

## **Chichester Diocesan Policy Concerning the Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Before Confirmation**

The admission of baptised children to Holy Communion is regulated by Church of England guidelines, agreed by General Synod in 2006.

There are three options:

1. **Admission to Holy Communion, later followed by Confirmation.** Parishes which wish to develop Confirmation in the direction of a profession of adult faith might adopt this option. Parishes would have the advantage of being able to communicate younger children, thus contributing to their formation and nurture.
2. **Admission to Holy Communion, as part of preparation for Confirmation.** This option would be useful to parishes which have a long preparation process for Confirmation and wish to admit baptised persons to Holy Communion at an early stage in this process.
3. **Baptism → Confirmation → Communion.** This keeps the traditional Anglican order of rites of initiation.

Every parish is required to seek permission from the Bishop before they initiate any changes to their current practice. No child can be admitted to Holy Communion earlier than the age of 7 and not normally earlier than the age of 13 for Confirmation.

### **Procedure for options 1 and 2:**

1. The Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge explores options with the PCC and any parish children's leaders. Theological, pastoral and practical issues must be considered.
2. The PCC must pass a resolution in support of the application.
3. A letter of request should be sent to the Bishop, accompanied by a copy of the supporting PCC resolution with voting figures. Contents of the letter should include:
  - A request for permission to adopt either option 2 or 3 and reasons for the preferred option.
  - An outline of communication plans within the parish
  - An outline of a programme of preparation for those being admitted to Holy Communion.
  - An outline of a continuing nurture and teaching programme for those being admitted to Holy Communion. This may be related to Sunday nurture groups, monthly meetings or periodical all-day events.
  - In addition, for option 1, proposals for encouraging confirmation.
4. The Bishop will respond, either giving permission or refusing permission. Clear reasons will be given if he decides to refuse permission.

If the Bishop has given permission, the following additional procedure takes place:

5. Hold a parish meeting (particularly for parents and carers) to explain things and answer questions.
6. Prepare all ages in the congregation for the consequences of the decision.
7. Explain the situation to the parish (e.g. letter to parents; explanation to children's groups; magazine/newssheet articles; sermon on the subject).

If children are going to be admitted to Holy Communion before Confirmation, the following steps also apply:

- Arrange preparation for the children and perhaps for parents/guardians and possibly godparents;
- Ensure that all the children concerned have been baptised prior to the service of Admission.
- Hold an 'Admission' as part of a main Sunday service.
- Fix up an appraisal for your system in the light of experience, the results of which should be reported to the Bishop.

The incumbent must maintain a register of all children admitted to Holy Communion. This can be included in the baptism register or we recommend keeping a separate Register for Admission to Communion<sup>1</sup>. Children should be given a certificate recording the details<sup>2</sup>, but this should also be recorded on their baptism certificate. Numbers of children admitted should be submitted annually to the Palace by the end of November.

If at any time the parish wishes formally to cease participation in the admission of children to Communion before Confirmation, permission to withdraw from the scheme will be sought from the Diocesan Bishop. The request for this permission must be in the form of a PCC resolution, accompanied by voting figures, and will have been preceded by consultation involving the incumbent, PCC, children's leaders, the wider church community, and the Diocesan Children and Families Officer. The letter must clearly explain the consultation process and arrangements made for the pastoral support and continuing nurture of any young people who, at the time of withdrawal, have already been admitted to Communion but have not yet been presented for Confirmation.

If a child who has been admitted to communion moves to another parish, (s)he will be able to receive communion, even if this is not the church's policy or practice. The child will need to show their baptism certificate on which the date they were admitted to communion will have been recorded.

## Resources

### ***The 2006 Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Regulations Canon B 15A:***

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/canons-church-england/supplementary-material/#b134>

### ***Common Worship liturgical resources for admission to Holy Communion:***

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/holy-communion/additional-eucharistic-prayers/guidance-on-celebrating-the-eucharist-with-children>

### ***Eucharistic Prayers for use when there is a significant number of children present:***

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/holy-communion/additional-eucharistic-prayers>

For additional information and preparation resources visit:

**<http://youth.chichester.anglican.org/childrencommunion/>**

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., <https://chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9781853119415/admission-to-communion-register>

<sup>2</sup> E.g., <https://chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9780715122495/admission-to-communion-certificates-pack-of-10>