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# Admission to Holy Communion Policy

## Document history

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# 1 Introduction

Affirming that baptism is the sacrament of initiation into Christ and his church, we believe that it is therefore desirable for all the baptised, including children, to be admitted to receive Holy Communion before Confirmation.

Christians discern the significance of the Sacrament of Holy Communion at greatly varying levels. With their capacity for awe and mystery, children can have a profound understanding of what happens at Holy Communion equal to or surpassing that of many adults. Admission to Holy Communion should arise out of a person's own faith development and not be a response to parental or peer pressure. In considering a person's admission the following guidelines will be observed.

## 2 Admission

- The appropriate age at which children are admitted will be a matter for discernment, prayer and discussion between individual families and the Vicar or Vicar's representatives.
- The person must be baptised.
- In the case of a child, parent/carer consent must be obtained.
- Normally at least one of the child's parents should be a regular communicant. However, if neither is, a child who attends church regularly may be admitted if a suitable sponsor is found; parental consent to this arrangement is required.
- The admission of a child to Holy Communion will be marked at a Parish Holy Communion service. A register of those children admitted will be kept.
- The decision to admit a person to Holy Communion will rest with the Vicar, after consultation with those responsible for preparation and their parents (where applicable).
- Those admitted to the Holy Communion must not be excluded from it anywhere in the Church of England. Therefore, when a family moves to another area the Vicar will advise their new parish of the child(ren)'s communicant status..

## 3 Preparation

Those wishing to receive Holy Communion will receive preparation in a form approved by the Vicar but which includes teaching on Holy Communion and belonging to the Church. Ideally it should happen with parental involvement and encouragement, although for children who attend without their parents, sponsors from within the church who share responsibility for their spiritual nurture will be sought.

Those with Additional Needs or learning difficulties will not be excluded from receiving Holy Communion. Their preparation will be undertaken in consultation with those responsible for their care, education and support and with regard to their individual capacity to appreciate the significance of Holy Communion.

## **4 Ongoing Nurture**

The spiritual nurture of all children will be fostered through the activities of the churches teaching groups as well as regular participation in worship, prayer and teaching with the whole church family. It is expected that children admitted to receive Holy Communion will continue to take part in the church's programme of teaching and nurture.

## **5 Implications for Worship**

- It will be made clear to the Parish that children are welcome to receive Holy Communion when it is celebrated.
- Children will normally receive Holy Communion with their families.
- Use of liturgy and song will be regularly reviewed in order that Worship is accessible and appropriate in the widest sense to all.
- Consideration will be given to the availability of a non-Alcoholic cup.

## **6 Confirmation**

Members of the Church are witnesses for Christ. Confirmation at an appropriate stage in life will provide them with the opportunity to make their own public profession of faith, and to receive the gifts of grace needed for a life of adult discipleship. Confirmation will be encouraged for all teenage and adult communicants, affirming that God's Spirit moves in God's time for each individual's journey.

## **7 Policy review**

This policy should be reviewed annually.