

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



Catholic Life and Mission Policy

"Forming young people to intelligent faith, compassionate action, and courageous hope"
Our Foundress, St Madeleine Sophie Barat

Catholic Life at Sacred Heart

Catholic Life and Mission at Sacred Heart is at the core of everything we do. Rooted in the Gospel teachings of Jesus Christ and guided by the vision of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat, Foundress of the Society of the Sacred Heart, our school seeks to develop the spiritual, moral, and social formation of all students.

At Sacred Heart, we recognise that each individual member of our community is created in God's image and likeness with unique gifts and talents, therefore we aim to nurture each person through authentic relationships and enriching faith experiences. Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat, stated that, 'for the sake of one child, I would have founded the Society.' We recognise that each of our students is that 'one child' by affirming and developing their uniqueness in the years they spend as part of our school community.

Mission

- The distinctive Catholic nature of our school is reflected through the safe, aspirational learning environment, as well as the presence of uplifting and stimulating iconography
- A key aim is to develop in our students an understanding of the Catholic faith
- It is essential that all students are invited to learn how to worship God in spirit and truth through prayer and liturgy
- We will provide a range of faith experiences to which all are included and can contribute
- Through the mission of our school, students will develop knowledge of, respect for, and tolerance of other races, religions, and cultures
- Our students will become socially aware of the importance of '*caring for our common home*' (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*) by developing a broad vision of the world, an awareness of environmental issues and a willingness to express concern in action
- Students should understand what '*courage and confidence*' means to them in the context of their lives and recognise how the range of opportunities that school provides for them will nurture this
- Students will be encouraged to develop self-confidence and discipline by taking responsibility for their decisions and actions
- We aim to instil and encourage academic rigour, social responsibility, and an authentic faith in the context of being a responsible and proactive member of society.

Sacred Heart Goals

Madeleine Sophie Barat's educational philosophy led to the creation of the five Goals of Sacred Heart education, with the intention that these be followed by Sacred Heart students across the world. Each academic year we place a particular focus on one of the goals, so that during the student's time in school they will have spent time reflecting in depth on each goal.

The Sacred Heart Goals form the foundation of a Sacred Heart education today and underpin the mission of our school.

- A personal and active **faith** in God

Rooted in the love of Jesus Christ, our schools promote a personal relationship with God and foster the spiritual life of its members. They seek to create an atmosphere where the attitudes of the open Heart of Jesus are reflected in all: attitudes of respect, compassion, forgiveness, and generosity. The development of Faith is at the centre of our life as Sacred Heart schools and its presence should be visible in the daily interaction between all in the community.

- A deep respect for **intellectual** values

Our schools foster in each person a love of learning. The education provided is creative, rigorous, challenging and promotes critical thinking. All members of the community are given opportunities to progress, to flourish and to develop their gifts and talents.

- A **social awareness** that impels to action

At the heart of our charism, bringing all the Goals together, we prioritise Social Awareness that impels to action. This gives our whole school community the tools, knowledge, values, and opportunities to learn how to address injustice, conflict resolution, and environmental issues, thus becoming agents of change.

- The building of **community** as a Christian value

Building a sense of community is essential for society and is a priority for schools which are rooted in and living out Gospel values. At the heart of life in a Sacred Heart School are activities which promote this sense of community. Our heritage and the schools' network bring an added dimension to our experience of identity and community. The attitudes, skills and the relationships developed in school raise awareness for each one of a shared world where partnership and responsibility are vital.

- **Personal growth** in an atmosphere of wise freedom

The Goal of Personal Growth affirms the uniqueness and worth of each individual member of the school community. It aims to provide opportunities for self-development, personal formation, and self-knowledge as well as to encourage the sharing of gifts and talents for the benefit of the community and society as a whole.

Sacred Heart Catholic School Environment

Visitors are immediately aware of the distinctive Catholic nature of Sacred Heart through the physical environment, the presence of images and symbols and the recognition of a learning environment that respects the human dignity of all persons as made in God's image and likeness.

At Sacred Heart, every effort is made to provide a spiritually uplifting, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment:

- All rooms have a cross and/or crucifix
- Our Chapel is a dedicated space, an attractive prayer area and a focal point reflecting liturgical colours, seasons, and events.
- Each form room has access to electronic prayer resources.
- There are displays in the foyer and corridors with reflection on our 'Sacred Heartness' and link to the liturgical calendar, reflecting a theme or the season
- The school grounds are peaceful and are near our prominent, outdoor crucifix

Worship and Prayer Life

"The spirit of prayer is the essence of our vocation." (St Madeleine Sophie Barat, RSCJ)

Prayer and worship are central to our Catholic identity. We provide opportunities for students and staff to grow in faith through daily prayer, weekly assemblies, regular celebration of the Eucharist, including lunchtime Masses, liturgical celebrations that reflect the Church's liturgical year, student-led acts of worship and retreats.

A way in which we link our prayer life with Religious Education is through chapel lessons. The aim of lessons is to deepen students' spiritual growth and understanding of the Catholic faith through learning, prayer, and reflection. The liturgical theme of the lessons allows our students to explore key teachings of the Church, reflect on moral and ethical issues and develop a personal relationship with God, through engagement with scripture and Catholic traditions.

Our Curriculum

Religious Education is the '*core of the core curriculum*' (Pope St. John Paul II), not simply one subject among many at Sacred Heart. Our curriculum helps us to fulfil our mission to educate the whole person and to lead students to an awareness of God in their lives. It is designed to assist students to be able to make an informed and mature response to God in faith and to nurture that faith. Our school reflects the diversity of our community, and we recognise that young people will be at different places in the spectrum of faith development; our Religious Education supports all students in their personal search for truth and meaning in life.

Students are equipped with the skills to develop a deep knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith while exploring its relevance to questions about truth and the meaning of life. They are guided to reflect on values, attitudes and practices that support a positive response to faith. Through critical thinking, discernment, and ethical decision-making, they learn to act in accordance with an informed conscience. Additionally, their spiritual growth is nurtured both individually and within the school community. An appreciation of other Christian traditions and world religions is also fostered, promoting respect, and understanding. Ultimately, students are inspired to put their beliefs and values into action, making a positive difference in their own lives and the wider global community.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is taught in a Catholic context recognising we are all made in God's image and likeness. See our RSHE Policy

Sacred Heart Chaplaincy

Spirituality and prayer life are at the centre of this school's Catholic life and mission. Chaplaincy provision at Sacred Heart plays an important role in the spiritual and moral development of the whole community.

Our Ethos Team works with all members of the school community and Sacred Heart Network to ensure our mission, and the Goals of Sacred Heart Education, are integral to and realised in all parts of school life. This is achieved by:

- Supporting the prayer and sacramental life of the school
- Developing, writing, and maintaining prayer life
- Working within the Sacred Heart Ethos Team, to enable all members of the school community to understand the charism of the Society of the Sacred Heart
- Being approachable, supportive, and available to all members of the school community, especially in times of need
- Updating and maintaining a purposeful place for prayer and reflection
- Promoting and supporting retreat and networking opportunities for students and staff
- Coordinating mass celebrations, liturgies, assemblies, and training
- Developing opportunities for pupil leadership through Goal Ambassador training and the Key Stage 5 Ethos Committee
- Promoting and supporting students to access their faith achievement awards such as Faith in Action and the John Paul II Awards
- Keeping the students updated with information about donations to charity.

Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

"The way to do much in a short time is to love much. People will do great things if they are stirred with enthusiasm and love." (Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ)

Inspired by Christ's example, we ensure that our pastoral system supports the emotional and spiritual well-being of all students and staff. For example, we offer chaplaincy support and mentoring for students. We encourage a culture of kindness, forgiveness, and reconciliation through initiatives such as 'girls on board,' The Wellbeing Hub and TenTen personal development programme. Our Pastoral and Ethos Teams support and facilitate varied opportunities for appropriate worship including retreats, liturgical celebrations and providing resources and training for tutors for daily worship and assembly preparations.

Social Awareness

As part of our mission, we encourage student engagement in charitable activities and fundraising for local and global causes. *Lumen Gentium* reminds us to consider the school not so much as an institution but as a community, 'for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity.' Each academic year we nominate a charity that we dedicate our fundraising efforts to. This provides students with an opportunity to put faith into action by showing kindness and service as well as recognising the importance of charity and Catholic Social Teaching.

Students are taught the importance of standing up for social justice as an important aspect of Christian life. There are planned opportunities for pupils to engage in campaigns for social justice:

- Feeling Families food collection
- Period Poverty
- Climate change activities e.g. Geography Awareness Week
- Reduce, reuse, recycle awareness
- St Cuthbert's Care Fundraising

Our Community

Recognising that Christ is at the centre of our school, we strive to support and value all, especially the most vulnerable. Our behaviour policy is driven by our belief that all are unique and made in God's image and likeness. See our Behaviour Policy.

We recognise we are part of a family of Catholic schools and work collaboratively with local Catholic schools in clusters, in our Trust and across the Diocese.

Everyone is encouraged to live life to the full and reach their full potential. Members of staff have opportunities to take part in the Diocesan continuing professional development and formation programmes. Our Headteacher leads on the National Catholic Leadership Programme, supporting aspiring, future leaders to take on the role of Headteacher in our Catholic schools.

Parents are encouraged to share their views through questionnaires, as well as at parent curriculum meetings and parents' evenings. Year 7 parents are invited to celebrate our Year 7 Welcome Mass at the Parish Church of St Robert, and all are invited to Christmas Concert.

Links with local parishes are a vital part of Catholic life in school. Fr Damian and Fr Paul are our priests with pastoral responsibility. Based at St John Vianney, one of our feeder parishes, they say Mass regularly in school and also take part in ethos related events to support our students and staff.

Students visit St Robert's church for Advent services and Year group masses, and we are well supported by our local priests. Links with our priests are strengthened as they celebrate Mass in school with students and staff, including our annual Big Mass in July. We also work with the Blackfriar Parentship and with our school community to encourage attendance at church and involvement in church events.

Leadership and Governance

Our Catholic identity is reflected in leadership and governance by ensuring school leaders and staff uphold Catholic values in decision-making. This is also achieved by providing ongoing formation and training in Catholic education and collaborating with the diocese, Sacred Heart Network, and the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust.

Collective worship involves a range of staff and student roles and responsibilities. All staff are required to support the Catholic life and mission of our school. The Assistant Headteacher for Ethos alongside the Chaplain and Sacred Heart Goals Coordinator, make up the Ethos Team. They lead and oversee all aspects of collective worship, ensuring high-quality, meaningful collective worship for everyone in our school community.

Catholic life events are highlighted and celebrated on our Personal Development blog [Blog | Sacred Heart High](#)

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by our Assistant Headteacher for Ethos and is evaluated and reviewed by governors annually.