

POLICY



LOUGHBOROUGH
Amherst School

CATHOLIC LIFE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

This policy applies to all School departments, including EYFS

“I believe that to be fully human, the religious instinct, which is in each one of us, must be first awakened and then cultivated.”

Cardinal Basil Hume.

(1) Ethos

As a Catholic school, our role is to encourage and nurture Gospel Values in all members of our community creating citizens who will be able to serve the common good with an understanding that cardinal and spiritual virtues are central to a human being flourishing. We recognise that all human beings are loved by God and we support pupils to learn of their own uniqueness and that of others.

We want all members of our community to be fully alive in their potential and God given talents. Education is our business but the education at Loughborough Amherst School takes a holistic view of heart, mind and soul. Renowned for our family atmosphere and excellent pastoral care, we aim to encourage a habit of spiritual contemplation and inner calm, along with one of wonder and gratitude in the face of existence.

Many of our members are not Catholic and we do not seek conversion as our ultimate goal. We believe that being part of a Catholic school enables people to be part of a message of hope. We are committed to promoting dialogue about all aspects of life, especially the ‘big’ questions, in the desire that we inspire them to discover the reason for their existence.

Finally, we aim to help parents/carers nurture children who, by the time they reach school leaving age, are ambitious but not materialistic, and confident but not arrogant.

Our ethos is encapsulated in our Mission Statement, which was composed by our own Year 7 pupils:

**We are a Catholic School.
We welcome everyone and we respect everyone for who they are.
We work together to become clever, kind and brave.
We are one family, and everyone is known and loved.
When we leave, we will go into the world and make it a better place.**

(2)Practice

Although our ethos makes itself felt in many subtle ways throughout school life that could not all be captured by any list, the formal practice of our Catholic Life is expressed in the following eight areas:

- a) Collective worship (Masses, liturgies and assemblies)
- b) Weekly Spiritual Life meetings
- c) Daily prayers
- d) Pilgrimage and retreat
- e) Catechesis
- f) Charitable work
- g) The physical environment
- h) All Amherst owned policies including Rewards and Sanctions

2(a) Collective worship

The School celebrates mass five times a year, on the following occasions:

- Start of year (Early September)
- All Saints (1 November)
- Feast of the Presentation / Candlemas (2 February)
- Exam Mass (Early May)
- Pentecost Mass (in 2022)¹

Each of the four School houses (Agnes, Peter, Rosmini and Teresa) has its own feast day². This day begins with a liturgy, which is largely pupil designed and led.

There is also an annual liturgy for each year group.

Assembly based acts of worship occur twice a half term on a Monday (one from the Head at the start of each half-term, and one from the LSF Chaplain), and there is also a whole school Act of Worship every third Friday which is pupil led. In the Preparatory School, the Head of Prep leads an Act of Worship on Mondays when we do not join the whole school.

2(b) Weekly Spiritual Life meetings

These are held every two out of three Fridays in year groups, and focus on the theme set by the Word of the Week provided by Nottingham Diocese Catholic Youth Service. They may take a variety of forms, including an act of worship or small discussion groups followed by a plenary.

2(c) Daily prayers

Daily prayers take place daily between 08.40 and 09.10 am. The exact gathering in which these prayers take place is dictated by the morning rota, which is as follows:

Monday: Heads assembly, Chaplains' assembly or Congers

Tuesday: Prep PSHE / Senior Tutor time

Wednesday: House meetings

Thursday: Prep PSHE / Senior Book Club

Friday: Spiritual Life meetings / Pupil Led Act of Worship

A selection of prayers is available in the dashboard on Sharepoint, although the person leading

¹ The 5th Mass, will vary dependent of the dates of the academic year each year.

² Teresa 15 October, Agnes 21 January, Peter 29 June, Rosmini 1 July.

prayers is not restricted to this selection. Regular use of the School prayer is encouraged, so as to embed it in the memory of every member of the School community.

2(d) Pilgrimage and retreat

We offer Sixth Formers the opportunity to join the annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in July. We also have a Spiritual Retreat to The Briars for Year 6 and 7 after Exams. The annual Minerva Day in both Prep and Senior Schools always contains spiritual workshops.

2(e) Catechesis

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills- appropriate to their age and capacity- to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of the religious commitment in everyday life.

- Religious education Curriculum Directory; page 6 RECD

The Curriculum Directory is our 'guiding light' in terms of Religious Education in the school. However, we must acknowledge, and respond to, the unique position of our community within the wider Catholic family. In light of this, we take seriously the inclusivity that is central to the school mission statement. The department respects equally all students, regardless of their own faith or non-faith position.

KS3: Years 7 and 8.

Year 7: What is religion? Creation and Fall. The Patriarchs. Exodus and Exile. Holy Week and The Parables of Jesus. Islam.

Year 8: The Nature of God. The Evidence for God. The Person of Jesus. The Holy Spirit. Judaism. The Holocaust. Environment and Stewardship. The Anointing of the Sick. Catholic Social Teaching.

KS4: Years 9, 10 and 11. GCSE over Three Years (Religious Studies: Route B. Catholic Christianity and Judaism. WJEC Eduqas)

Year 9. Component 3: Judaism: Beliefs and Teachings. Judaism. Practices.

Year 10. Component 1: Foundational Catholic Theology: Origins and Meaning. Good and Evil.

Year 11. Component 2: Applied Catholic Theology: Life and Death. Sin and Forgiveness.

KS5: Years 12 and 13. A Level over two years. (Religious Studies: Edexcel)

Philosophy of Religion. Religion and Ethics. Study of Religion (Christianity)

General RE. Year 12. Faith and Reason. Morality and Ethics. Religion and The Media. The Church in the Modern World.

General RE. Year 13. Human Rights. Faith and Spirituality. Sexual Ethics and Sanctity of Life. Religious Freedom.

Every new member of staff, new parent and new pupil (in Years 9 and above) receives a short induction booklet from the Head outlining our spiritual ethos and how it informs the practical life of the School. Pupils in Year 8 and below an age appropriate version of the same booklet from the Head of Prep. Every new pupil to the Prep School receives a child's prayer book, every new pupil to the Senior School (including those who move up from our Year 6) and all new members of staff receive a candle. In addition, in Year 7 every pupil receives a Catholic Good News Bible.

2(f) Charitable work

We have an annual vote for a school Charity of the Year which are always nominated by students and staff. They are always checked that they are in line with Catholic Teachings and we make every effort to promote, raise awareness and significant funds for this charity. All money goes to this charity. We encourage the development of links with the Catholic Social Action group within St Mary's, Loughborough, Parish.

2(g) The Physical Environment

The School is fortunate enough to be centred around the original Convent building established by Mother Mary Amherst in 1850. We maintain Spiritual Life boards in the Cloister outside the Chapel. We also have welcome areas in both Prep and Senior that display and share the key symbols of our Catholic heritage and ethos. Within the main School Reception, there is also a display featuring the School Prayer and the Prayers of each of the four Houses all written by Amherst community members. Our Mission Statement is displayed in a number of locations around the School site. Every classroom, has a crucifix and every Form Room has a prayer board.

Our Chapel is used regularly for Acts of Worship of every nature as well as occasional events such as Carols by Candlelight. The Chapel contains a quiet area specifically designed for pupils to pray. We also have a Multi-Faith Reflection Room on the first floor of the Convent building. This is open to any pupil for quiet reflection but is also used for specific purposes such as the performance of Salah by Muslim pupils.

2(h) All Amherst owned policies including Rewards and Sanctions

Whenever we create, write or review policies, we keep in mind our ethos and mission in order to ensure that these perennial values are reflected in day to day policy.

(3) Leadership and review of Catholic Life

The leadership and review of Catholic Life is carried out as follows...

- The Head and the Prep Head review and adjust policy, but are informed and guided through discussion with the Chaplaincy Committee, Chaplaincy Group and School Board of Governors
- The Chaplaincy Committee (Consisting of the Head, Prep Head, Chair of School Board of Governors³, LSF Chaplain, Caritas Prefect, HoD RE and other interested staff⁴) meets once a term to review all aspects of Catholic life in the School
- The Chaplaincy Group also meets once a term (a week or two before the Chaplaincy Committee). This group is chaired by the Caritas Prefect and consists of a Chaplaincy rep from each year group in the School. It is recommended that one or two members of the Chaplaincy Committee be in quiet attendance as their workload allows, but their presence should be very low key. This ensures that a strong element of honest pupil voice informs the discussions of the Chaplaincy Committee.
- Catholic life is a standing item in the termly Head's reports to the School Board of Governors. The Board may ask question or raise concerns which then need to be addressed before the next Board report.
- Diocesan inspections (or informal visits and correspondence) will also inform the ongoing review of Catholic life.

³ When available

⁴ Membership should never exceed ten people