



**ST GREGORY'S**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear parents and carers,

Thank you first of all, for your patience whilst waiting for an update on this subject. I appreciate it has been a long time since being able to give you a definitive date and time for when your child is to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist for the first time. I can confirm that after recent conversations with Father Cownley and supporting priests, that preparation and celebrations of both Sacraments will take place before we break for Easter.

**Covid Restrictions**

Whilst restrictions have eased with regards to Covid, for the safety of our school community we have taken the decision to celebrate First Holy Communion over the course of two Masses on consecutive weeks.

The following measures will remain in place to ensure fairness and safety in attendance:

- Each child will have a row for their family consisting of 6 seats. This will help us ensure that we do not go over the capacity that is allowed in church at the current time.
- Children receiving the sacrament will sit together at the front of the church. The children mix daily and this will create more space in church for the remaining attendees to spread out.
- At this point, it is personal preference if you wish to wear a mask in attendance. Masks do not currently need to be worn by parents and staff in attendance. If guidelines change, we will inform you of this expectation, unless of course you are medically exempt.

Dates for the upcoming Sacraments are as follows:

**Reconciliation** – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March.

Children will attend Mass at Church on the morning of this day, followed by confessions. This is to be attended by the children, year group staff and serving priests only.

**First Holy Communion** – Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March or Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April

Both Masses will begin at 6pm. If Father Cownley is feeling well enough, he will co-celebrate Masses along with Father Ian Wilson and Father Gerard Lennon who have kindly offered their time to serve our school community. You have the option to select which Mass to attend and will need to book this through the School Gateway app. Booking opens today 09.02.2022 and will close next Wednesday 16.02.2022. Spaces are limited to 20 children for each Mass and this will be on a first-come-first-served basis. All are very welcome to celebrate this occasion, but please be mindful that each child can have only a maximum of 6 members of friends or family in attendance on the

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Principal: Mr Chris Hancox

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Part of the Emmaus Catholic Multi Academy Company

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evening, ensuring that immediate family and friends can be accommodated to celebrate with us in a safe and comfortable fashion.

If your child is not Catholic but would still like to attend to support their classmates, they are very welcome to join in the celebration and bring one adult along with them. **Please speak to the class teacher if this is your intention** and confirm if you wish for your child to receive a blessing when it comes to the other children receiving Communion.

Whilst celebrating this special occasion looks slightly different to how we've celebrated in previous years, myself and the Senior Leadership Team feel it is imperative that receiving the Sacrament is at the heart of this occasion to bring them closer to Christ. Joining together on a smaller scale with immediate family and friends will support this intimate, happy and holy occasion.

We will continue with our plan of celebrating with the children back at school on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April and host a Communion party to mark the occasion as a year group. We ask that the children attend school on this date in the clothes they are wearing for the Sacrament, as we will host a thanksgiving Mass in school and have a small party afterwards. More details will follow, closer to the time.

### Parent's Catechesis Meeting

On the evening of Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, we would like to invite you to join us for a parent's catechesis meeting to give you an overview of the preparation the children will go through in the lead up to the Sacraments. But it will also be a time for us to share and reflect on our own experiences and how we as parents and staff can support the children in this chapter of their faith development. Mrs Levack will lead on this meeting and it will begin at 5pm. Any materials shared, will be distributed the following day via your child if you cannot be present at the meeting.

Please do get in touch if you have any questions or concerns. We are likely to request that you arrive at church no later than 5.40pm on the evening of your child's Mass, and drop your child off at the Guild Room before taking your seats in church. I will confirm these arrangements at the parents meeting on the 03.03.2022 and also communicate this to you by email closer to the dates of both Masses.

Best wishes and God bless,

Mr C Hancox  
Interim Principal

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