

Sacred Heart Catholic School



Catholic Life and Mission Policy

“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.”

John 13:34-35

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Rationale

At Sacred Heart Catholic School, Catholic Life and Religious Education are at the heart of everything we do. Religious Education is not one subject among many but the foundation of the entire educational process, in accordance with the Religious Education Directory (2023). At the centre of our Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, called to holiness and destined for eternal life. In the spirit of Vatican II's teaching that "true education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs", our work seeks to form children who grow in wisdom, virtue and service.

Religious Education is the core of the curriculum and Catholic Life and Mission permeate every aspect of daily school life, shaping relationships, decision making, policies, curriculum and the overall culture of the school.

Our Catholic beliefs and values inspire and unify all aspects of our school life. They are lived through prayer, worship, study and service. Sacred Heart Catholic School fulfils its mission in communion with the Bishop and the wider diocesan family of schools and parishes. Catholic Life is not only taught through the curriculum but is lived as a way of life, promoting Gospel values, giving praise and reverence to God, and nurturing every child's personal faith journey. This is achieved through prayer, liturgy, retreats, curriculum learning and service to others, all of which root our school in the person of Christ. Our mission is known, lived and witnessed throughout the school, and the Word of God shapes our decisions, relationships, curriculum and priorities, ensuring that Christ is at the heart of all we do.

Our Catholic Life and Mission are shaped by the diocesan call to Encounter, Discipleship and Missionary Discipleship. We create opportunities for pupils and staff to encounter Christ personally, to grow as disciples through prayer, worship and learning, and to live as missionary disciples who bring Christ's love to others through service, justice and witness.

Purpose

This policy outlines how Sacred Heart Catholic School promotes, develops, celebrates and evaluates Catholic Life and Mission across all aspects of school life. It provides guidance for staff, governors, pupils and parents and supports the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. It should be read alongside the Religious Education Policy, Prayer and Liturgy Policy, Relationships Education Policy and Behaviour Policy.

Mission Statement

Sacred Heart Catholic School is a loving community where we love and learn together with Christ at the heart of all that we do. We aspire for every child to become a confident, curious and resilient learner through hard work, perseverance and pride.

We nurture in every pupil a deep understanding that they are created in the image and likeness of God, helping them grow in confidence, security and self-worth. We foster empathy, compassion and forgiveness, encouraging a positive attitude so children can achieve excellence and apply their gifts for the benefit of others.

We uphold the value and dignity of every person, showing respect, celebrating diversity and welcoming those of all faiths and none. Through togetherness, service, stewardship of creation and care for one another, our children and staff strive to live out the Gospel in practical and meaningful ways.

We achieve our mission by:

- Establishing and maintaining a visible Catholic ethos evident in the welcome, prayer, learning and relationships of our school community.
- Providing opportunities for pupils and staff to encounter Christ daily through prayer and liturgy in line with the Prayer and Liturgy Directory (2023).
- Supporting children in preparing for and celebrating the Sacraments in partnership with parents, parish and diocese.
- Ensuring Gospel values permeate our teaching, learning, policies and community life.
- Providing an inspiring, creative and inclusive curriculum rooted in the person of Jesus Christ and shaped by the Religious Education Directory.
- Modelling leadership and service in the image of Christ.
- Actively teaching and modelling the virtues of compassion, courage, honesty, forgiveness and service, supporting pupils to grow in personal responsibility, care for our Common Home and seek the common good.
- Developing the virtues of faith, hope and charity and encouraging pupils to be signs of hope in the world.

Through these commitments, we support every member of our community to encounter Christ, follow Him as disciples and share His love as missionary disciples within our school, parish and the wider world.

Spiritual Life of the School

We foster the spiritual development of pupils, staff and families, recognising that each person is on a journey of faith. We provide opportunities to encounter God through:

- Daily opportunities for prayer throughout the school day.
- Prayer and liturgy that are carefully planned and celebrated in accordance with the Prayer and Liturgy Directory.
- Celebrations of Mass in school and parish, marking liturgical seasons and feast days.
- Retreats and reflective opportunities that deepen discipleship.
- Prayerful environments and sacred spaces reflecting the liturgical seasons.
- Adoration, the Rosary, Reconciliation and other devotions of the Church.

Opportunities for pupil leadership in prayer and liturgy

Chaplaincy is a central and visible aspect of school life. It supports the spiritual formation of pupils and staff and provides opportunities for prayer, worship, service, leadership and outreach.

Our prayer and liturgical life is designed to lead pupils from encounter with Christ, to deepening discipleship, and finally to outward-facing mission, in harmony with the diocesan vision.

Our school is committed to ensuring that prayer and liturgy are age appropriate, progressive and inclusive, enabling every child to participate fully and encounter Christ personally.

Giving to others and Missionary Discipleship

Catholic Life is expressed in service to others. Pupils are encouraged to live out their faith through acts of charity, justice and kindness at local, national and global levels.

Catholic Social Teaching underpins the life of the school. Through the principles of Human Dignity, the Common Good, Solidarity, Participation, Subsidiarity, Stewardship and the Preferential Option for the Poor, pupils learn how faith is put into action and how they can contribute positively to society.

Catholic Social Teaching is integrated throughout the curriculum and wider life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to put these principles into action through fundraising, service projects, charitable outreach and acts of stewardship.

Through these acts of charity and justice, pupils learn that missionary discipleship is not an abstract idea but a lived response to the Gospel.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- Ensure Catholic Life and Mission remain central to strategic decision making.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of Catholic Life and Mission.
- Support and challenge leaders in maintaining the Catholic character of the school.
- Participate in monitoring activities and validation processes.
- Ensure statutory and diocesan requirements relating to Catholic Life and Mission are fulfilled.

Headteacher

- Leads and models Catholic Life and Mission.
- Ensures Catholic Life permeates all aspects of school life.
- Provides opportunities for staff formation and spiritual development.
- Ensures policies and procedures reflect Catholic teaching and values.

Religious Education Leader

- Supports the strategic development of Catholic Life and Mission.
- Leads monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning.
- Supports staff formation and professional development.
- Develops strong partnerships with parish and diocesan agencies.

All staff

- Contribute to the Catholic Life and Mission of the school.
- Model Gospel values in relationships and interactions.
- Support prayer, liturgy and spiritual development.
- Promote Catholic Social Teaching and the common good.
- Provide witness to the school's mission through their daily work.

Pupil participation and leadership

Pupils actively contribute to the Catholic Life and Mission of the school through chaplaincy teams, liturgy leadership, Mini Vinnies, eco-leadership, charitable outreach and service to others. Pupils increasingly take ownership of the Catholic Life and Mission of the school through planning, leading and evaluating aspects of prayer, service and charitable outreach.

Through these opportunities, pupils develop as disciples of Christ, taking responsibility for promoting Gospel values, prayer, service and Catholic Social Teaching throughout the school community.

Staff formation

The school is committed to the ongoing spiritual, theological and professional formation of all staff. This includes:

- Diocesan training and formation programmes.
- Induction into Catholic education for new staff.
- Opportunities for prayer and reflection.
- Retreats and spiritual development opportunities.
- Engagement with the Religious Education Directory and Prayer and Liturgy Directory.
- Professional dialogue and collaborative development.

Staff are encouraged to deepen their understanding of Catholic teaching and their role in the mission of Catholic education.

Parental and Parish Partnership

We recognise parents as the first educators of the faith and work in partnership with them, alongside our parish and diocese.

Parents are invited to participate in prayer, liturgy, sacramental preparation, learning and community life, strengthening the bond between home and school.

We work in close partnership with our parish, recognising that the school is at the service of the local Church. Together we celebrate feast days, sacraments and the liturgical life of the community.

Clergy and parish representatives regularly contribute to the spiritual life of the school through Mass, liturgy, sacramental preparation, pastoral support and the witness of faith.

Together we strive to create a community where children encounter Christ in relationships, worship and service.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring information informs Catholic Life self-evaluation and contributes directly to school improvement priorities. The effectiveness of Catholic Life and Mission is monitored and evaluated through:

- Pupil voice
- Staff voice
- Parent voice
- Governor monitoring visits
- Learning walks
- Reviews of prayer and liturgy
- Evaluation of the impact of the mission statement on school life
- Monitoring of chaplaincy and pupil leadership
- Parish feedback
- Self-evaluation and school improvement planning

The outcomes of monitoring are used to celebrate strengths, identify areas for development and ensure continual improvement in Catholic Life and Mission.

Equality and inclusion

In line with the Equality Act (2010), our Catholic ethos ensures inclusivity for all.

We recognise that every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses an inherent dignity which must be respected and protected.

The Catholic Life of the school celebrates diversity, respects the dignity of each child and ensures all pupils are valued and supported in their faith and learning journey. We strive to be a community of generous hospitality where every person, especially the most vulnerable, is welcomed, valued and supported.

We celebrate the presence of pupils and families from diverse cultures and belief traditions, respecting and valuing people of all faiths and none while remaining faithful to the teachings and mission of the Catholic Church.

Pastoral care is a strength of our school. Staff provide the highest levels of support, with a particular commitment to the most vulnerable, ensuring that every child feels safe, known and loved.

Our school environment reflects our Catholic identity through sacred spaces, displays and symbols that honour the dignity of each person and support spiritual formation.

Concluding Statement

At Sacred Heart, Catholic Life and Mission are not simply aspects of school life; they are the heartbeat of our community. Rooted in Christ, guided by the Gospel and inspired by the dignity of every person, we strive to form pupils who are hopeful, compassionate and ready to serve the world.

Together, we seek to ensure that every member of our community encounters Christ, grows in discipleship and is empowered to become a joyful missionary disciple in the service of others.

In all we do, we seek to build a community of Encounter, Discipleship and Missionary Discipleship in joyful communion with the vision of our diocesan bishop.

Policy Review

Policy owner:	Anne-Marie Bell, Headteacher
Responsible:	Local Governing Body
Date approved:	September 2026
Review date:	September 2027
Monitoring responsibility:	Headteacher, RE Leader and Governors