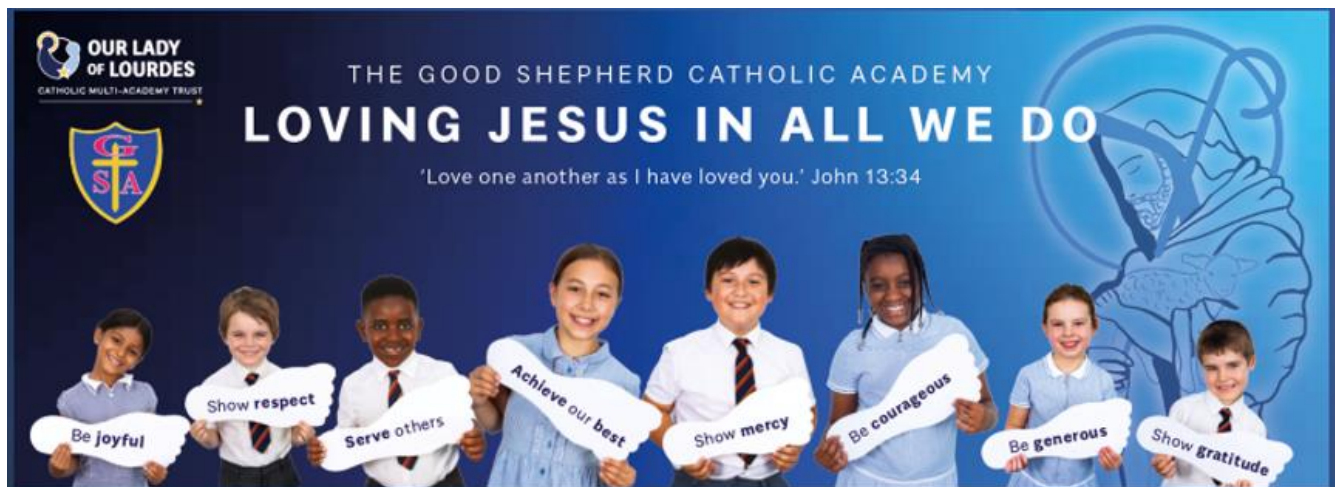




The Good Shepherd
Catholic Primary Academy

CATHOLIC LIFE POLICY



Ratified On:

14th December 2022

Review Date:

September 2024

Chair of Governor's signature:

Mrs Rebecca Burke

Headteacher's signature:

Mrs Celine Toner

Catholic Life Policy

John 13:34-35

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Rationale

In the life and faith of our Catholic school, Religious Education plays a vital and central part, it is the foundation of all of our teachings. At the very heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the Human person. Therefore, religious education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. Our Catholic beliefs and values inspire and unify every aspect of our school life. They are the basis, and an essential influence, on all that the staff and pupils at the Good Shepherd Academy do. It is not solely taught as a curriculum area but as a way of life, promoting the Gospel values, giving praise and reverence to God. It is an opportunity for everyone to develop their own personal faith, through words and actions, and to enter into a communion with God. This is achieved through liturgy, collective worship, assemblies, lessons and roles and responsibilities throughout the school, which deepen our Catholic life and highlight our belief that Christ is at the centre of all that we do.

“True education is directed towards the formation of the human person in the view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duties of which he will, as an adult, have a share.” Vatican II (Gravissimum Educationis, 1)

Our Mission: ‘Loving Jesus in all we do’

As a Catholic Primary School we aim to develop and nurture our children as they continue in their faith journey. With Christ at the centre of all that we do our Mission Statement is the foundation on which we build the Catholic Life of our school.

We aim to achieve our mission by:

- Establishing, maintaining and developing a Catholic ethos which is permeated in everything we do and is apparent to all those who enter the school.
- Providing frequent opportunities for conscious and active participation in collective worship through Holy Mass and other services/celebrations in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church to all in the community.
- Providing support with the Sacramental Programme, in collaboration with the Parish, in accordance with the rites of the Catholic Church.
- Creating a place of learning where Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church are evident in everything we do.
- Modelling the image of Christ in the way we lead and manage the school.
- Providing an enriched curriculum which is creative, inspiring and inclusive for all pupils, which is fundamentally based on the teachings of Jesus and his Holy Church.

Catholic Life Policy

- Developing the prayer and spiritual life of all members of our school and the community it serves.
- To promote the virtues of faith, hope and charity.
- To educate pupils to be active in their faith by playing an active role in our community and beyond.
- Ensuring that the Gospel values are permeated through all policies which include inclusion, behaviour and curriculum.

Caring and meeting the pastoral, spiritual, moral and social needs of the children are met by:

- Providing good Catholic role models for the younger citizens of the future so that they may follow in Jesus' footsteps.
- Maintaining, working with and developing successful links with the home, parish, archdiocese, community and the wider world.

It is our hope that by working towards the above we play our part in the mission of Christ and his Holy Church on Earth.

1. To provide opportunities for regular collective worship.
2. To provide a caring, inspiring and creative environment.

The Spiritual Life of the School

We aim to develop the spiritual life of everyone within our community, regardless of their beliefs. We provide spiritual development for pupils and staff alike, and invite our families to develop spiritually in connection with the school and parish.

We do this by:

- Providing children with the skills to develop their own prayer life - through the reading of the Scriptures, music, drama, dance and prayer
- Providing opportunities for reflection
- Developing the environment – both the classroom and wider school
- Training members of the Chaplaincy team to take the lead in organising the prayer focus and leading prayers and liturgy
- Homework based on Come and See
- Travelling Nativity families during Advent
- Lenten Prayer bags for families during Lent
- Travelling class prayer books
- Whole school Masses
- Class Masses
- Class Retreats
- Adoration

Catholic Life Policy

- Reading the sacred Scripture in the parish on a Sunday
- Whole school Masses held in the Church – both during the school week and on a Sunday
- Fundraising
- Opportunities for Reconciliation
- Prayer groups

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Prayer

The prayer life at the Good Shepherd Academy is an integral part of our day. It is a means of expressing, fostering and nurturing faith. We aim to create and maintain an environment where each child's aptitude to prayer is encouraged so that they can respond to joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation in the world around them. Our classrooms, work area, corridors and entrance area are welcoming, bright and creative so that our Mission Statement is being lived out through our surroundings.

Children are encouraged and helped to discover the many different ways in which to pray, formal and informal, private and communal. They are encouraged to be still and listen to God. We aim to teach and develop a variety of prayer methods to the children such as:

- Teaching the traditional prayers of the Church alongside any new prayers.
- Allowing the children to develop their spiritual awareness by giving them the skills to create asking, thanksgiving, praising and sorry prayers.
- Through the reading of the Gospels and the Holy Bible. (liturgical prayer)
- Through the teaching of traditional and modern hymns.
- Through the teaching of drama, sacred music and prayer.
- Meditating and reflecting in silence whilst being inspired by liturgical music and religious art.
- Through Adoration, in the presence of Christ.

Prayer in the classroom.

Each classroom in the school creates a prayerful environment by each having a prayer focus.

Catholic Life Policy

- It is required that this focus is dressed in the correct liturgical colour as a visual sign, showing the children the change and the mood of the liturgical calendar.
- This prayer focus should have a Bible which shows the previous Sunday's Gospel readings; or the reading associated with a feast day; or a reading which is relevant to the current Come and See topic.
- Teachers are encouraged to be creative when creating an interactive display on their classroom prayer focus. Objects, images and candles should reflect the liturgical year, feasts or the current Come and See topic.
- Teachers are encouraged to provide a prayer box / tree / book where children can write petitions so that the class as a community can pray for the needs of others.
- Each room in the school has a crucifix which reminds us all of the sacrifice of Christ for all of humanity; it reminds us that Christ is the foundation stone of Catholic education and that Christ is at the centre at everything we do.

It is required by law to provide daily worship in the classroom. Teachers and pupils pray at each of these periods of the day:

At the beginning of the school day (Morning prayers)

Before and after Lunchtime (Grace)

Angelus (KS2)

At Home time (End of day prayers)

Collective Worship

In addition to the daily requirement of collective worship in our classrooms we provide collective worship at a whole school level and for different year groups in the school (see Collective Worship Policy)

Each of these Collective Worship are always based linked to a Catholic theme and one of our school values.

Children also plan and deliver a weekly child-led Collective Worship. They plan this using the Let us Pray resources alongside other available resources

When we plan for these occasions we keep the following points in mind:

- Using the correct structure – Gather - Word - Respond - Go forth
- Is the scripture at the centre of the Liturgical Prayer?
- Is the language being used suitable for the age group?
- Are the symbols being used relevant and meaningful?
- Can everyone identify and join in with what is happening?
- Can this celebration be related to the lives of the children?
- Is it meaningful?

Catholic Life Policy

Retreats

The experience of a Class Retreat is a very special opportunity for spiritual growth, where the challenges of Christian living can be experienced in a manner that inspires young people. Annual Class Retreats are incorporated in the school calendar and are led by our Chaplain.

The Chapel

The Good Shepherd Academy is fortunate to have a Chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. Our Chapel provides an ideal haven for quiet personal prayer and reflection. Children are also encouraged to visit the Chapel for group prayer during the week and at key times during the year – rosary during October & May, Remembrance during October etc.

The Mass

We acknowledge and revere the most Holy Sacrament of the celebration of the Eucharist. We believe it is central to our roles as being members of the Body of Christ and redeeming life graces and the blessings which it provides.

In school our Masses are carefully planned in advance, so that all children have the opportunity to lead and celebrate. Mass is celebrated at least half termly, and all staff and children attend from Reception to Y6. Members of other denominations are welcomed at Mass and contribute as far as their individual consciences and the norms of the Catholic Church allow. Those who wish to receive a blessing at the Eucharist are invited to come forward.

We firmly believe in the importance of celebrating the Mass by:

- Encouraging all our school members to go to Mass on a weekly basis.
- Providing opportunities for School Masses throughout the academic year.
- Providing opportunities to lead Sunday Mass with the parish – termly.
- Providing opportunities for Year group Masses to take place, where each year group actively plans and contributes to the celebration.
- Celebrating Holy Mass on Feast Days and Holy days of Obligation.
- Celebrating Masses as part of the Sacramental programme.
- Celebrating Mass at the key times of the school year each new term and a leavers Mass for Year 6.
- By teaching the structure of the Mass to the children

We are all part of the Eucharistic Community. This is not just a matter of saying that Mass is important in our school but rather that it has a profound effect on our life as part of the community The Church's Liturgical Year and Traditional Devotions.

Using the Liturgical year as a framework, we draw on the wealth of the whole church to teach our children who God is and what they are. We follow the development through the Curriculum Directory, introducing children to the lives of saints, to the changes of season and the mood and colour expressing these changes. Children are given the associated language,

Catholic Life Policy

signs and symbols. This involves progression, some repetition and deepening of understanding.

Devotion to Our Lady, as Mother of Jesus and our Mother is encouraged. A simple form of the Rosary is introduced in October and May across the school.

Prayers or remembrance are encouraged in November, particularly following our whole school Mass for All Saints Day and our Remembrance Liturgy (led by Year 6).

The Advent and the Christmas season is observed and celebrated through the Come and See programme, as well as through a variety of collective worship gatherings such as daily classroom reflections, Advent Collective Worships, Nativities , Carol Service and Mass. After the Christmas Holidays the season is continued up to its official ending with a celebration of Mass for Epiphany.

Lent preparations take place in the classroom with daily reflections and the whole school take part in the Stations of the Cross. Holy Week preparations end with a Liturgy, where the events of Holy week are re-enacted (led by Year 5). Children in Years 4-6 also take part in a service of reconciliation.

Reconciliation

Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation We aim to nurture a growing appreciation of the joy of forgiving and being forgiven, the gradual formation of conscience and the infinite mercy of God. Our children should encounter and seek to live in accordance with the ideals of this Sacrament and the quality of relationships within the School should bear witness to this. Our children are given the opportunity of receiving the Sacrament in school during Lent. Special arrangements are made, with the support of our parish priest and with the assistance of visiting Clergy, for our children to take part in a service of reconciliation in our church. We strive to provide children with quality preparation and meaningful celebration of the Sacrament, fostering a relationship of trust, enabling them to discuss difficult areas of their lives in complete confidence and encounter Christ's redemptive love.

Giving to Others

We aim to bring about an awareness of the needs of others. This is an on-going process and those less fortunate than us are remembered in daily prayer. During the autumn season children and the community are encouraged to bring in food for those less fortunate during the Harvest Festival celebrations. The food is taken to a local food bank. There is also a non-uniform days where the children donate money and the proceeds are sent to CAFOD. During the season of Lent we raise funds for various charities at home and overseas, e.g. McMillan, Framework, NCDYS and CAFOD. Children are always encouraged to help each other as well as their parents, teachers and other people in our community. It is our aim that our whole school ethos is one that will foster and nurture a generous giving of self, an appreciation and respect for one's own property and that of others.

The Bishop's Spiritual Themes

During the year 2018, Bishop Patrick encouraged all schools to promote his three spiritual themes of: Encounter (to call), Discipleship (to build) and Missionary Discipleship (to

Catholic Life Policy

send). Therefore, at different points in the year, we will be focusing on each spiritual theme as an integral part of the Catholic life of the school.

Parental Involvement

We believe that if our Catholic ethos is to be effective, we must at each stage seek to involve parents and give them the confidence to play their part in the formation of their children. The school supports and develops the primary task of parents as the first teachers of their children in the ways of Faith. We aim to involve parents by

- Inviting them to Collective Worship
- Inviting them to celebrate Holy Mass and other Liturgies and services at different times during the school year
- They are invited to parent meetings when Religious Education is discussed e.g. as their children enter school in Reception, Parents Evenings twice a year and for RSE information meetings
- Inviting them to special celebrations such as Nativities, Carol Service, Class Retreats, Easter Liturgies and Leavers' Mass
- They are encouraged to participate with their children during Advent when the 'Travelling Cribs' are sent home, encouraging a time of sharing and reflection
- They are encouraged to participate with their children during Lent as part of our 'Spread joy' initiative
- They are encouraged to bring their children to the Holy Mass either Saturday evening or Sunday.
- They are encouraged to support the Religious Education lessons by helping their children complete homework tasks and discuss with their children work being completed.
- They are given information through the school website which also has a direct link to the Nottingham Diocesan and the Parish website
- Providing information evenings on the Sacramental Programme, through the parish
- Inviting them to share their views through meetings and questionnaires.

Equality Statement

We have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010, in respect of safeguarding and in respect of pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

The curriculum is inclusive and facilitates the needs of all children regardless of their age, size, mobility, gender, ethnicity and ability. Our planning aims to foster an appreciation of each other's cultures and beliefs along with the promotion of a healthy and positive self-image. This is linked to the school's role as a Christian community, Special Education Needs and Inclusion.

Review

We acknowledge that this policy and our understanding of learning need to be reflective and open to new research in order for our teaching to be successful. The Headteacher and staff will review this policy during September 2024. Any suggested amendments will be presented to the Governing Body.