



PRACTICAL CHAPLAINCY

A GUIDE





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This document is for Chaplains, particularly new appointments, giving practical advice on carrying out this particular role.

It is also a useful reference for Headteachers and SLTs.

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1. CHAPLAIN JOB DESCRIPTION

"The presence of the chaplain in school is a presence 'in pilgrimage' – a physical, charismatic and symbolic presence"
(Maureen Glakin)

Job overview: The chaplain is to work with school and college staff to ensure that the Catholic ethos of the school/college is maintained and spiritual values safeguarded, liturgical celebrations are promoted, the pastoral needs of the school or college are met and links are made between school/college, parish and home.

Responsibilities of the chaplain:

- To plan, prepare and facilitate liturgies – including Masses, collective acts of worship, assemblies
- To resource staff in their statutory responsibility to provide collective worship
- To provide opportunities for daily prayer for staff and students, including ensuring the place of worship is open to those wishing to use it
- To make provision for students and staff of other faiths
- To maintain the chapel / chaplaincy area and be responsible for the chaplaincy budget
- To support heads of year or the pastoral equivalent, playing an active role in the pastoral system
- To provide support and guidance for students, staff, governors, and families when appropriate – in times of bereavement, and during spiritual, personal, family and social difficulties
- To attend parents' evenings and other extra-curricular events to forge links
- To promote and co-ordinate charity programmes
- To organise and facilitate retreats, including accompanying students on residential retreats, liaising with Heads of Year /RE Department
- To encourage students to take on leadership roles within chaplaincy
- To liaise with feeder schools on joint projects
- To facilitate good communication between school/college and the feeder parishes
- To advise the senior leadership team
- To provide staff induction and inset during the school/college year
- To provide yearly reports to governors if applicable
- To collate evidence regularly in preparation for Ofsted/Section 48 inspections
- As part of CPD, to attend relevant diocesan and national meetings, to keep abreast of initiatives in education and in Church teaching

The school or college chaplain is not the provider of Catholic ethos. His/her role is to support, encourage, facilitate, inform and resource. The responsibility for Catholic ethos lies with the whole community.



2. REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURE OF CHAPLAINCY – THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

The role of a chaplain is varied and responds to the needs of each individual school community. Yet there are some fundamental aspects to the role that are common to every situation. The story of the disciples encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus offers a valuable way to reflect on the nature of school chaplaincy.

Jesus himself came up and walked by their side. (Luke 24:15)

WALKING ALONGSIDE Chaplains are involved in accompanying people, staff, students, families, walking with them on a shared journey, being totally present to them and investing time and energy into building relationships. They help to create a place of support when it is needed, offering time to encourage understanding, to resolve conflict, to enable reconciliation and healing. Chaplaincy is where people can be themselves, where the uniqueness and dignity of each person is recognised and celebrated and where Christ himself is made manifest.



So he went and stayed with them. (Luke 24:29)

STAYING WITH Chaplaincy is a constant in school, a permanent and almost unchanging presence. It provides a root and a shelter, while at the same time it can open the door to new experiences and be an invitation to new opportunities, but always in a safe place, allowing time to simply 'be': to reflect, to be challenged, to explore new ideas, in order that people can begin to know themselves better and know the God who created them.



Now while he was with them at table, he took bread and said the blessing (Luke 24:30)

PRAYING The chaplaincy provides opportunities for people to gather in prayer and worship, to meditate, to celebrate, to give thanks. This 'sacred space' emphasises that we belong to God, we meet God in others and we are on a shared journey to a deeper life with God. Our prayer time and our liturgical celebrations should be creative, imaginative, engaging, varied, relevant and founded on sound theology.



Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained he scriptures to us? (Luke 24:32)

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS A key part of the chaplains' role is to proclaim the Gospel, fulfilling the baptismal vocation to share the prophetic role of Christ. This involves offering reflection on the Good News, evangelisation and catechesis. It will also require the chaplain to read the signs of the times, speak out against injustice and help guide the whole school community in the way it maintains and develops its Catholic ethos.



Then they told their story of what had happened on the road (Luke 24:35)

LISTENING A lot of the chaplain's time involves listening to and sharing in peoples 'story': who they are, where they have come from, where they are going ... this often begins with casual conversations and can lead to profound sharing. It requires the chaplain to create a place where people can talk in confidence and confidentiality (where appropriate) and share joys as well as sorrows. This aspect of chaplaincy must be founded on honesty, integrity, trust and respect.



They had recognised him in the breaking of bread (Luke 24:35)

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS The Mass is the pinnacle of our liturgical celebrations. The sacraments are there to feed, nourish and strengthen us. They are a way for us to recognise the loving presence of Christ in our lives. The chaplain can ensure that the Eucharist and other sacraments are celebrated in a way that cultivates an awareness of God's presence, enables people to recognise Christ in everyone, and to witness to Christ and his church.



(Thanks to ACCE)



3. PRACTICAL CHAPLAINCY – FIRST THINGS

Some practical suggestions to help you settle in to your new role., taken from ideas and tips offered by experienced chaplains.

Know your school/college: get to know the structure and the timings of the school/college day, week, month, year – all schools/colleges are different! How does the liturgical calendar fit into this structure?

- Importantly, what do the *administrative* structures look like? It can take a year to 'acclimatise' if you have not worked in a school or college before!
 - Get to know the physical layout of the school/college.
 - Make time to meet all the staff, as well as the student groups and societies operating in the school/college – how can you help them, and how will they help you?
 - Be a visible presence at break and lunch times every day – this is the best way for you to get to know the students and for them to get to know you. You will have some important conversations on the playground and in the canteen.
 - Look at the timetable and the resources of the previous chaplain – work from what is already happening and begin to develop it further.

Planning: this is absolutely vital to every part of your work.

It may seem counterintuitive to have a weekly timetable for a chaplain, as a great deal of your time is to be spent 'wasting time for God' – i.e. spending time around school/college in your capacity as 'a symbolic presence of Christ' for students and staff in any kind of need.

However, at times the role can appear rather vague to a new chaplain, and the weekly / termly structures of a new school/college can be confusing. A weekly timetable can actually be extremely supportive of your work, and your outreach time can easily be planned into this.

The weekly timetable must be used in conjunction with both the termly plan and the Liturgical Calendar. It can also be used as the basis for ***regular (half-termly) appraisals*** by your line manager, which will help you enormously with future planning and development.



PERIOD	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	Staff prayer	Staff briefing			
	SEN meeting	Yr 10 assembly			
2	RE drop-in Yr 7	Safeguarding			
	<i>Break outreach</i>				
3					
	Chapel group				
4	<i>Lunch outreach</i>				
5	Line manager				
	Plan and prep				



4. MASSES, LITURGIES, ASSEMBLIES, PRAYER TIME

Planning activities:

- Use the weekly / termly planner to plot all your activities, linked with the school/college year and liturgical calendar – assemblies, masses, prayer groups, etc
- Liturgies, school/college masses, retreats etc MUST fit into the overall timetable and your line manager must be part of the planning to make sure there are no clashes.
- Members of staff involved in any event must be given good notice, and their roles explained.
- Check that any students involved are in fact available on that day.
- Retreats – remember there is a lot of admin associated with taking students out of school or college – familiarise yourself with the protocols and plan well in advance. If staff are included in the retreat, it would be helpful to outline what if anything will be expected of them or from them

Preparing School and College Masses: when planning school/college Masses - whole school/college, tutor groups etc – think about how best to involve students in the Mass.

- A lot of our school and college communities include large numbers of students of other faiths and none, and it is important that we are as inclusive as possible. Make sure the students are prepared beforehand, reminded about the significance and the structure of the Mass.
- The Jerusalem Bible readings are readily accessible, but in some situations you may decide to use a more appropriate/ accessible translation, depending on the congregation. For more involvement in the prayers of the Mass, the Children's Eucharistic Prayers have additional responses .
- It is great to have a celebrant who can animate the Mass with some short comments on the different sections. Work with the local clergy to establish a termly 'Mass rota' – don't forget a meeting including tea and biscuits is a great incentive!

Involve the students in Mass as much as possible –

- preparation of the chapel / hall, and the altar
- altar servers
- readings
- bidding prayers
- offertory procession
- music – choice of and singing/playing
- dance, mime – use appropriately, often best in larger Masses and in liturgies



Preparing liturgies: whilst the Mass is the high-point of our celebration and worship, para-liturgies are really important elements of celebrating the liturgical year in your school or college.

The Liturgy Office has a useful template, indicating the 4 key elements of a liturgy:

Preparing Liturgy/ Prayer Structure (Liturgy Office)

OCCASION / THEME	e.g. World Refugee and Migrant Day, or liturgical season
<i>Gather</i>	e.g. music, procession include welcome
<i>Word and reflection</i>	e.g. story, news item, video clip – linked to scripture passage – with time for reflection – silent or led, possibly including discussion
<i>Symbolic Action</i>	e.g. writing short thoughts on theme to bring to altar, creating a simple symbol to take away
<i>Send Forth</i>	e.g. final prayer, song, blessing relating to theme

- the liturgy must reflect the theme
- the students must be involved as much as possible
- the liturgy should be as reflective and imaginative as possible
- stuck for an idea? The Southwark chaplains community have a wealth of resources to share!

Useful book for planning liturgies –

Revealed: A catholic Youth Formation |Ministry – Redemptorist - 9780852313480

Preparing Assemblies: involve the students as much as possible –

- ask students to plan assemblies
- help students to present assemblies
- have themes that they can relate to
- include activities in the assemblies
- use music especially 'their' music
- help staff plan assemblies and work with their students

Useful books for planning assemblies –

Praying Each Day of the Year – 3 volumes – Nicholas Hutchinson HFC

Ideas for Secondary School Assemblies – Janet King – 1854241419, 185424292X

50 Sketches about Jesus – David Burt – 0854768149

Secondary Schools Assemblies – ed Stuart Kerner – 9780281058921



Prayer time: central to the Church and to the life of our school or college – our meeting place with God and a whole way of life.

- prayer is for all students and all staff - and all occasions
- consider where it will take place
- think about who will be involved and adapt accordingly
- theme and resources
- depending on the participants, think of the language and type of prayer
- don't be afraid to try new things
- start and end (the day, the meeting..) with prayer

Useful book –

Revealed: A catholic Youth Formation |Ministry – Redemptorist - 9780852313480

Physical space is important: as well as a chapel, the chaplain needs an office / private space to have small prayer groups, to meet with students/staff/families, as well as planning and writing resources, storing chaplaincy artefacts, resources, books etc. You will need to timetable activities and use for this space, and outline expectations of behaviour etc.

School or college is Church for the majority of our students : so links with Deanery priests are vital – students' involvement in school as Eucharistic Ministers, readers etc can translate to work in parishes, opening up opportunities for other young people to begin to feel involved. Seek out any **parish youth workers** and make links with them, to help you to develop this area.



5. MENTORING AND CPD

Mentoring

It is very helpful to chaplains new to the role to be allocated a mentor – this is usually an experienced chaplain in one of our nearby schools or colleges who can meet with you and discuss issues arising, give advice etc. It is important that a new chaplain visits other schools or colleges to see how chaplaincy works in different ways – this also is discussed during the networking sessions in the Diocesan chaplains meetings (see below). Mentoring advice is given the pack 'Appointing a Chaplain', available on our website.

CPD for Chaplains

Many chaplains come to their new post from youth ministry in various forms, or from teaching, or from another career path. This leads to the question of CPD and training.

- The Diocesan termly meetings offer CPD to our chaplains and it is important that all chaplains attend, not only for the various inputs but also, and just as importantly, for the networking with colleagues.
- ACCE (Association for Catholic Chaplains in Education – a year's membership is £50 and includes resources etc) offer two important CPD events: in the autumn a 24 hour training for new chaplains, and the Summer conference. In addition they organise a winter retreat in Ampleforth. All 3 events are highly recommended – acceuk.org.uk
- SFCA offers a range of resources for college chaplains - www.sixthformcolleges.org



Other training on offer includes:

- CCRS (Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies) via CCF in Tooting Bec, comprising 8 modules over two years, mainly distance learning – cost £320.
- St Mary's, Twickenham offers a foundation degree in Chaplaincy and Youth Ministry – distance learning over two years with some weekend residential – cost £4500. In addition they offer a masters in Catholic Leadership - www.stmarys.ac.uk
- SCYS (Southwark Catholic Youth Service) lead a 4 module programme on Youth Ministry, related to parishes but nevertheless extremely valuable for school chaplains.



6. WORKING ALONE

Working alone: the chaplain is not usually a member of a department team – and you may feel quite lonely in these circumstances. It is important to really get to know your staff as soon as possible – establishing the Spiritual Life Group will help here – and very important to work closely with the RE department, who will be supportive of you as well as grateful for your support of them.

Establish / develop further a Spiritual Life Group – usually comprising chaplain, staff, some sixth formers. The group meets (usually twice each term) to plan activities throughout the year connected to the liturgical calendar etc. and it can be a great support for you throughout the year.

Spiritual direction: some of the work that you do with students and staff who are experiencing various difficulties will leave you vulnerable, and you will need a 'third party' to help you work through this. It is important that you find a spiritual director (not usually your parish priest) to whom you can go periodically, to help you explore your own spiritual life and development.

Pastoral Supervision: this support goes deeper and enables you to be very analytical and reflective of your own role as chaplain. This is a really vital support particularly when you have been involved in difficult and sensitive situations which may put you under a lot of pressure, both spiritual and emotional. A qualified practitioner carries out this type of supervision. More information can be found on this website:

<https://www.pastoralsupervision.org.uk/about-pastoral-supervision/>

Build on your own experience: each new chaplain comes to the role with a wealth of ideas from their previous experiences. Always look to develop and extend – build new ideas into the existing structure – don't fear failure! Don't be afraid to be radical with liturgies, music, and use other Christian partners e.g. local churches. Be prepared to try things. Don't wait for the 'perfect' situation – there never is one! Pray and trust that the Lord will guide you.





THE FOLLOWING 2 SECTIONS ARE EXTRACTS FROM 'APPOINTING A NEW CHAPLAIN', WRITTEN FOR HEADTEACHERS, SLT AND GOVERNORS

7. LINE MANAGER

The standard model is that the lay chaplain is employed and funded by the governors of the school or college, and is fully **supported by** and responsible to the line manager – the Headteacher (or nominated member of SLT) on a day-today basis. The lay chaplain is also accountable to the bishop through the diocesan chaplaincy coordinator.

8. THE FIRST FEW WEEKS

DOCUMENTS TO DISCUSS WITH NEW CHAPLAIN

- *Information pack on the school*, including site plan of buildings
- *Annotated list of staff* with roles that link to chaplain
- *Staff handbook* -talk through and highlight key policies pertaining to chaplaincy – include protocols for trips and in-school events, especially Health and Safety policy
- *Year diary* with key events highlighted, especially those that the chaplain needs to attend and / or prepare

FIRST TWO WEEKS

The new chaplain may or may not be used to working in a school framework and will need clear information about their role – a timetable of structured experiences in the first 2 weeks is extremely useful:

- The normal welcome, briefing and training events for staff on the first day (staff inset) during which the chaplain is introduced – it is explained that they are available to both students and staff
- Meet the Chair of Governors
- Meet the Child Protection Officer to discuss protocols and current issues
- Meet chaplain's line manager to clarify resourcing the role and set regular meetings
- Shadow a member of staff for one day to become familiar with the rhythm of the school day – this should include the opportunity to be in the playground at break and lunch times
- Walk round school with site manager to gain a broader view - include an articulate student / group to explain the best and worst aspects of the physical site
- Trail a student for a day to sit in specific classes
- Encourage the chaplain to walk round the school and introduce themselves to all staff / service providers etc
- Look at the past year' events to get a picture of how chaplaincy has functioned in the school



9. THE FIRST FEW MONTHS

FIRST MONTH

The aim of the first month is to identify the broad spiritual needs of the school community, and to absorb the views, as well as the hopes, of a wide range of the school community.



To this end the chaplain would benefit from conversations with a governor, key senior staff, head of RE, members of admin including the school bursar, student council, some parents, a member of the local clergy, another local school chaplain. How do these people experience the school community, what are the greatest spiritual needs of the school, what spiritual strengths do they recognise at present? The school Mission Statement is a key document in this discussion.

The chaplain should aim to establish links with local clergy who are able to come into the school throughout the year to say Masses etc. – negotiating a rota is a good idea.

The chaplain also needs to make links with other groups that work within the school chaplaincy – e.g. CAFOD, SVP, Rainbows, choir, meditation etc.

The aim of this listening exercise is for the chaplain to gain an in-depth knowledge of the school quickly.

Student engagement with the new chaplain

At the same time, the chaplain needs to engage in some direct tasks with the students and a specific timetable should be established for a series of events to introduce the chaplain and chaplaincy to a range of students.

Towards the end of this first month, the chaplain should have time for an extended line-management meeting to **reflect** on their experiences in the school, and **to list chaplaincy priorities** and **plan out activities for, at least, the rest of the term.**