

St Richard's Catholic College

Catholic Life, Vision & Ethos Policy



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: May 2024

Chair of Governors:

The Governing Body will review the policy in May 2025

Catholic Life, Vision and Ethos Policy

St Richard's is a Catholic school and parents choose to send their children here because they wish them to be educated in the Catholic faith. The school has a Lay Chaplain who is responsible for promoting and co-ordinating liturgical activities and daily prayer throughout the year and for leading the whole community in supporting the spiritual journeys of all who come to learn and work at St Richard's. The school looks to form the spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral aspect of every member of the school.

We are fortunate in having a strong Chaplaincy team that is supported by priests and deacons who lead Services and celebrate Mass regularly. The local clergy are regularly in school and are available to staff, pupils and parents. They lead our full school Masses on special occasions and on Holy Days of Obligation when available. The year Liturgies, and Celebrations of the Word and form Liturgies and Celebrations of the Word are celebrated on a rota basis by the Priests and Deacons of both Deaneries. The Lay Chaplain, along with the Performing Arts Department, create opportunities for pupils to be involved in acts of worship following the Liturgical Year of the Church, the seasons and various feast days. The Lay Chaplain, together with members of the RE and music department, is always ready to assist with the preparation of form and year Masses. The Lay Chaplain organises an opportunity for pupils to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Along with the RE Department, the Lay Chaplain is involved in facilitating retreat days every year and trips to both Catholic and other religious places of worship. The Lay Chaplain provides a yearly weekend residential retreat for KS3 (Year 7 and 8) and our bi-annual Rome Pilgrimage for KS4 (Year 9-11), which give the pupils the opportunity to spend some time together to reflect on their faith journey. She is also the appointed Diocesan Lourdes Champion to support pupils applying for the Redshirt youth programme for Year 9 and Year 10 on the annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

Assemblies are held every day and these are occasions when the school comes together as a community in prayer and worship. Assemblies are led by the Lay Chaplain, the Principal, the Vice Principal, the Assistant Principals, and Pastoral Leaders. We encourage groups of pupils, under the direction of their Form Tutors, to prepare and present assemblies. The Music department and groups of musicians and singers provide the music for all assemblies. External speakers give variety and breadth to our themes. Opportunities arise throughout the liturgical year for particular emphasis to be given to our spiritual growth and the material needs of others, with encouragement to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation in Years 10 and / or 11.

Within the life of a Catholic school, prayer life is an essential element of faith development. At the start of each week, prayers for each day which reflect the Gospel readings and various Catholic themes are placed on the pupils' notices. These are used by Tutors and Subject Staff in daily morning prayer, for grace before meals and for prayer for the end of the day. All staff facilitate time of prayer at the beginning of registration each day, and at the end of the day and grace is said before lunch. Each Form group has access to all the necessary things to assist in Form prayer, such as bible, rosary, form candle, standing cross and cloths in the liturgical colours. The Lay Chaplain has also put together a Tutor Prayer Guide book and gives regular input in staff meetings to support staff in the prayer life of the school. Prayer may be led by the teacher but this is not necessary as members of the class should do it on a rota basis. A prayer, especially the prayer of St Richard or a reading should also be said at the end of the day as a reflection of the day's work.

The Lay Chaplain has also put together a set of resources for Form Tutors to use to plan and put together their Form Liturgy/Celebration of the Word. Each form has an elected Caritas Leader and they support the tutor in preparing their form liturgy/Celebration of the Word, assemblies and morning prayer. Caritas Leader Team is led by a Caritas Captain and Deputy Captain and Caritas Senior Team elected from Year 10 and 11, pupils in year 9 and 10 are invited to apply for these leadership roles in the summer term and are commissioned in these roles in our opening liturgy of the year.

Underpinning the sacramental and spiritual life of the school is the expectation that all members of staff will help promote the spiritual work of the school. This is helped by the existence and display of a very caring relationship among its members. The Lay Chaplain and Senior Assistant Principal provide support for new staff and those who require it. New staff receive inset training from the Lay Chaplain and members of the RE Department to support them in this aspect of school life.

Alongside the Lay Chaplain there exists key carers among staff who are willing to help any member of staff who is distressed or in difficulty. The Lay Chaplain assists the Pastoral Team in providing support to pupils in need.

The Chaplaincy team and the Leadership and Management Team are also available to help any staff member who feels under pressure or worried, whether due to the demands of the task in hand or for personal reasons. The Lay Chaplain is available for staff to come and talk in confidence. Please do not hesitate to approach any of the above and rest assured that the strictest confidence will be guaranteed.