



Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College

May God's love be our guide 

BLESSED THOMAS HOLFORD CATHOLIC COLLEGE PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

Our Mission Statement

The purpose of Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College is rooted in the religious mission and values of the Catholic Church. Our mission is that as a member of Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College we pray '**may God's love be our guide**' as we follow the BTH way to **Be Kind, Work Hard**, and develop our whole selves. We achieve this through prayer, celebrating the sacraments, and living the values of Catholic Social Teaching.

1.Context

1.1 The Importance of Prayer and Liturgy

Jesus Christ is central to the life of Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College and permeates every action and celebration. Prayer and liturgy are integral to the spiritual life of the college and to students' moral and spiritual development. They are essential to our Catholic identity and mission, enabling our community to become reflective, experience the presence of God, and develop a mature spiritual life.

1.2 The Particular Character of Our School

Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College serves 1,614 students aged 11-18 in Altrincham. The majority of our students are Catholic, with the remainder coming from other Christian denominations, other faith traditions, and a small number of students of no faith background. This rich diversity strengthens our community as we journey together, united by our shared mission and mutual respect.

Our college chapel, known as the **Heart of BTH**, serves as a sacred space for prayer, reflection, and the celebration of liturgy, reinforcing the presence of God at the centre of our college community.

Guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ, we seek to create an inclusive and prayerful environment where all students can deepen their relationship with God and develop a strong moral compass. Our prayer and liturgy provision recognises and celebrates our diversity whilst remaining authentically Catholic, ensuring that all members of our community are welcomed and respected.

2. Statement of Requirement

2.1 Legal Requirement

As a Catholic college, we recognise the legal requirement for an act of collective worship (prayer and liturgy) to take place daily. This is fulfilled through structured

prayer, liturgical celebrations, and acts of worship that reflect the Catholic ethos of the college.

Parents retain the right to withdraw their children from prayer and liturgy activities up to Year 11. Sixth-form students can themselves choose to withdraw.

2.2 Provision to Fulfil Students' Entitlement

Our students are entitled to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church. By the time students leave BTHCC, they will:

- Be familiar with the common prayers of the Catholic tradition (as outlined in Appendix 9.5 of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory)
- Be confident in participating in the liturgy of their parish communities
- Have experienced the celebration of Mass for key liturgical seasons
- Have had opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Have developed a personal prayer life
- Understand and appreciate the liturgical year and its seasons

Our prayer and liturgy aim to be inclusive, educational, and spiritual, reflecting the traditions of the Catholic Church while respecting the spiritual needs of all. They are linked to the Catholic liturgical calendar and key events, encouraging personal reflection and fostering a sense of mystery and purpose. Where appropriate, Liturgical Prayer follows the Emmaus model: **gather, listen, respond, and mission.**

2.3 Shared Repertoire

Students will develop familiarity with:

- **Common prayers** including the Sign of the Cross, Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles' Creed, and others appropriate to their age and stage
- **Liturgical music** including key Mass settings, Gospel Acclamations, and a varied repertoire of hymns and chants shared with our local parishes and diocese
- **Responses** used in Mass and other liturgical celebrations

3. Statement of Inclusivity

Our college welcomes students and staff from all faith backgrounds and none. While prayer and liturgy are central to our college life and authentically Catholic in character, we respect the religious integrity of all members of our community.

For Catholic students: Prayer and liturgy provide essential formation in the faith, deepening their relationship with Christ and preparing them for full participation in the life of the Church.

For students from other Christian traditions: We welcome their participation in our prayer and liturgy. They are invited to join in listening to scripture, in silent reflection, and in prayers that are common to all Christians. We respect that they

may not receive Holy Communion at Mass or sacramental absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in accordance with Church teaching.

For students from other faith traditions: We recognise and respect their faith commitments. These students bring their own hopes and concerns to prayer and liturgy. We invite them to be present, to engage through seeing, hearing, and reflecting, and to share in times of silence. We respect their religious integrity by not asking them to say responses, prayers, or perform gestures that do not correspond to their own faith. We are committed to ongoing dialogue with families and, where possible, local religious leaders.

For students of no faith background: We invite them to be present and to engage respectfully with what they experience. They are encouraged to reflect on the values we celebrate without being asked to make responses or gestures that would compromise their integrity.

All students are expected to show respect during times of prayer and liturgy, recognising these as important expressions of our Catholic identity.

4. Responsibility

4.1 Governors

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure the Lay Chaplain and Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator has dedicated time and resources
- Review this policy every three years, or sooner if required by diocesan guidance
- Ensure at least one governor attends key liturgical celebrations annually
- Allocate a specific budget line for prayer and liturgy (liturgical books, vestments, sacred vessels, music resources, staff formation)
- Receive an annual report on prayer and liturgy provision, including student voice feedback
- Ensure all staff appointments recognise the importance of supporting the Catholic life of the college

4.2 Headteacher

The headteacher ensures that:

- Prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the college and align with the Prayer and Liturgy Directory
- The Lay Chaplain and other staff responsible for prayer and liturgy receive appropriate training and formation
- There are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy
- Prayer and liturgy are included in the college development plan
- The leadership team models good practice by participating in and leading prayer and liturgy

4.3 Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator and Lay Chaplains

Our Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator alongside the Lay Chaplains ensures that:

- An Annual Plan of Provision is created identifying liturgical seasons, key celebrations, and opportunities for the Sacraments
- Daily planned prayer is provided for all students, appropriate to age and ability

- Students are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in planning, preparation, and delivery
- Resources are appropriate and readily available
- Induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new staff
- Staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- Monitoring and evaluation take place regularly
- There is collaboration with local clergy, parishes, and Shrewsbury Diocese
- Dialogue is maintained with families from different faith backgrounds

4.4 All Staff

All adults, whatever their personal religious affiliation, contribute to the spiritual life of the college. Staff facilitate prayer and liturgy for students, teaching them how to participate meaningfully and grow in faith. Staff from other faith traditions can facilitate classroom prayer and support students in their spiritual development.

4.5 Student Leadership

Sixth Form students and College Council members are particularly involved in preparing, delivering, and evaluating prayer and liturgy. Catholic students and those from other Christian traditions may undertake a specific ministry in accordance with Church teaching.

4.6 Local Clergy

Priests and deacons from our local parishes and deanery play an important role in supporting the spiritual life of the college, celebrating liturgy, and forging links with the wider Church.

5. Overview of Prayer and Liturgy Provision

5.1 Daily Prayer

- Morning prayer to start each college day
- Grace before meals
- End-of-day reflection and prayer
- Staff prayers before all CPDF sessions and meetings

5.2 Weekly Prayer and Liturgy

- Celebration of the Word for each year group (assembly time)
- Wednesday Word
- Walk by Faith in Together for Good reflection and prayer sessions
- Voluntary Mass for students and staff

5.3 Seasonal and Special Liturgies

- Whole college Masses for Holy Days of Obligation (Ascension, All Saints, etc.)
- Welcome Mass for Year 7 students and parents (September)
- Advent and Lent Reconciliation services
- Ash Wednesday liturgy
- Holy Week reflections
- Leavers' Mass for Year 11 and Year 13 students and parents
- College Patronal Feast Day celebration

- Remembrance liturgy (November)
- Special liturgies responding to particular needs and events

6. Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to our understanding of ourselves as a Catholic college, reflected in our annual budget allocation.

Human Resources: Dedicated Lay Chaplain, time allocated for Head of Religious Education to support liturgical planning, release time for staff formation, student liturgy leaders.

Physical Resources: The Heart of BTH (college chapel) maintained as a sacred space, liturgical books (Roman Missal, Lectionaries, Ritual books), sacred vessels and linens, seasonal decorations and liturgical colours, music resources and instruments, prayer focus materials for tutor rooms, classroom crucifixes and religious artefacts.

Financial Resources: Annual budget for consumables (candles, altar breads, wine), new liturgical resources and replacement items, staff formation and training, student liturgical formation.

Partnership Resources: Strong links with Shrewsbury Diocese liturgy office, collaboration with local clergy, access to diocesan advisers and formation opportunities, dialogue with local faith leaders where appropriate.

7. Training and Formation

All Staff: Induction for new staff includes introduction to this policy and our approach to inclusivity. Whole staff INSET on prayer and liturgy at least annually. Access to resources and guidance for leading tutor-time prayer. Regular updates on liturgical seasons and forthcoming celebrations.

Undertaking a specific ministry (Staff and Students): Formation for readers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, those leading intercessions, choir members and cantors, altar servers, and student liturgy leaders.

Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator: Regular liaison with diocesan advisers, attendance at diocesan formation events, access to professional development opportunities, membership of relevant networks for sharing good practice. The college recognises that liturgical formation is ongoing and progressive, building skills and understanding over time.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular Monitoring: Observation of liturgies by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator and senior leaders, review of planning documents and resources, feedback from staff, student voice through College Council and year group representatives (ensuring representation from students of all backgrounds), feedback from clergy, and feedback from families regarding our inclusive approach.

Annual Evaluation: Comprehensive review involving students from all faith backgrounds and none (through surveys and focus groups), parents (through surveys), staff (through department meetings and surveys), clergy (through consultation), and governors (through attendance at liturgies and review of reports). The evaluation will analyse participation levels and engagement across all groups, the effectiveness of our inclusive approach, the Annual Plan of Provision, areas of strength and development, and budget review.

Reporting: Termly updates to governors on key celebrations and developments. Annual report to governors including overview of provision, student voice feedback from all groups, staff formation undertaken, areas of strength and development, budget review, and action plan. Contribution to the diocesan Section 48 inspection process.

Areas for development identified through monitoring and evaluation will be incorporated into the college development plan and actioned appropriately.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure it continues to meet the spiritual needs of the college community, aligns with the latest diocesan guidelines, and maintains our commitment to respectful inclusivity for all members of our diverse community.

Date of Next Review: September 2026

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Prayer and Liturgy Directory for Catholic Schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales (2023).