

There is also a more detailed guide available for parishes considering admitting children to Holy Communion. To obtain a copy or for further advice, contact:

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# Admitting Children to Holy Communion

## A short guide

This leaflet explains the main guidelines for parishes in Chester Diocese considering whether to admit children to Holy Communion. Whatever policy you decide is right for your parish, we hope that thinking through the issues will be of significant value. Our prayer is that you will gain a clearer understanding of children's faith and a new vision for how to nurture them in the life of the church.

### **Bishop's Direction**

*In accordance with regulation 3 of the Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Regulations 2006, I, Peter, Bishop of Chester hereby direct that from this date parishes in the Diocese of Chester may make applications under the said Regulations.*

## **Guidelines for the Diocese of Chester**

Before parishes can admit children to Holy Communion before Confirmation they must have the permission of the relevant Suffragan Bishop.

### **Permission**

Before giving permission for a parish to admit children to Holy Communion before Confirmation, the Bishop will need to be satisfied that:

- there has been wide and significant discussion in the parish about the issue
- there is agreement within the PCC for such a change to take place
- the parish will comply with the Admissions of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Regulations 2006
- children to be admitted will take part in a suitable preparation course. This should be part of a continuing programme for the education and nurture of children and their families from baptism, through the welcoming of children to Holy Communion and on to Confirmation and beyond.

### **The process of discernment**

Before a child can be admitted to Holy Communion before Confirmation, the incumbent must be satisfied that:

- the child has been baptised
- the child wants to be admitted
- normally, the child will be at least eight years of age at the time of Admission
- the child has normally been a regular member of a nurture group and/or has attended church regularly for at least a year
- a person with parental responsibility is content that the child should be admitted.

## **The pattern for Admission**

- The service which marks admission to Holy Communion will be conducted by the parish priest.
- Either the Common Worship liturgy 'Admission of the Baptized to Communion' (Christian Initiation volume) or the Diocese's own liturgy must be used.
- The parish must keep a register of all those who have been admitted to Holy Communion before Confirmation. (This register is covered by the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978).
- Each child's baptism certificate should be endorsed with the words '*Admitted to Holy Communion by me*', and signed and dated by the Incumbent. In the absence of a baptism certificate, a certificate of admission should be given.

### **Children visiting or moving to other parishes**

Once a child has been admitted to Holy Communion in one parish, the Regulations state that they are entitled to receive in any parish, whether or not that parish has itself gained permission to admit children. This also applies to children admitted to Holy Communion in other dioceses. Parishes should be aware that in some dioceses there is a lower age limit or none. Any incumbent or parish with concerns on this matter should contact their Suffragan Bishop.

### **Confirmation**

Confirmation marks the important moment when baptised members of the Church take public responsibility for their baptismal status. It is important that admission to Holy Communion before Confirmation is seen as a stage of Christian nurture which leads later to Confirmation.