



St. Ethelbert's R.C. Primary School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

As a parish community, we shared your disappointment when, as a result of the pandemic, our Sacramental Programme children were unable to make their First Reconciliation in March and their First Holy Communion in June.

Now that restrictions on church openings have been lifted, we are now in a position to make arrangements for the children to receive these very special sacraments. Our celebrations will still have to meet the requirements of government and Diocesan guidance but we are sure that, like us, you will be eager for the children to complete their sacramental journey.

Therefore, our 2019/2020 cohort will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (First Confession) during school time on **Wednesday 14th October** and then make their First Holy Communion at a special mass on **Saturday 14th November at 11am in St. Ethelbert's Church**. In order to be Covid-19 compliant, the following arrangements will have to be put in place and we ask that all families cooperate so that our celebration can run smoothly:

- The church's current seating arrangements already promote social distancing, with only alternate benches in use – this, however, limits the number of people who can be safely accommodated at any one time
- Each family will be allocated **ONE bench**, for a maximum of **six people** who have to be **from the same household** (including the first communicant). Unfortunately, there is no capacity to increase this
- Each family will be given a time of arrival and will be invited into church at their allocated time by a member of the catechist/school staff team – we ask that families do not congregate too close to the entrance
- Everyone in attendance must use the hand sanitizer provided when entering and exiting the church
- All adults and children over 11 must wear a face covering whilst inside the church
- At the end of mass, each family will be invited to leave at an appropriate time by the catechists/staff team, in order to maintain social distancing
- Unfortunately, there will be no group photograph nor can personal photographs be taken in church

Boys must wear dark trousers, a shirt and tie. Girls may wear a traditional Holy Communion dress if they wish to do so; if not, they must dress smartly appropriate to the occasion.

Although the celebration will be very different from those held in previous years, it is important that the children complete their sacramental journey, so that they can take part fully at weekly mass, by receiving the Eucharist. We understand that some of you may be disappointed that such restrictions are in place; however, it is highly unlikely that the current situation will change in the very near future. We appreciate your understanding at this difficult time.

With every good wish,
Father Morrough & St. Ethelbert's Catechists