



# Developing a Chaplaincy Team in Westminster

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GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS



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# Introduction

For those involved in youth ministry, school chaplaincy or religious education, there is always a temptation that we imagine our work among young people should look or feel like what we once experienced ourselves, sometimes many years ago. There is a serious challenge for us to constantly renew our vision of youth ministry so that it corresponds to the needs of children and young people today, and also for us to be renewed in the light of the Holy Spirit and by the evangelising witness of the young people we serve. So although some experiences seem perennial and young people undoubtedly need the wisdom and care of their parents, teachers, priests and chaplains, it is likely that youth ministry and chaplaincy will look and feel very different from what we once experienced.

## YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES AS AGENTS OF YOUTH MINISTRY

After the recent meeting of the Synod of Bishops on youth, faith and vocational discernment, Pope Francis issued his document *Christus Vivit*. Here, he offers a renewed vision for youth ministry led by and for young people themselves. Reflecting particularly on education, the Pope cautions against a kind of religious education or Catholic life which leaves children and young people with an ‘insurmountable disconnect’ between what they have been taught and the world in which they live. In order to avoid this, the Pope has challenged us all to imagine new, popular, flexible and synodal forms of youth ministry that are not only appropriate to their needs but also directed by them. Pope Francis says, ‘I want to state clearly that young people themselves are agents of youth ministry’ (*Christus Vivit*, 203).

## HEART SPEAKS TO HEART

This form of youth ministry, principally synodal in its essential characteristic, means that we are called to walk with young people in order both to accompany them and to be accompanied ourselves by their presence alongside us. This walking together is essential for both young people and their leaders so that, as the motto of St John Henry Newman might suggest, heart can really speak to heart. In this form of ministry, we can provide the appropriate level of guidance and pastoral care for young people while at the same time being open to the possibility of being renewed or even evangelised by their own witness. Similarly, young people have the capacity to walk alongside each other, in so far as they are guided and accompanied by those responsible for their spiritual wellbeing.

Pope Francis teaches that, ‘ministry among young people has to be synodal; it should involve a journeying together that values the charisms that the Spirit bestows in accordance with the vocation and role of each of the Church’s members, through a process of co-responsibility’ (*Christus vivit*, 206).



## MINISTRY AND MINISTERS

Throughout our lives, we are all the recipients of ministry in the life of the Church. At others times, we are all also called to be ministers or of service to others. This is also true for young people and children. Ministry is never simply a passive experience. Everyone is called to serve and, at times, to be served; all are called to help and, when necessary, be helped by those around us. Moreover, bishops and priests are called and appointed by the Lord himself to have oversight of the work of ministry and the formation of Christ's faithful, including the young.

## CHAPLAINCY TEAMS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

For some time now, schools in the diocese have been responding to this renewed vision for ministry among children and young people. Some have already established chaplaincy or liturgy teams so that young people themselves can become more and more the agents of the pastoral and prayerful dynamics of their own lives and places of learning. It is essential that they are also ministered to and wisely led by their priests, teachers and chaplains. In order to do this, the Diocesan Education Service is pleased to offer this advice and encouragement for primary schools and their leaders.

Special thanks go to Elaine Arundell, one of our primary school advisors for Catholic life, for her work on this project over many months, as well as other colleagues from the service and schools who have offered input and advice.

The Pope says, '...by learning from one another, we can better reflect that wonderful multifaceted reality that Christ's Church is meant to be. She will be able to attract young people, for her unity is not monolithic, but rather a network of varied gifts that the Spirit ceaselessly pours out upon her, renewing her and lifting her up from her poverty' (Christus vivit, 207).

Above, we thank you all for the witness you give. May you also be open to learn from and be renewed by the youthful witness of the people we lead and serve. May God bless you all and especially your work in formation among young people and children.

**Fr. David Reilly**

**Diocesan Coordinator for School Chaplaincies (Westminster)**



# Chaplaincy in Schools: A Rationale

## WHAT IS THE VISION IN CREATING CHAPLAINCY TEAMS IN OUR SCHOOLS?

Our diocesan vision is that all pupils in our schools will be able to encounter Christ and develop a personal relationship with him through their **faith and action**. It is our hope that all pupils will walk with each other and the adults in their community - parents, staff and clergy - as companions on the journey of faith, each playing their part in developing the Catholic Life of the school thus building up the Kingdom of God. For some pupils this may include becoming Chaplaincy Team Members (CTM) where they will be guided by school leaders in partnership with their parish clergy.

Every member of each school community is made in the image and likeness of God and has a fundamental need of Christ. It is our aim to support and facilitate school leaders so that they can go forth in empowering the pupils in their setting to take a more **active and leading** role in their vocation to love and serve God and others. We would encourage all pupils to be 'leaders' and active members of the community working together to achieve the mission of the Church. All are called to action, all are valued... the Church needs each and every one of them. Moreover, there is a value to being ministered to. It is not just an emphasis on 'doing' but also 'receiving', both roles are equally important.

Pupils being able to lead others to encounter Christ through prayer and silence as well as through action and relationships is paramount to our vision. We hope that all members of the community will grow to appreciate the importance of '**listening**', '**being**' and '**doing**' so that each one develops a real and living personal relationship with Jesus Christ and can hear his unique calling to each one of them.

We believe that our pupils of all ages, culture, creed, gender, background or ability can assist in the Church's mission to reveal Christ to the world and agree with Pope Benedict XVI's conviction:

***"Dear young people, the Church depends on you! She needs your lively faith, your creative charity and the energy of your hope. Your presence renews, rejuvenates and gives new presence to the Church."***

Through their own uniqueness as well as their words and actions, every member of the school is called to represent Christ and so to build up the Catholic Life of the school. However, the role of the Chaplaincy Team (CT) is quite distinct and differs from other leadership roles such as the School Council. Unlike any other team/group, the CT deals with matters of Catholic faith, practices and beliefs, rather than just knowledge and efficiency; is concerned with attitudes, values and virtues, not just rules and regulations; and is about 'being' and 'listening' as much as 'doing' and 'speaking'. It is one that needs spiritual and practical guidance from faithful adults and requires pupils to be leaders and role models through their loving and serving others.



## WHAT GUIDANCE DOES THIS DOCUMENT OFFER?

This document has been created to provide some guidance on how pupils could fulfil their chaplaincy role through being missionary disciples and leading others to do the same. Together with the CT **Support Materials**, it offers a plethora of ideas on how pupils could take a more leading role in the faith/spiritual life as well as the common good in school and it is designed to be of benefit to staff and pupils in all settings, regardless of age, background or faith experience. It is not meant as a directive or a manifesto for schools, nor is it intended to promote a particular diocesan model. Instead it is offering guidance which can be adapted for individual contexts.

Whilst some schools have already embarked on their journey with a CT, some have not yet started and others are looking to enhance it further. These documents, which are accompanied by **Pupil Chaplaincy Training resources**, are designed to be used as a springboard for discussions and training for those on all parts of the journey. This guidance document also aims to provide clarity on what CTs are and what they are not so that schools are clearer in establishing these and moving forward.

## WHO ARE CHAPLAINS AND WHAT ROLE DO THEY PLAY?

Pope St John Paul II taught that:

*‘the purpose of the Catholic school is the advancement of the human person; each individual in their material and spiritual needs is personally at the centre of Jesus’ teaching.’*

A Catholic school is a very special kind of community, part of a parish, where children and adults are personally, and together, at the very heart of the teachings of Christ.

In such a context it is vital that there are those who can support the spiritual, pastoral and human mission of the school and so we really need and value the role of our chaplains just as in many other settings where human life is experienced. In many primary schools, the chaplain is the Parish Priest, although in some settings this may be a lay chaplain. Our schools are places where the priest belongs. He is never simply a ‘visitor’, but is an integral part and important figure in the life of the community.

A chaplain has a very special ministry, it is a reserved position in schools that requires special training and characteristics; this is one that cannot be replaced or substituted by any other member of staff or groups of pupils. The term ‘pupil chaplaincy’ has been adopted by a number of schools when referring to pupils who are taking a leading and active role in the Catholic Life of the school. However, this sometimes causes confusion as the pupils themselves are not ‘chaplains’, despite the fact that they are a Chaplaincy Team Member.

Pupils would undoubtedly benefit from the support and direction of an adult with this expertise and gifted ministry at some stage in their role, depending on the availability of the chaplain as well as the nature of the tasks in which the pupils are involved. As a result, it is hoped that they will be inspired to explore their own unique calling and joyfully offer their gifts in the service of others in the school and parish while also having a deeper understanding of the theology underpinning their actions.



In Westminster, we suggest that our schools refer to the group of adults and pupils working together as the 'Chaplaincy Team' and refer to pupils as '**Chaplaincy Team Members**' to avoid any misunderstanding. Schools may choose to have a special name for this team and some suggestions are given later in this document.

## WHAT ARE MEMBERS OF THE CHAPLAINCY TEAM 'CALLED' TO DO?

Pupils on the CT will be called to serve as both **disciples**, trained in the teachings of Christ, and **apostles**, delivering and spreading his teachings to others. They are special in their **being** and how they live as well as in their **doing**, as are all pupils. For this reason, it is imperative not to create a 'them' and 'us' environment where members of the CT are seen as an elite group who do everything to the exclusion of others as this can lead to a feeling of resentment or apathy from other pupils. This is contrary to the vision for both the Church and the Chaplaincy Team. As Pope Francis stated:

*'You too, dear young people, can be joyful witnesses of his love, courageous witnesses of his Gospel, carrying to this world a ray of light'.*

It is not merely the role of clergy, teachers and members of the CT to evangelise and share the Good News and to 'love and serve the Lord'. Every pupil in our Catholic schools is called to do the same, as encouraged in the dismissal at Mass (Missa). The CT should fundamentally **plan/lead** initiatives in which others can be involved as well as **facilitate and empower** them to take an active role in various aspects of Catholic Life, through prayer, action and witness. Examples of this could include: organising a democratic vote for a charity or a religious statue; knitting scarves for the elderly/homeless; donating toys for prisoners' children at Christmas time. Further examples of this are included in the **Developing Catholic Life Support Document**.

## WHAT IS A CHAPLAINCY TEAM?

Chaplaincy requires time, energy and space as well as faith. Developing spirituality through **prayer, worship and liturgy** is a natural part of this role and it is increasingly more commonplace for pupils to take a more active role in planning and leading worship in school. Whilst pupils are not trained mentors or counsellors, they do have the ability to be there for others, **listening** to them and showing that they care. These are skills that can be fostered and developed in all settings.

A CT is one in which a group or groups of selected **pupils and adults work together** to reveal Christ to the school through their faith and action. Pupils will be involved in developing the Catholic Life and mission of the school in a number of ways chosen by the team, depending on the needs and charism of their setting.

Every CT is **unique** because each school is unique and so is each child, therefore the tasks they choose and the way in which they implement them may also be **unique**. There is no 'one size fits all', although all CTs will be involved to some extent with prayer, worship and spirituality.





It is useful to think about why there should be a CT in the school: What will its role and purpose be? The benefits of developing a CT as regards to the promotion of the Catholic Life of the school are numerous. To date, feedback to the Education Service concerning the impact of the teams from a wide variety of schools has been encouraging.

Ultimately, the CT should be enriching the **Catholic Life** of the school: the individuals who attend it and the school as a whole as well as the parish and local **community**. It should be a reality in their lives, not just something that is done to please a leadership team or tick a box for inspection. Instead, these pupils are there as **missionary disciples**, serving others, ministering to the needs of the institution and essentially making Christ known through their actions and example.

## WHY IS PUPIL CHAPLAINCY TO BE ENCOURAGED IN OUR SCHOOLS?

The chaplaincy enterprise is an essential good in its own right, an innate good at the heart of the school; it is for peoples' **spiritual and pastoral welfare** first and foremost. Pupil chaplaincy has the added focus of allowing pupils to participate, to a greater or lesser degree, in that work.

Pupils should be encouraged to take a leading and active role as our pupils of all ages have much to offer. They are the **Church of the present and of the future**, and it is in their best interest, and ours, to form and develop them fully in the faith so that it becomes something real and meaningful for them. In this way, we will be working together to make our Church stronger and more secure for the future.

## WHAT DO SCHOOLS SAY ABOUT CHAPLAINCY TEAMS?

The benefits of having a CT are impressive. Leaders generally report that they enjoy working with the team and are proud of their achievements; it invariably enhances the school in some way and values pupils and their voice. Developing a CT is organic, it appears to take a life of its own which grows at its own rate, depending on the environment. Each team is different from another and for this reason there is a great freedom and possibility.

Pupils are equally positive about the opportunity it provides including taking action. As one pupil from The Good Shepherd Primary School in Hammersmith stated:

*'We all come together because we want to help other people too. In meetings you think about how to help others or raise money or write to someone to tell them that we think something is wrong.'*

It also helps them to empathise with others and understand more fully the theology underpinning their actions

*'Our Mission Statement is "Love one another as I have loved you!" Helping them is showing we love them too. Imagine if that was us, we would want to have someone to help and love us!'*

(KS1 pupil at The Good Shepherd Primary School in Hammersmith)





## HOW WILL THE TEAM BE COMMISSIONED?

In Westminster we encourage school level training and commissioning so this may be done at a special Mass (such as the beginning of the year) or at an assembly. It would be best practice to get the priest/clergy involved and he can give some guidance and potentially give them a special blessing publically. Parent/governors/parishioners may be invited too in order to further enhance relationships. For this special service, pupils may want to write their own CT prayer/promise. There are some examples of this in the [Chaplaincy Team Administration](#).

## HOW CAN SCHOOLS BEST PREPARE FOR SETTING UP A CHAPLAINCY TEAM?

Before establishing a CT in the school, it is advisable to research this initiative thoroughly. Discussing it with members of the leadership team and/or other key members of staff as well as the chaplain/clergy would be best practice. It would be fruitful for schools to link with others who have a successful CT established, to see the pupils in action and speak to them about their experiences as this would help to 'keep it real' and manageable. For models and examples of good practice, ask your Diocesan Adviser.

# Guidance for Pupil Chaplaincy Teams: Application

## WHICH ADULTS SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE CHAPLAINCY TEAM?

Before (CTM) are appointed, it is important to think about the adults who might be involved. Leaders should **invite the Parish Priest**, member of the clergy or Religious to support with setting it up and offer guidance throughout the year. They may meet with the pupils regularly or provide input at special times (eg setting up for Mass), although this might not always be a possibility. Working with the clergy, lay chaplain or Religious means that pupils are supporting them in their role as 'evangelists' and 'missionaries' in a broad sense. It also teaches pupils that all are valued members of the Church and prepares them for 'vocation', in other words responding to God's call both now and in the future.

Knowing the adults and pupils as well as the 'whole picture' in the school is imperative so that the roles are not given to those who already have heavy responsibilities. 'Talent-spotting' can be useful as there may be (an) adult(s) with much to offer in terms of passing on the faith, empowering pupils or being able to offer the gift of their time and care. Such adults may need encouragement or confidence to step forward for the role and they may need to be approached initially. Being a member of the teaching staff is not essential.

Ideally, adult team members will be practising Catholics, certainly the one leading and overseeing it should be. Having knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and practices is important, although there may also be members of other denominations on the team. This can work extremely well for diversity as it demonstrates respect and inclusion. Adults may also include parish catechists, parents or governors.



The CT leader may be the Religious Education Coordinator or the Headteacher and this leader can take overall responsibility for the team in terms of training/directing both adult and pupil members. For practical reasons, they themselves may not need to attend all of the meetings or oversee all the activities, however a discussion may need to take place regarding who will be responsible for line-managing the adults and the practical implications of this. Adults might also need to discuss who exactly will make the (difficult) decisions: will this ultimately be the Headteacher, the adult member of the team or the pupils themselves? Will it be a collaborative effort? Or will it depend on various factors?

Adults on the team must have good relationships with pupils and be willing and enthusiastic to give up their time and energy for this role and may be required to collaborate with other adults such as the Music, PSHE and IT Coordinator. Leaders will also need to have some training/support with issues of Safeguarding and discretion as pupils may open up to those in a pastoral role that they trust and value. This responsibility lies with the school. CTMs should be very clear about the boundaries of confidentiality and to whom they report concerns should they arise.

### WHICH PUPILS COULD BE INVOLVED IN THE CHAPLAINCY TEAM?

Having faith and being interested in **faith development** is a prerequisite part of being on the CT. Faith proportionality should therefore be considered when choosing CTMs in order to create a rich and diverse team. Pupils should be chosen because of who they are, how they can take on the role of missionary disciples and how they can support the Catholic Life of the school. They should not be chosen because of the faith and practices of their parents. It is common sense, however, that certain jobs such as altar serving and setting up for Mass are done by CTMs who are practising Catholic as they should really understand what they are doing and why. Ideally, they should also be willing to contribute verbally, work well in a group and be a good faith role model for others.

While being responsible and articulate are admirable qualities, there may be shyer, less able or SEN pupils who may be enthusiastic in their faith and who would like to be part of the team. This can actually be to the team's advantage as CTMs could demonstrate kindness and empathy as they work together. Having a 'good' reputation for behaviour and grades can also be an advantage but, again, it is not essential as other pupils could rise to the responsibility and challenge which in turn could set a great example for their peers. If pupils only see one kind of personality, ability or faith represented, they may not respond positively or feel that they have a connection with them.

**Variety and diversity** are key. When considering CTMs, it may be useful to include other pupils in the decision-making. Ask them:

- Who would be a good role model for others?
- Who is kind, forgiving, caring and values others?
- Who is reliable and can work together with others?
- Who is interested in the Catholic/Christian faith and can share this with others?



Ideally, there will be a balance of race, culture and language as well as different genders on the team. Practically, there might be more females who volunteer for various reasons and there are various suggestions to deal with this:

- Have different genders represented from each class;
- Encourage male participation by appealing to a few potentially interested members of the class (as feedback tells us that more females tend to volunteer for these roles);
- Have a balance between all genders on the team and ensure that there are jobs that all genders in the class/setting would be interested in fulfilling.

There is no minimum age requirement for a CTM, however it is important that all members are able to understand what they are doing in an age-appropriate way and feel that they are able to contribute positively. Meetings and activities would therefore need to be set up in such a way that they could engage in them without feeling superfluous or overwhelmed. This would be the responsibility of the adult members of the team. The team might also consider if every CTM needs to be present at all meetings and activities

### HOW LONG SHOULD THE APPOINTMENTS BE?

The appointments of CTMs can vary, depending on the needs and direction of the school as well as the roles pupils will need to fulfil. In many schools the pupils will be in post for a year while in others the post may be for one term only. There are various benefits and drawbacks for each of these options that should be determined by the leaders; this may need to be on an individual basis.

If their appointment is termly, then more pupils will have experience of this role and it will not be set aside for the small few. This may create a very positive environment where all pupils feel called/chosen and have an opportunity to be responsible in their roles. The drawbacks will include lack of consistency from one term to the next, lack of energy and time of leaders to retrain new CTMs, and potential lack of depth/commitment in developing a project.

If it is yearly, then pupils will have time to learn, practise and embed their skills and will be able to train the next group for the year ahead. The drawback is that only a small number has been chosen and other pupils may feel demoralised and excluded by this.

There is also the issue that a year is a very long time in a child's life as, if they have to give up a number of their lunch/break-times for a year, they might begin to feel that the role has become a bit of a burden. Doing it yearly with members of KS2 pupils means that pupils can become quite independent and efficient in their role and leaders can grow in expertise also. This approach is particularly useful in the first year of introducing the concept of a CT in the school and for leaders who have various other heavy responsibilities.



CTMs can be reappointed if it is felt that this is in the best interest of the child and the school. However, this would need to be discussed by the team leaders and the benefits and challenges of this should be explored.

Succession planning will also need to be considered: Will the current team begin to train the new CTMs? Will they have an opportunity to work alongside each other before they hand the baton on? Or will the team start from scratch at the beginning of the year? Some schools find that for continuity and efficiency, the Y6 class is not chosen to be CTMs while other schools decide that having Y6 on the team works best for them. It very much depends on the needs and demands of the school and the pupils and this process may evolve from one year to another.

## HOW WILL THE SELECTION PROCESS TAKE PLACE?

In summary, selection of pupils will depend on a variety of factors and these will also include the personalities and talents of pupils and how they will work best as a team. Ultimately it will need to be a decision by the adult leaders which may be in conjunction with the other pupils as they be much more knowledgeable about each pupil and what they have to offer.

There are various ways that this selection may take place such as: completing an application form, attending interview, volunteering in class, holding a democratic vote or being chosen from a pool of willing participants. This method of selection can be decided upon by the school depending on which would best suit their needs, although it might develop from one year to another. For further support with application forms and letters as well as interview questions, see [Chaplaincy Team Administration](#).

## HOW SHOULD THE NAME BE CHOSEN?

The name of the CT can be very personal to the school and could link to the school's unique Mission Statement, ethos or charism. This 'naming' of the team should initially be a collaborative decision in which all ideas are discussed and explored fully. When setting it up for the very first time, the pupils could be involved in choosing the name, although in subsequent years this may not be needed. There may even be a democratic vote for the whole school.

Other teams and clubs exist, such as 'Mini Vinnies', 'CAFOD clubs', 'Mission Together Ambassadors' and 'Caritas Ambassadors' but these are quite specific groups with their own particular ethos and focus. They are not exactly the same thing as a CT although there may be quite a bit of overlap. These groups can be used to complement the CT and they are also enablers for charities; it is indeed possible to have several groups alive in one school, providing pupils are supported and directed strongly by the adults. It is therefore important to discuss the logistics and practicalities of this with the adult members of the team to ensure pupils are able to fulfil their chaplaincy role to the full.

Examples of names include: RE Team, Faith Friends, Faith Leaders/Apostles, RE Ambassadors, GIFT (Growing in Faith Together Team), FIG (Faith is Growing), 'The Chaplaincy Team', or it might even have a name associated with the school/ethos which may include rhyme or alliteration. The name of the team could be shared on the website, on a special display board and at assembly.



## WHAT SHOULD THE CHAPLAINCY TEAM NOT DO?

There are many things that the CT CAN do but there are also some things that they should not do including the following:

- Replace the already existing groups in the school such as the Eco club. Instead they should be working together to enhance each other;
- Replace class/school based pupil-led worship/prayer that all pupils in the school should have the opportunity and training to lead;
- Be a small group who does everything in the school linked with Catholic Life to the exclusion of other pupils;
- Fulfil the adults' roles and responsibilities for aspects of Catholic Life (the adults are still responsible) or attempt to 'tick boxes' for the sake of Diocesan Inspection.

## WHAT VISION COULD THE CHAPLAINCY TEAM HAVE?

Having a shared vision is crucial as it unites the team; this may be unique to the school and adults may want to discuss the vision and aims of the team when it is being formed initially or at the beginning of each year. They could ask pupils what their own vision is and what they hope to do/achieve while on the team. There will undoubtedly be some similarities in what they say which will most likely link with the school's Mission Statement. This vision and the aims of the team can be shared with stakeholders and the school community and there are some generic examples offered in **Useful Materials:**

**Administration** which could be used as a starting point for the pupils to reflect on their own aims and expectations for the school so that they feel listened to and valued. **Training** is also provided.

## WHAT IS THE SUGGESTED FORMAT?

Leaders may need to reflect very carefully about what would work for their school in terms of time and resources (including human) so that it is manageable for all. There are different structures for Pupil Chaplaincy and no suggested format as such. It depends on the needs of the school.

FORMAT	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
<b>Option A</b> Follow the format of School Council where there are representatives from each class who meet regularly, offer opinions and feed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members of all classes involved</li><li>• Representation of views from every year group (more inclusive and balanced)</li><li>• Meeting regularly at a specific time and place helps to develop routine and aids memory</li><li>• Pupils have a sense of security (know what to expect if already familiar with the set-up)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils/staff may have different lunch times (especially EYFS and KS2)</li><li>• Whole school timetable might make it difficult to meet due to space and weather (intervention groups, wet play etc)</li><li>• Meeting may be postponed and the team may lose</li></ul>



back to their classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be designated space for them which is well-known and established in the school</li> <li>Other pupils will be familiar with the day/time and remind them, especially younger pupils</li> </ul>	<p>momentum (due to space/weather)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils might need to meet more regularly (for particular project/job)</li> <li>Time may be lost when coming together as a team as it can take a while to 'find' members (from different parts of school/lunch breaks; very young pupils)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p>Have a group of about 8 pupils from a class where the teacher can take responsibility for the team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could meet with the adult(s) on a more flexible and practical basis, especially if the teacher/teaching assistant is one of the members of the team</li> <li>Efficient as it does not require much time to gather the team together</li> <li>Pupils can access resources easily (not remember them each time or carry them to each meeting)</li> <li>Having it in a year group where the pupils are responsible and do not have other responsibilities (eg Y4/5) means that the workload might not be as great for the adult leader, especially when getting the group started</li> <li>More efficient communication and much greater flexibility if team is composed of a group from a specific year group (Y3 - Y5) who is working with a teaching CTM.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher is not part of the team and has other commitments during this time, such as working with other pupils</li> <li>Pupils from other year groups may feel excluded from this opportunity</li> <li>Not representative of pupils of various ages</li> <li>Pupils may feel this is another 'lesson' as it is in their classroom</li> <li>Other pupils may be distracted if they are meeting while they are finishing work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option C</b></p> <p>Have various groups from different classes who are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes into consideration the various strengths of all adults on the team so as not to overburden any individual, particularly the Senior Leaders as they will</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There might be several mini teams and so the team might feel disjointed</li> <li>Adult leader with overall responsibility to meet with all</li> </ul>





responsible for different aspects/jobs within the role	<p>already have various demands on their time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various tasks could be taking place throughout the school (such as planning for Mass, organising focal areas, developing the prayer garden etc)</li> <li>• Larger number of pupils involved</li> <li>• More opportunities for pupils to be included/active</li> </ul>	team members on a regular basis so that there is a shared purpose and vision
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## HOW COULD THE TIME AND PLACE BE CHOSEN?

There are various questions to consider before deciding on the time and place, although it will very much depend on the format of the meetings. Possible places to meet could include: a classroom, chapel, meeting room, prayer garden, church or office unless they are completing training or a task instead. It is likely that meetings will take place at break-times or before/after school but there may be other opportunities to meet if there are certain tasks that need to be done. For example, selling poppies on the playground before the end of the day or setting up for worship during class time. If this is the case, leaders may need to ensure that pupils are not consistently missing out on curriculum time and that their work does not suffer. For this reason, adults may also need to consider the ability and needs of the pupils on the team. Other points may need to be discussed especially those involving Safeguarding and Health and Safety:

- Will pupils be supervised going to/from meetings or waiting for an adult?
- Will any medical/special equipment need to be brought to meetings?
- Can all pupils access this meeting place easily or will they need special assistance or equipment to get there?
- Will systems need to be put in place to advertise the meetings and alert pupils to any changes?

For further support with planning the time and venue of meetings, see the [Chaplaincy Team Administration Support Document](#).

## HOW CAN PUPILS BEGIN TO TAKE THE LEAD?

There are very many ways pupils can be involved so it would be advisable for leaders to think of which ones they would like to concentrate on first. It is best not to do too many activities at one time but to do a small number of them well, ensuring that pupils are trained so that they know what they are doing and why. It would be even better if they were to involve other pupils in some of these activities so as to be **inclusive** as well as to share the load, for example develop the prayer garden.





For other activities, it would be most beneficial for the leaders to explore ideas with the pupils so that they have ownership of them and begin to take the lead. It is best not to direct and ‘teach’ too much in case they lose interest and enthusiasm. For example, CTMs could discuss how they could support other pupils in their role as missionary disciples. Answers and suggestions from CTMs will inevitably link to their own experiences and the needs they have identified from speaking to other pupils in their own class/school (for this they may use the questionnaire/audit in the **Developing Catholic Life Support Document** and the **Prayer, Liturgy and Worship Support Document** as well as **Training** resources.

There may also be **graded responsibilities** depending on the age and ability of pupils. In this case, the younger pupils may help to ‘lead’ on something very basic with the support and direct of others on the team. This would help to develop the nurturing role of others and show that **all** pupils are valued.

## HOW CAN TEAM MEMBERS COMMUNICATE WITH AND INVOLVE OTHERS PUPILS?

The team can communicate with others at various times and in different ways: before or after assembly/worship; by visiting individual classes to give updates; through display boards, posters and newsletters or magazines; and essentially through interacting with others at various times during the school day. Relationships are key to this process. It is through discussion with others that they can best evaluate the real needs of their peers while building up credibility and trust. Ideas for getting started and involving other pupils are included below although there are many more examples of tasks and templates as well as inspiration for other communication in the **Developing Catholic Life Document**.

<b>Prayer/Liturgy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up for liturgy/class prayer foci</li> <li>• Reading Bible stories to younger pupils at lunchtime</li> <li>• Sharing the week’s Sunday Gospel reading (distributing the Wednesday Word if applicable)</li> <li>• Writing a team prayer/promise (in song)</li> <li>• Organising and/or leading prayer and liturgy and modelling for other pupils</li> <li>• Publishing a weekly ‘thought’ based on scripture throughout the school</li> </ul>
<b>Common Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising, promoting and participating in charity events</li> <li>• Developing initiatives that value others (eg <b>DEAP</b> initiative ie <b>Drop Everything And Pray</b>)</li> <li>• Looking after others in the school community (such as those are struggling or having a difficult time)</li> </ul>



<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising a Chaplaincy Team board</li> <li>• Contributing to (or compiling their own) the school magazine/newsletter/website</li> <li>• Meeting with the chaplain, parents, governors, visitors, other schools...</li> <li>• Sharing plans and developments with pupils in various ways</li> </ul>
<b>Practical support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up/developing a prayer garden</li> <li>• Setting/tidying up for worship</li> <li>• Distributing resources</li> <li>• Sharing ideas for improvement with parents/governors/SLT/pupils</li> <li>• Being proactive through leading by example</li> </ul>

## Guidance for Pupil Chaplaincy Teams: Training

### WHY IS TRAINING AND FORMATION NECESSARY?

The Scriptures tell us to: *‘Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it’*. (Proverbs 22:6). This training is part of the **formation** of every individual and should already be taking place. As Religious Education is ‘the core of the core’ of our Catholic schools, those pupils who have volunteered for the role should already be quite familiar with the basic beliefs/practices of the Catholic faith and Gospel values. Formation is for all pupils, not exclusive to the CT; however, its members will need specific training. As disciples who are going out to serve others, they will need to be well-grounded, like a tree with good roots. They must, therefore, develop their **own faith life** which adult members of the team can support with through prayer/reflection. Ideally, this could be with the aid of a chaplain although adult members of the team could also help to direct and train the team.

Don Bosco, who was extremely passionate about the youth and adults’ relationship with them, said: *‘It is not enough that you love the young; they must know that they are loved.’* In the same way, pupils need to know that they are chosen, trusted and valued. The best way of demonstrating this is by putting it into practice and empowering them to **contribute, plan and take the lead** with different aspects of their chaplaincy role. For this, adult members of the team need to **spend time** with pupils, training them, **fostering good relationships**, building up their confidence and getting to know each of their strengths and challenges. Pupil members of the team must know that they are loved and **trusted** by being given sufficient guidance and opportunities. Much of this training will be personalised to the school, its routines, expectations and vision.



This training can take many forms and may include teaching pupils how to: set up for/plan Mass; lead and evaluate liturgy/worship; organise prayer groups during break times or monitor prayer areas. Practical training is essential and this can be most effective as a ‘hands on’ approach as pupils learn and understand through the practice of doing.

This training could be interspersed with prayer, theory and discussion so that it does not become a list of tasks. Naturally, pupils will not get the ‘perfect’ result the first time so a positive and encouraging environment is a pre-requisite for pupils to develop and grow.

While practical training and theory are necessary, their training should ideally be steeped in prayer and scripture with adults leading and inspiring pupils to aim high and *‘... not be afraid to be saints of the new millennium’* (St Pope John Paul II).

## WHAT MIGHT TRAINING AND FORMATION LOOK LIKE?

Training team members very much depends on the previous experiences of the pupils, their age and ability and the aims for the coming term/year. For example, if the focus is on taking a leading role in the planning of Mass, they could be trained in writing bidding prayers, choosing appropriate hymns for the liturgical season and writing an introduction. They could also be involved in dramatising a reading or writing their own scripture reflection where appropriate (although it is best to speak to the priest beforehand). Like the administration, there needs to be a balance so that pupils do not feel they are in another lesson.

Some general training has been provided to assist team members with getting started in the school which can be found in **Training Resources**. It is not essential that this training is done with every school; the chaplain or team leader may well have more personalised training from which their pupils would benefit. It is recommended that adult members of CTs make links with other more experienced teams, or schools in their area/deanery, so that they can gain training from each other or plan training collaboratively. For links to well-established CTs in the Diocese, see **Chaplaincy Team Administration**.

## WHAT ADMINISTRATION COULD BE CONSIDERED?

Administration should not be overly time-consuming or detract from the practical side of working on a CT. Tasks could include: advertising meetings, sharing their successes with the wider community (such as writing parts for the school newsletter/website; creating a newsletter), creating a business card or promoting events including Masses, worship or fundraising. There is much administrative work that could be done but it is essential to get the balance right so that pupils continue to be active and interested in their role. All administration should be done for purpose and impact. For more support with CT Administration including examples and templates of development plans, audits and rotas for various worship, see **Chaplaincy Team Administration Document**.



# Guidance for Sustaining/Maintaining Chaplaincy Teams

## HOW CAN SCHOOLS SUSTAIN AND MAINTAIN A CHAPLAINCY TEAM?

Establishing a CT may appear quite successful at first, with pupils being motivated and excited by their roles but this enthusiasm may wane throughout the year for a number of reasons, including the loss of momentum, the feeling of 'going through the motions' and the sacrifice of their own time. Pupils might rather prefer to be with their peers when the weather is clement, or there may be friction within the team when there are strong personalities. If tasks and responsibilities are always dictated by adults, pupils might feel that the role is stagnant or uninteresting so they may not want to attend the meetings. Each team will face its own challenges and difficulties.

Due to the very nature of the CT being child-centred, it will look different from one year to another as pupils will bring with them their own vision and energy as well as each member's unique gifts and interests. New teams can build on the successes of the previous years, especially from the first year when the groundwork has been laid. If there has been an impact from the CT's work, then systems will become established and some ideas will germinate or come to fruition. Each CTs' work will then obviously look different from that of earlier years and the new team can build on previous efforts and hatch new initiatives. It is hoped that pupils will not just repeat activities from those in the past, although it is strongly advisable to keep what is relevant and working well. In doing this, the pupils will be able to grow in confidence and ensure that systems become more developed and refined for the benefit of all in the school. Effective CTs will model good practice, inspire others to do the same and raise the bar for their peers. Some advice for dealing with some difficulties could include:

- Ensuring that there is a (small) team of adults so that one person is not overburdened and that pupils are adequately supervised at all times;
- Including a range of activities throughout the year so that all members are kept active;
- Keeping positive with pupils so that they build confidence and motivation; celebrating successes often with each other and with the whole school;
- Not making meetings too formal or weighing heavily on the administrative tasks;
- Interspersing training and discussion with prayer and activities;
- Explaining the rationale behind their work so that everyone understands the theology underpinning their actions;
- Making sure that the community does not suffer with 'fundraising fatigue' by planning this carefully, focusing on education rather than money;
- Listening to pupils and their ideas regularly and supporting them with making their ideas become real; emphasising that ideas need to be practical, safe and cost-effective and that they must be in line with our Catholic faith.



The following challenges and solutions are offered for further support:

CHALLENGE	REASON(S)	RESULT	SOLUTION
Pupils over-reliant on the liturgical year and published/available resources	Teachers/pupils will want to get it 'right' and be efficient with the limited time they have  Members feel 'afraid' to be creative	Stifle the Holy Spirit and pupils' creativity  = mediocrity, mundane worship  = passive/uninspired pupils	Be flexible/creative with available resources or write own  Include other themes/starting points for initiatives and projects, not just liturgical year
Meetings may become solely activity focused	Team excited to get things done  Project challenging and time-consuming	Members too busy 'doing' that they will not have time to spend with others,  Do not develop spirituality/faith	Have a termly action plan for meetings  Plan for regular faith development
All tasks being completed by members of the Chaplaincy Team to the exclusion of other pupils	Misunderstanding that the Chaplaincy Team have to do everything  Lack of peer volunteers	Others feel excluded  All gifts/energy not used  Members become overwhelmed – busy  Members become disillusioned – little play time	Include/direct other pupils where possible  Plan activities that others can get involved in  Create an atmosphere where all are valued
A number of other pupils want to join the team	Chaplaincy Team popular/inspiring  Members participating in 'fun' tasks  Prestige of being in group	Pupils or parents keep asking questions about when/how they can join  Other pupils feel devalued, resentful or frustrated	Expand the team if there is capacity  Set up different groups with responsibility for various aspects/roles of Chaplaincy  Consider a rota for volunteers
Repetition of structures/initiatives introduced in the past	Efficiency  Security	Pupils pay lip-service  Little 'spark'/energy	Listen to pupil voice  Pupil questionnaires



All of these difficulties, and more, are a reality in schools but are not insurmountable. Leaders should be astute and responsive to the needs of their own pupils, dealing with issues creatively and sensitively. However, all actions must be kept manageable and realistic in order to keep the momentum going on a long-term basis. For more support with this see [The School Year Support Document](#), [The Prayer, Worship and Liturgy Support document](#) and the [Developing Catholic Life Support Document](#).

## HOW CAN SCHOOLS MOVE FORWARD WITH THESE SUGGESTIONS?

It is imperative to note that schools are not required to take all of these suggestions on board from all of the documents as that would be unsustainable as well as impersonal to the school. Instead, CTs could discuss which would best suit the school's need and ethos. The ideas offered do not form an exhaustive list as schools are very likely engaging with other equally relevant and worthwhile activities. It is hoped that CTs will take some of these suggestions and come up with their own so that the Catholic Life of their school becomes fully alive and vibrant, and the school and parish become places where the Trinity is truly present and at work.

## SUMMARY

- Every CT is unique because each school is unique and so is each child;
- Pupils should be led by a chaplain/member of the clergy, where possible;
- CTMs are there to serve the school (Jn 13:4-15) and thus Christ (Mt 25:40). Their service is Ubuntu –good for the school and good for them;
- Every pupil in the school can be a leader, although some will have more specific roles;
- Pupils need to be given guidance and support as well as opportunities and freedom to implement their own ideas and become increasingly more independent and skilled;
- A CT will only succeed in this if they have excellent role models, regular support and high quality enrichment opportunities;
- All pupils in the school should benefit from the CT whether this is through role modelling, attendance or active participation/support in various initiatives;
- There should be a combination of prayer and action, being and doing;
- Balance, diversity and relationships are key.

## FURTHER SUPPORT FOR THE WAY FORWARD

A plethora of resources to support this guidance are included in the **support documents** and **Training resources**. All of the support materials/training are intended to be used to promote creativity and efficiency rather than set restrictions and unrealistic expectations. Various other support materials and exemplification will be available on the Pupil Chaplaincy channel on our sharing platform, Slack. For further details, please contact a Diocesan Adviser who can support with of this further during their visit.

