



# The Ursuline Academy Ilford

## Prayer and Liturgy Policy 2025

The Ursuline Academy Ilford

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The Policy will be reviewed:	<b>Spring 2028</b>

# Ursuline Academy Ilford – Mission Statement

*‘Act, move, believe, strive, hope, cry out to him with all your heart, for without doubt you will see marvellous things...’ St Angela Merici*

The Ursuline Academy Ilford is a Catholic community of faith, love, kindness and service. Guided by Gospel values and the Holy Spirit, we strive to create an inclusive environment where everyone in our diverse community can reach their full potential in all their endeavours.

Our young women are inspired by the witness of St Angela and the vibrant school community, whose motto *‘SERVIAM’*- I will serve, empowers us all to play our full part in society.

To help bring this about, Governors, leaders, teaching and support staff commit themselves to:

- Recognising the value and God-given uniqueness of every student we teach and responding sensitively to their needs and talents.
- Ensuring equity in all we do, and that equality of opportunity is available to all.
- Providing opportunities to enable all students to develop and grow intellectually and spiritually.
- Building a community based on justice, trust, cooperation and courtesy.
- Inviting parents and carers to play an active role in their daughter’s development, academically, socially, spiritually and morally.



Our values are drawn from the Ursuline charism, informed through our rich traditions, inspired by the spirit of St Angela Merici and challenged by the needs of our time.

*Students in an Ursuline school are growing to be individuals who are:*

- United in harmony
- Grateful and generous
- Listening and attentive
- Loving and compassionate
- Faith-filled and hopeful
- Courageous and resilient
- Discerning and joyful
- Leading for justice
- Acting with truth and integrity

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# 1. The context of this prayer and liturgy policy

*"The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God, and develop a mature spiritual life."*  
— Marcus Stock (2012), *Christ at the Centre*, Catholic Truth Society, p. 23.

At the Ursuline Academy Ilford, we embrace our mission to nurture faith, reflection, and spiritual growth within our school community. Rooted in Catholic tradition, we warmly welcome all to journey with us, recognising and celebrating the inherent dignity of every individual as a reflection of God's love. The Ursuline Academy Ilford is an inclusive school where the motto '*Serviam*'—*I will serve*—is fully lived out by students and staff. The Ursuline values are not only visible in the physical environment but are also deeply embedded in the kindness, compassion, and respect that define our relationships with one another.

## 2. Statement of Requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils, including those in the sixth form (Section 70, 1988 Education Act) that is in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20; Instrument of Government, clause 2). Academies in England are required by their funding agreement and Articles of Association to comply with similar requirements (*The Mainstream Academy and Free School: Supplemental Funding Agreement*, December 2020; *Model Articles for Catholic Academies*, February 2019).

The law requires all maintained schools to recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children up to the age of 16 from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1A)). Sixth-form pupils can choose to withdraw themselves from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1B)).

The school's provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil pupils' entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which pupils in the school will be familiar.

Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school, this means that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

## 3. Responsibility

### a) Governance

The governors, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission, have a responsibility to ensure that:

- Prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* (published by the Bishops' Conference)
- There is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator)
- The prayer and liturgy policy are updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders.
- There is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

### b) Headteacher

The headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

- Prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- They work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
- Those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- There are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

### c) Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

The Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator at The Ursuline Academy is the lay chaplain. In their absence or if the position of lay chaplain is vacant, the Assistant Head with responsibility for Catholic Life would act as the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator.

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy ensure that:

- Prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- There is an Annual Plan of Provision for prayer and liturgy across the school year which identifies liturgical seasons and key celebrations, as well as opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments
- There is daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- Pupils are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation
- Resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and pupils
- Induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- Staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- Monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- Monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the headteacher and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- There is collaboration with local clergy and parishes, staff and students attend masses at times throughout the year,
- Liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

## 4. Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Provision of prayer and liturgy at the Ursuline Academy follows the rhythms of the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church. This includes the major seasons and holy days of the liturgical year. You can find a useful directory of explanations about Catholic prayer on the Archdiocese of Southwark's website:

[Prayer: Archdiocese of Southwark](#)

As Ursulines we continue the approach to ministry which draws its life and vision from St Angela's spirit and philosophy. Inspired by the call of the same Gospel, and challenged by the needs of our time, we, like Angela, ground our mission in the following core values:

- Spiritual formation and faith development.
- Respect for the uniqueness of the individual.
- Development of the whole person.
- Development of a nurturing community spirit.
- Commitment to peace-making.
- Serviam (I will serve) as a lived reality.
- Development of leadership skills for every individual.

We will continue to foster and deepen the students' personal relationship with God our Father daily in prayer. We do this by helping them become aware of God's Presence in their lives and of His love for them by leading them to respond to Him in a manner suited to their age. This may be in one of the following ways: Prayer of silence; Spontaneous prayer; Praying through gesture or action; Formal prayer; Prayer through

song and music; Liturgical prayer and observances.

*“Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others”.* **Pope St John Paul II**

### Daily Prayer and Liturgy Provision

Morning Form Time always begins with a moment of communal prayer. This includes, but is not limited to, saying the Ursuline School Prayer (appendix 1). Form tutors are responsible for facilitating this but are also encouraged to give students roles of leadership in leading prayer. For example, through the role of form Chaplaincy Representatives. Prayer in form time may be expanded into a Celebration of the Word (see below).

Our primary goal is the spiritual growth of our students. Teachers *may* start each lesson with a prayer, which can be the Ursuline School prayer, a student-led prayer, or a reflection led by the teacher. Students are taught a range of prayers from the Prayer & Liturgy directory through their RE lessons.

All staff and Governor meetings at the Academy begin with a prayer or reflection, reinforcing the school's commitment to spiritual life. Each Monday morning, the headteacher leads a prayer and reflection during the staff briefing, providing an opportunity for the entire school community to unite in prayer at the start of the week. These briefings take place in the school chapel, symbolising the central role of faith and community within the Academy.

### Student Assemblies

Each week, students attend one Liturgical assembly and one Year Group presentation assembly (see rota in appendix 2). The Liturgical assembly is led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the chaplain or Catholic members of the RE department. At least once per half term Student Leadership Team leads the celebration of these assemblies. The Year Group presentation assembly is led by the Head of Year and/or students from within the year group.

House assemblies/celebrations take place on the feast day of each saint. These are led by the school chaplain, the student leadership team and the year 7 form group for that house.

Assemblies include a Celebration of the Word which focuses on the theme of the week as given in the school's liturgical calendar.

### Weekly Mass

12:40 (lunchtime), Mass takes place in the school chapel. A form group attends each Mass. Mass is celebrated by local parish priests.

### Prayer and Liturgy Provision through the Academic and Liturgical Year

The entire school community attends the celebration of Mass on the following occasions:

- The start of a new academic year (taking place in the first two weeks of September)
- All Saints Day
- St. Angela Merici day, the school's patronal feast day (taking place on or close to 27<sup>th</sup> January)
- The solemnity of SS. Peter & Paul
- Whole school celebrations e.g. Headteacher's commissioning 2023, Thanksgiving for long service 2024 & 2025.
- End of Year 13; Mass of Becoming: A Blessing for the Journey Ahead

The entire school community attends a formal Liturgy or extended Celebration of the Word, led by the Headteacher and/or Prayer and Liturgy Co-Ordinator, on the following occasions

- Advent Carol Service (the last day of the autumn term)
- Ash Wednesday
- Maundy Thursday (or the last day of the spring term)

Other Holy Days of Obligation are observed in school when they fall in term time. If possible and appropriate, this includes the celebration of Mass in school. If Mass is not possible for any reason, a Celebration of the Word will be coordinated, and students and families will be encouraged to attend Mass in their local parish. If Holy

Days of Obligation fall out of term time, they are acknowledged in some way through the school's liturgical calendar and the regular prayer and liturgy provision.

During the months of May and October the rosary is said daily during break-times. The Chaplaincy team lead this. This either takes place in the chapel or a prayer table is brought to the school playground. The Chaplaincy team also lead the praying of the stations of the cross, following the stations displayed in the school grounds. Prayers for the deceased are offered in November with the prayer table hosting book of remembrance for all the school to contribute to.

During Lent, every member of the school community is given the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school. This takes the form of 'Reconciliation Days' for each year group. On these days, the Prayer and Liturgy Co-Ordinator will arrange for an assembly on the theme of Reconciliation for the year group. Through the day, as clergy availability permits, students then have the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with a priest in the school chapel.

*"Retreats and drop-down days have been days have been well organised and have an impact on the students who remember their core message for a long time. RE teaching is excellent and they enjoy participating and contributing to Masses and other acts of worship/celebrations of faith".* **Parent quote from Catholic School's inspection, March 2025 at the Ursuline Academy Ilford.**

The diocese of Brentwood have a range of resources to support prayer & liturgy. You can read the full set of PLD prayers by following the link and selecting PLD prayers:

[Looking Forward Series Compilations - Brentwood Diocese](#)

## 5. Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. Dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy will be furnished and maintained as such and updated to reflect the Church's liturgical season. Staff training and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

We are very proud of our school chapel, the heart of Ursuline Academy Ilford. The beautiful mural of St. Angela Merici serves as a daily reminder of the profound impact her work continues to have on our lives.

## 6. Training and formation

All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. One INSET Day per year is dedicated to Catholic life this is an opportunity for whole-staff professional development, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

## 7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, Senior leaders and all those responsible for leading assemblies carry out observations using the school's assembly observation form (see appendix 3 & 4) and at least annually, and involve all key stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, clergy, and governors. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate. The Annual staff, student & parent surveys include questions on the Catholic life & mission of the school.

## 8. Review

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.

## Appendix 1: Ursuline School Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

**Gracious God,**

**Let us remain in harmony, united together all of one heart and one will,**

**Let us be bound to one another by the bond of Love,**

**Respecting each other, helping each other and bearing with each other in Jesus Christ,**

**For if we try to be like this, without any doubt the Lord God will be in our midst,**

**Amen**



## Appendix 2: Assembly and Year Group Presentations

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Year 13	Senior Leadership Liturgical Assembly: 8.40am - 9:00am Main Hall			Year team Assembly 8:40am - 9:00am Main Hall	
Year 12				Year team Assembly 8:40am - 9:00am Main Hall	
Year 11					Year team Assembly 8:40am - 9:00am Canteen
Year 10		Senior Leadership Liturgical Assembly: 8.40am - 9:00am Main Hall		Year team Assembly 8:40am - 9:00am Canteen	
Year 9			Year team Assembly 8:40am - 9:00am Canteen		
Year 8		Year team Assembly 8:40am - 9:00am Canteen	Senior Leadership Liturgical Assembly: 8.40am - 9:00am Main Hall		
Year 7	Year team Assembly 8:40am - 9:00am Canteen				

# Appendix 3: Collective Worship Assembly Observation Form

Date:	Year group(s):	Theme:  Led by:
		The teaching & example of Jesus as expressed in the Gospels Catholic Social Teaching The Ursuline Student Profile
<b>Gathering for assembly</b>	Students' entrance Silence Recorded or live music Visual stimuli	
<b>Assembly theme</b>	What was the theme? How was it chosen? (e.g. Church season/feast/memorial/other) How was it addressed in prayer/Scripture/song music/visuals?	
<b>Who was the assembly prepared by?</b>  <b>Who delivered the assembly?</b>	Senior Leadership Heads of year Chaplain Head girl team Students: Form groups, chaplaincy reps	
<b>Please comment on the response and participation of gathered student body</b>	Opportunities for prayer and response	
<b>Quality and type of prayer (formal/spontaneous / pupil-written / sourced / learned : Sign of the Cross / Our father / Hail Mary/ Eternal rest)</b>	Sign of the cross at the beginning and at the end School Prayer: Gracious God Formal or Spontaneous Opportunities for silence and reflection Pupil written Sourced Learned : Our Father / Hail Mary / Eternal rest	
<b>Choice of Scripture</b>	Old or New Testament Gospel Psalm Letter	

<b>Reading/proclamation of Scripture</b>	Clarity Oracy Audible Rehearsed	
<b>Non-scriptural readings – poem, wisdom, speech, sound bite. Catholic / Christian / other faith tradition / other source</b>	Poetry Speech Sound bite Catholic / Christian / other faith tradition / Other source	
<b>If a guest speaker has been present comment on their effectiveness with respect to the criteria above</b>		
<b>Is there a clear delineation of liturgical assembly from section on notices, announcements, reminders, warnings, sports results etc</b>		
<b>Mission : what message or messages did pupils and staff leave with? What actions or changes or further reflections are proposed?</b>		
<b>Dismissal : Orderly &amp; quiet Directed by adults</b>		

**Summary:**

# Appendix 3: Year Group Presentation Assembly Observation Form

Date:	Year group:	Theme:  Led by:
		
<b>Gathering for assembly and dismissal.</b>	Well organised and orderly? Uniform worn correctly? Respectful and positive atmosphere?	
<b>Assembly theme</b>	What was the theme? How was this addressed during the assembly? In line with themes rota?	
<b>Quality of presented material and engagement.</b>	Was a PowerPoint or similar used? Was music or video used? Overall how effective was the assembly in engaging the student audience and conveying a clear and powerful message?	
<b>Links to school ethos, Catholic Social Teaching, Ursuline virtues.</b>	Were there explicit links to CST USV etc? Images displayed or talked about?	
<b>Prayer</b>	Was the school prayer said during the assembly. Were there any other moments of prayer, reflection or call to action?	
<b>Student participation</b>	Did any students participate in the assembly / help deliver part of it etc?	
<b>Summary:</b>		

# Appendix 5: Frequently Asked Questions on Prayer & Liturgy at The Ursuline Academy Ilford

## **1. What is the purpose of prayer and liturgy in the school?**

Prayer and liturgy at The Ursuline Academy Ilford serve to foster the spiritual growth of students and staff, create a sense of community, and celebrate God's presence in daily life. It aligns with the Catholic tradition and the school's Ursuline values.

## **2. Is participation in prayer and liturgy mandatory for all students?**

Yes, all students are expected to participate in prayer and liturgy as part of the school's Catholic ethos. However, parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship, and sixth-form students can withdraw themselves (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1A) & s.71(1B)).

## **3. How does the school ensure inclusivity in prayer and liturgy?**

The school welcomes students of all faiths and backgrounds, ensuring that prayer and liturgy are delivered in a way that is respectful and inclusive. Opportunities for reflection and participation are available for all students, regardless of their religious background.

## **4. Q: Does the school provide facilities for students who require a space for prayer or ablution?**

**A:** Yes, the school has a dedicated prayer room available for students who wish to pray during the school day. Additionally, an ablutions facility is provided to accommodate those who require it as part of their faith practice.

## **5. How often do students participate in prayer and liturgy?**

Students engage in daily prayer during form time, weekly liturgical assemblies, and various liturgical celebrations throughout the academic year. RE lessons also incorporate prayer and reflection.

## **6. Who is responsible for leading prayer and liturgy in the school?**

The Lay Chaplain is the designated Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator. In their absence, the Assistant Head responsible for Catholic Life oversees prayer and liturgy. Staff members, students, and local clergy also contribute to leading prayer and liturgical events.

## **7. What role do students play in prayer and liturgy?**

Students are encouraged to take an active role by leading prayers, serving as form Chaplaincy Representatives, planning assemblies, participating in retreats, and engaging in liturgical music and readings.

## **8. How are parents and the wider community involved in the school's prayer and liturgy?**

Parents and community members are invited to key liturgical celebrations, such as school Masses and Advent and Lenten services. The school also collaborates with local parishes to strengthen spiritual engagement.

## **9. What provisions exist for staff prayer and reflection?**

Staff prayer takes place at the beginning of Governor and staff meetings. The Headteacher leads a weekly prayer during Monday morning briefings in the school chapel, providing spiritual guidance and unity.

## **10. Are there special liturgical events throughout the year?**

Yes, the school observes the liturgical calendar, including major feast days, Advent and Lent reflections, and Masses for significant occasions such as the start of the academic year and St Angela's Feast Day.

## **11. How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of its prayer and liturgy provision?**

Regular monitoring and evaluation take place through staff feedback, student reflections, and input from clergy and governors. This ensures continuous improvement and alignment with the Catholic ethos.

## **12. Where can I find more information on Catholic prayer and liturgy?**

A useful directory of explanations about Catholic prayer is available on the Archdiocese of Southwark's website: *Prayer: Archdiocese of Southwark or the Diocese of Brentwood website.*