



12 Courtenay Hill, Newry, Co Down, BT34 2EA
Phone: (028) 3026 2175

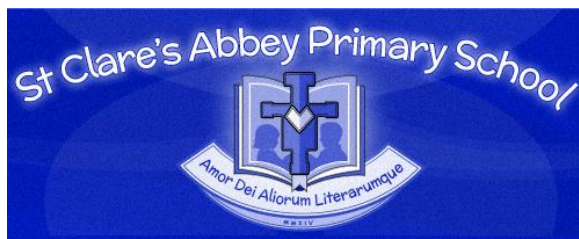
03/08/12

Dear Parents

As the date of your child's First Holy Communion finally approaches, we write to ask for your assistance on a few matters in our efforts to keep the ceremony as respectful and reverent as possible.

- **Seating arrangements:** We have struggled with this aspect of the ceremony due to the current situation and as we have so many families to accommodate and wish to be fair to all, given that no one wishes to be in the seats furthest away from the altar. Therefore, **Seats will be allocated on a 'first come, first served basis.'** Each family can have their child plus **five family members** and their first communicant must sit on the outside of the row so that staff can direct with minimal fuss at Holy Communion time. Remind your son/daughter that once the ceremony starts there can be **no talking**. Please note seats will be reserved near the front for readers. Staff will be on hand to direct you to a seat.
- **Masks must be worn by adults and children over the age of 13 inside the Cathedral.**
- When walking up to the altar remind your son/daughter that their **hands should be joined together**, 'pointing up to God.' Children will receive First Communion alongside their family members. You will be directed to the altar and once you all have received Communion you will be directed to exit the Cathedral through a side door. This will be the end of the Communion ceremony.
- Your child has been taught to receive the Sacred Host in his/her hands. Please remind your children that they are to bless themselves after receiving the Sacred Host.
- The cathedral gardens will be open for your family to take photographs. Families are asked not to re-enter the Cathedral after the ceremony as a full clean down must be completed before the next mass. Due to the current climate, unfortunately staff and clergy will not be able to have photographs taken with the children. We would love if you could forward a photograph of your child on his /her First Holy Communion day to the following email address **stclaresabbey@gmail.com** so that it can be posted on the school website.





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- **PLEASE do not take photographs during the ceremony**, (Bishop and Priest's request).

We have had a most unconventional 'lead up' to the sacramental day and the ceremony will look very different to others that we have had over the years;

- Fewer pupils will have individual roles to undertake in the ceremony, (we had planned on having a lot more, but the new church guidelines have meant that these cannot happen)
- Staff will be providing the music rather than the school choir,
- There will be no art display of the pupils' work
- We will be unable to have a post sacramental celebration in school

However, we know that everyone is working extremely hard to ensure that it is a special day for your children and your families and we do expect it to be a truly joyous occasion and one that we will all enjoy immensely because of its simplicity. It is our privilege to be your partners in this chapter of your precious child's life and we wish you a wonderful day.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Monaghan	Mrs Doherty
Principal	Religion co-ordinator

