of Christmas is put up in the Hall Foyer. This provides a visual stimulus for pupils as they pass through the Hall during Advent, and

for those attending the Christmas Carol Service of the importance of Advent as a time of preparation for the incarnation at Christmas. .

At the end of the service, a special collection is taken for the Rowans Hospice and Changing Worlds to highlight our ongoing commitment to charities both locally and internationally.

Advent and Christmas were also celebrated in the chapel with Tutor groups invited in to take part in a liturgy.

Voluntary Lunchtime Liturgies

Every Tuesday lunchtime in the Chapel, Year Groups or Form Groups take it in turn to prepare the Voluntary Lunchtime Liturgy. It is prepared by the students with support from the Form Tutor, Chaplain or R.E. teacher for the group.

These activities are purely voluntary and the group preparing the liturgy extend an invitation to all students who would like to attend.

During Lent, in addition to these liturgies, Stations of the Cross are also presented, with the support of the Chaplaincy Team. During the month of May, a lunchtime liturgy for year 7 is organised, including a procession and crowning with flowers in honour of Our Lady.

Prayer Groups

In addition to the Liturgies, Prayer Groups take place in the Chapel. Staff pray together at Briefing on a Monday morning and on a voluntary basis in the Chapel on Tuesday mornings at 8.40am. Students and staff are invited and frequently attend the chapel to pray together in times of bereavement or other occasions of need.

Music and Liturgy

Oaklands also has produced its own Hymnal (with cover for copyright) now in its fourth print, which is used for all our liturgical activities and has been adopted as well by a number of Parishes.

There is a dedicated member of staff to lead music for worship, supported by other musicians and singers in each year group.

Music and Liturgy are therefore synonymous at Oaklands.

Residential Experience

The liturgical life of the school has been further developed at Oaklands with the adoption by the Governors of Residential Experience as an integral part of the curriculum in Years 10, 11 and Sixth Form.

In November the Sixth Form go to St, Cassian's Centre, Kintbury for their residential experience which is led by the team at the Centre, supported by Oaklands' staff.

Year 11 students (October) and Year 10 students (February) also go to St. Cassian's for their residential experience which is led in the same way.

Year 9 have an on-site Relationship Day in June led by the RE department in conjunction with a number of external agencies. Year 8 have an on-site Day of Reflection in June/July lead largely by outside agencies supported by The RE Dept and other staff including dance, and Year 7 go on pilgrimage to Portsmouth Cathedral in October. The school chaplain prepares and leads a liturgy at the end of each of these days in which students and relevant staff are fully involved.

The benefits of these experiences has been seen for some time now back at school in terms of relationships, motivation and follow up in various liturgical and non-liturgical activities.

R.E. Department and Related Activities:

In addition to Year and whole school activities all members of the R.E. Department, plus other interested staff arrange a variety of extra curricular activities which support the Christian life of the school e.g.

Tuesday	-	Lunchtime Liturgy
Various	-	Youth SVP Group

Prayer Groups and Meditation are also organised at appropriate times in the year.

INSET Days

INSET Days have given us the opportunity of bringing staff together to celebrate either Mass or a non-Eucharistic Liturgy. The whole staff response to these liturgical activities has been most encouraging. It has proved a very important time for bringing **all** staff together to pray, without the pressure of a teaching day. Every other year one of the INSET days is allocated to some form of Day of Reflection. These have been very successful and staff fully involve themselves in the programme.

In addition to these set days, we as a staff also celebrate the special times in the lives of individual staff through the organisation and leading of liturgies and masses for those who are retiring or moving on.