



# St Patrick's RC Primary School, Dipton

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Headteacher: Mrs J Burgess  
*We follow in Christ's footsteps*

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

## First Holy Communion Update

Following on from the Bishop's recent instruction that, where possible, parishes facilitate pupils completing their sacrament of First Holy Communion we have put together the following plan.

The plans consider all the current COVID-19 rules, however, as you are all aware, these can change at short notice up to any point. Due to the fact that we have 15 children who took part in their sacramental preparation last year, and to work within the Diocesan Health and Safety Guidelines for churches opening and the new governmental legislation around lockdown, we need to run separate masses to accommodate pupils and their families. We are only allowed 30 people in the church, to celebrate mass, at any one time. You will also all be aware that Fr Donnelly also oversees St Mary's South Moor, St Joseph's Stanley and Sacred Heart at Byermoor and will need to facilitate all of their Holy Communion masses as well. We are fortunate enough to welcome Fr Radni to the parish who will also be working with Fr Dermott to facilitate all these different mass events. We anticipate the Mass will last approximately 30 – 40 minutes.

### **Group 1 – Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November at 9.30am**

*Myia, Isaac, Ruby, Lainey and Jay*

### **Group 2 – Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November at 9.30am**

*Katie, David, Cara, Rosie and Spencer*

### **Group 3 – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November at 9.30am**

*Amelia, Nina, Georgie, Riley-Jay and Rodrigo*

Unfortunately, we will be unable to change these groups around due to the church's capacity.

First Reconciliation, will be celebrated by both Fr Donnelly and Fr Radni at some point before the First Holy Communion in a socially distanced way in school. As you are all aware the government rules have changed and it is now illegal to mix with any person who does not live in your household and due to the limited number of people allowed in church at any one time – we have taken the difficult decision to limit attendance to siblings and 2 adults per child making their Holy Communion. We appreciate that this will mean that some difficult family decisions will have to be made, however we felt that it was more important that all children are able to take part in their Sacrament of First Holy Communion as they have already had to wait too long, due to the national Coronavirus lockdown.

Due to the governmental and diocesan requirements, there will be no singing in church and no moving around and mixing with other families. All families will be shown to their named bench and be asked to stay in that place during mass. All adults in church will be required to wear a mask. If you choose not wear one, unfortunately, you will be unable to enter the church building as face coverings are mandatory (unless you are exempt).

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Every family member who has been allocated a place in church (restricted to immediate family - maximum 2 adults + siblings who live with the child making their FHC) will have to submit a contact mobile phone number, name and address to the school via [diptonstpatricks@durhamlearning.net](mailto:diptonstpatricks@durhamlearning.net) please put FHC in the subject box. We will then pass all of these details onto church so they comply with the Diocesan Track and Trace requirements. They will then destroy the data after a three week period.

We recognise that this is not what you may have envisaged, when your child started their First Holy Communion programme, however, we feel it is important that pupils have the opportunity to finish their journey. On the day that your child is making their First Holy Communion, you will be able to take your child and their siblings' straight to church from home. If a First Holy Communion dress/new clothing has already been purchased, pupils are, of course, permitted to wear this. Alternatively, pupils can wear 'smart' clothing of their choice or school uniform. Once each mass has finished, pupils can go home to change, if necessary, before returning to school by 12 noon at the latest to then enjoy the remainder of the school day.

On the afternoon of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November, pupils will have a celebratory event for the whole class with juice, cakes and a few other treats which school will provide.

We continue to keep the whole parish and, most especially, our First Holy Communicants in our prayers.

God bless all of you,

Fr Dermot Donnelly  
St Patrick's Parish Priest

Mrs J Burgess  
Headteacher

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