



The Willows Catholic Primary School

Catholic Life and Religious Education Policy

*Our central aim at The Willows is our school motto:
God Loves Me, God Loves Everyone.*

With Christ at our heart, we are a loving, caring family where each individual is nurtured in mind and spirit to fully become the person God created.

In learning together, we support each other to reach our full potential in a safe and stimulating environment where all are valued and respected.

Our school motto: 'God loves me, God loves everyone' guides our journey.

Catholic schools are special, Christ's teachings and values, through the Gospel, permeates through absolutely everything we do. Whether this is the way in which we interact with each other, forgiving those who have upset or hurt us and how we treat anyone within our family or community.

CATHOLIC LIFE

Dealing with people

Every person that comes to our school, whether child, parent, grandparent, relative, professional or otherwise is treated like part of the family. They will be greeted with a warm welcome and invited into school and treated as an individual – an individual that commands respect and the right to feel valued: just as Christ would expect us to.

Behaviour

Our school has a very robust behaviour policy which all children and staff are very familiar with. Whilst this policy sets out expectations it is important to remember Gospel values and Christ's teachings when dealing with behaviour. Jesus gives us the opportunity to say sorry and make things right again – we expect staff and children to do the same. Each child is treated as an individual and situations and actions are tailored to the needs of that individual. One size does not fit all.

Prayers

Each class pray at least four times a day. Each class will have their own age appropriate prayers for the different times of day. It is expected that all classes will say a prayer at:

- The beginning of the day
- Before lunch
- After lunch
- At home time

Our school prayer is also used throughout the Catholic life of our school. It is used in our Friday morning assembly and staff should feel free to use it as and when they deem appropriate throughout the day. All the prayers are displayed in each classroom.



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Communal Areas - Worship Area, Hall etc.

The communal areas in school provide classes with the opportunity to showcase their work and faith to other children and adults outside of their class community. In each of these areas you will find our faith is evident.

Classroom Environments

Our classrooms aim to be a bright and stimulating learning environment for our children. Each classroom focuses on the learning needs of that particular class whilst also ensuring the values and teachings of our faith are evident in everything.

Each classroom will have:

- A crucifix in a prominent position
- An interactive prayer and worship area
- A Religious Education display
- Other displays relating to the learning needs of the children

Whole School Worship Area

The Worship Area is intended to be a quiet and reflective space where children can go during breaks and lunchtimes to be still and be closer to God. Throughout the year, the focus of the area will be changed to match that of the Liturgical Calendar. It is important that children are aware of how to use this space and staff should consider training the children in this. The Worship Area is available daily for the children to use. Every Monday lunchtime the RE co-ordinator runs a Lunchtime Liturgy for Key Stage One children where the liturgy reflects on the Gospel of the previous Sunday.

Classroom Prayer and Worship Areas

Within each classroom, there is a dedicated area that allows children to focus on Prayer and Worship. This should be the most prominent in the room and attention should be drawn to it wherever possible, leading prayers in this area having lit a candle for example.

This area will regularly have its theme changed to match the Liturgical Calendar and colours. For example, during Lent, the focus will be around Jesus's time spent in the desert, his suffering and use the colour purple.

Each area is equipped with a host of items and resources that allow the children to plan and lead their own worships – whether this is for themselves, a small group or their whole class. Depending on the age of the children, this process will be supported to ensure they act in an accurate and appropriate manner. Following these liturgies, the children, support by staff, record their thoughts and planning in their Class Prayer and Liturgy Log – wherever possible, photos will be added.

Class-based Prayer and Liturgies

It is expected that all children, regardless of their age will plan and deliver Prayer and Liturgies to their class. Each liturgy should be age appropriate and the children will be supported in the planning and delivering of such. In Reception, this may be the children



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choosing appropriate artefacts, decorations and leading actions; in Year 6, the process should be much more independent – children choosing the theme or topic, an appropriate Bible story, writing prayers, considering a mission appropriate to their topic. We have trained Liturgy Leaders from Year Five and Year Six with support from Margaret Wright from the Diocese. These leaders are actively encouraged to help organise religious events in school, such as Family Fast Day. They plan and prepare a liturgy every Wednesday for Reception and Year One which they deliver in class at the end of the day on a rota basis.

Each Prayer and Liturgy will follow a distinct pattern:

- Gather – how will the Prayer and Liturgy start, what will the children have as a focus
- Listen – there will be an appropriate Bible story
- Reflect – having listened to the reading, how will the children engage and reflect upon it
- Respond – following the reflection, what will we do, will they say or write a prayer?
- Mission – how will the children show what they have learned as a result of this session?

It is important to remember that children will need support with this process, it is very tempting for children to choose as many objects and decorations as they can rather than putting thought and consideration into their choices.

Prayer and Liturgy Timetable

Monday:	Whole school Prayer and Liturgy
Tuesday:	Class based Prayer and Liturgy (either child or teacher led)
Wednesday:	Class based Prayer and Liturgy focusing on the Wednesday Word
Thursday:	Class based Prayer and Liturgy (either child or teacher led)
Friday:	Class based Prayer and Liturgy (either child or teacher led)

Class-led Whole School Prayer and Liturgies

Throughout the year, each class will be expected to lead at least two whole school Prayer and Liturgies. These Liturgies offer the children the opportunity to develop a multitude of skills both in faith and other areas.

These Prayer and Liturgies should follow the same pattern as class-based sessions and as much as possible, the planning and practice of these should be led by the children.

It is important to note, these Prayer and Liturgies are not a performance – they are an opportunity for our school family, led by children, to engage with God, His words and consider our own faith.

The use of microphones should be avoided wherever possible. Similarly, children should be expected to know their words so that if they are reading from a card they proclaim these words.



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Teacher-led Class Prayer and Liturgies

Just as children are expected to lead Prayer and Liturgies in the classroom, so too are teachers and other adults. In order for the children to progress and develop in their ability to lead worships, they need to have good practice modelled to them.

In delivering a Class Prayer and Liturgy, adults will make it clear and obvious to the children the structure and pattern of the worship so that when children lead, they have a clear idea.

Teachers and adults should work with their class to decide when they will have adult and child led worships and the planning will be modelled and recorded in the Class Prayer and Liturgy Log.

Lectio Divina

In Christianity, Lectio Divina is a traditional practice of reading scripture, meditation and prayer intended to deepen our relationship with God.

There is no set expectation for the children to take part in Lectio Divina. However, as they are a fantastic way to get the children to engage with scripture and hear God's word. Teachers look for opportunities to use Lectio Divina as part of the RE curriculum when looking at particular piece of scripture. Ideally, each child will experience at least three Lectio Divina during the academic year.

A Lectio Divina session will have the following structure:

- Read
- Meditate
- Pray
- Contemplate

Lectio Divina can be used with all children right across the school – they must simply be tailored to the age and ability of the children. You will find helpful resources in the RE cupboard (or online) to help you plan a Lectio Divina.

Class Prayer and Liturgy Log

The Prayer and Liturgy Log is intended to be a record of this classes development on their prayer and faith journey.

The log should contain:

- Prayer and Liturgy planning sheets
- Responses from Prayer and Liturgies
- Photos of children leading their Prayer and Liturgies
- Pictures, items of work that illustrate the learning that has taken place
- Examples of planning led by children and adults

There is no right or wrong way to use this log, the expectation is simply that we will have a record of the children's prayer and faith journey. Any items which staff feel would be appropriate to be put into this book can be.



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Teacher-led Whole School Prayer and Liturgy

On Monday morning a member of the Senior Leadership Team will lead our weekly Prayer and Liturgy. This is an opportunity for the messages from the Gospel to be delivered to the children – in particular those who did not attend Mass. This Prayer and Liturgy will be planned by the Senior Leadership Team or adapted from the Ten:Ten Resources.

Weekly Celebration Assembly

At the end of each week, as a school we come together to share and celebrate the various successes of our children. During this assembly, each teacher chooses their 'Star of the Week'. The teacher leading the assembly will invite each teacher to the front of assembly to tell our school family why this particular child has stood out. Also during this assembly, we will award the Attendance Trophy, Will Bear (our school mascot), announce House Point winners and sing Happy Birthday to those children who have had a birthday since our last assembly.

Whilst this assembly does not follow the structure of a Prayer and Liturgy, it is a vital part of our school life – celebrating children's successes and will always end with our Willows prayer – reminding children how we put God's love at the centre of our lives.

The Parish

As a Catholic school, we have a responsibility to ensure the continuation of the Catholic faith for years to come. For this reason, teachers continue to foster an excellent relationship between our school and our parish.

At The Willows, we are part of the Holy Cross Parish – an amalgamation of the St. Joseph's and The Willows parishes. Together, the two schools and churches form one parish – teachers at our school continue to work hard supporting children to understand that the two different schools and two different churches, we are one community, one family in faith.

Wherever possible, teachers should ensure the children are involved in parish life and the parish are involved in school life.

Whole School and Class Masses

Throughout the school year, Mass forms an integral part of our worship. At the beginning of each term i.e. September, January and April, the whole school will join together to celebrate Mass in Church with the Parish. These Masses are special as children from Key Stage 2 are chosen to lead the Readings, Bidding Prayers and Offertory. The Year Six children sit with their Reception buddies during the service.

Following our Whole School Mass, each class will join the Parish for their own Class Mass. These Masses are intended to demonstrate to the children that Mass should be a normal occurrence in the children's Catholic faith. Unlike Whole School Masses, the children do not lead any element of this Mass. They are expected to go to Mass and experience it as any other Parishioner would.



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Usually, at Class Masses, there will be no hymns and no Offertory Procession. Occasionally, Father may ask teachers to arrange some children to bring the Offertory to the altar. Key Stage Two have a book of simple book of responses which has been designed to encourage their participation at Mass.

From the moment the children leave school, until the moment they return, they are asked to be quiet and reverential. There has long been a misconception that Mass happens to the children and they do not need to engage with it. Teachers work hard throughout the year to address this misconception; encouraging the children to engage with, learn responses and prayers in school and understand the various elements to the Mass. To encourage their participation at Mass, a book of simple book of responses has been designed for the Key Stage Two children to follow.

Stations of the Cross

During Lent each year, all the children meet with Father in church to look at the Stations of the Cross. The content of each sessions depends greatly on the age of the children – for example, Reception look at the pictures and consider what is happening, Year 6 consider each image and talk in depth about the different emotions that Jesus experienced.

When the children go to these Stations of the Cross sessions, we expect them to behave appropriately and be especially reverent as they walk with Jesus on his journey to his eventual death.

Benediction and Reconciliation

During the year, each class will experience and take part in Benediction. The expectation is that each class arrives promptly and as always, remember our high standards of behaviour in church. Again, teachers ensure the responses and hymns are practiced so the children can access the service as fully as possible.

During Lent, children from Year 3 onwards also have the opportunity to experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Again, children are reminded about how to behave and what to expect. Whether the child has made their First Reconciliation or not, all children have the opportunity to speak to Father.

Club Day

Club Day is a traditional event held within Kirkham and Wesham. It is an opportunity for all the local church communities to join together and process through the streets of Kirkham.

As a school, we take part in Club Day in support of our church and Parish. There is no expectation for members of staff to take part however, if you are available, your support will be greatly appreciated in representing our school.



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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is the most important subject at The Willows. English, Maths, Science and Computing are considered core subjects within the National Curriculum. At Catholic Schools across the world, Religious Education is considered to be of the highest importance.

As a result, it is important to note the expectations with regards to R. E. lessons: in Key Stage 1, children will receive two hours of timetabled R. E.; in Key Stage 2, children will receive two and a half hours of timetabled R. E. – this time expectation does not include Prayer and Liturgies or worship.

It should be noted however, given the pressures of teaching in our current climate, this is always very difficult to achieve. Despite this, at The Willows, a Catholic school, striving to provide our children the best, Religious Education lessons take the most important placement in our weekly timetables.

Religious Education Planning

In the Diocese of Lancaster, we are fortunate that the Diocese allows us to decide what is the most appropriate method of delivering the R. E. curriculum to our children. The school scheme used is Come and See.

The R. E. Curriculum is based on the Curriculum Framework Wheels found on the server. This document sets out the minimum expectation, with overarching learning objectives, of what our children need to be taught.

To support this, planning documents have been developed to include suggested individual lessons objectives, HRSE objectives, which Attainment Target to focus on and a suggestion of how this could be evidenced in the children's books (see Assessment). These documents are intended to provide support and a potential starting point. The individual lesson objectives do not need to be followed, so long as the objectives highlighted in the Curriculum Framework are covered. Likewise, if not following these objectives, each attainment target should be covered in depth and sufficient evidence should be clear in the children's books.

We are also very lucky in that we have a wealth of different planning resources available in school. The R. E. cupboards in the Worship Area have books, resources and ideas which can support you in your planning. There is also a range of other cultures resource boxes which can be used when studying other faiths.

Likewise, each class has a copy of the following schemes which can be dipped in and out of to support lesson planning and delivery:

- The Way, the Truth and the Life
- Come and See
- Caritas in Action



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Additionally, excellent resources can be found online:

- CAFOD
- Westminster Diocese
- Hexham and Newcastle Diocese
- Leeds Diocese

Religious Education Lessons

Religious Education in Catholic schools focuses children's learning on a single end goal – to deepen the children's relationship with God. We do this by 'Learning about' and 'Learning from' religion. Therefore, during each lesson it should be clear whether the children are learning about or learning from our faith. In Year Five and Year Six, the children also encouraged to analyse and evaluate their learning.

Religious Education relies on the same key principles as any other lesson: excellent teaching and excellent subject knowledge. We are very fortunate to have a staff who have a wealth of experience and knowledge of the Catholic faith.

Religious Education lessons are planned in such a manner that ensures they are fun, exciting and engaging – children learn best this way; not by simply reading and answering questions.

HRSE – Human Relationships and Sex Education

Mr. Wylde is our HRSE coordinator. The HRSE scheme of work used is from Ten: Ten resources, Life to the Full. Each year group has access to their own age appropriate curriculum. Evidence is recorded in a variety of ways such as recording comments in floor books, photos and pictures.

Religious Education Assessment

Every class has a knowledge organiser relating to the topic that is taught. In Key Stage One and Key Stage Two these are in their child's RE book as a point of reference. They cover the objectives that will be taught, key vocabulary and the curriculum content for that topic. Moderation activities will be administered to various Year groups as directed by the Diocese when necessary.

Religious Education Tracking

At the end of the academic year, teachers award each child with an overall judgement based on age related expectations. At the end of each Come and See topic, the class teacher will record their judgements about each child's understanding. This records the progress each child has made across the whole topic. The teacher will highlight in red, amber and green as to whether the children are working towards, at the expected standard or making more progress within RE.

These tracking grids are then used by the Senior Leadership Team to evaluate standards in Religious Education across the school and inform development targets in the school development plan and subject action plans.