



# MEATH DIOCESAN OFFICE

October 2023.

Dear Father,

The following are some guidelines for **Confirmation Ceremonies 2024**. *I would be grateful if you would bring these guidelines to the attention of your schools and confirmation classes in your parish.* They are written to ensure that the students have as meaningful a celebration as possible without distractions and that the individual candidates sole focus is on the reception of the Sacrament.

1. This year, Confirmations in the Diocese will be celebrated outside the celebration of Mass. If a parish wishes to have a Confirmation Mass, they should let me know before the end of November.
2. While some parishes may have to limit the numbers attending due to the size of the church, as a minimum, each child should be accompanied by a sponsor and two parents or guardians. If the church is of a size that warrants multiple ceremonies, consideration should be giving to moving the celebration to a larger church nearby. That happens in several parishes already.
3. All young people wishing to receive the sacrament should make a formal application, following the procedures laid down. Letters of applications do not need to be sent to this office. If a young person does not do so and does not take part in the programme of preparation consideration should be given to postponing that person's Confirmation.
4. It should also be remembered that the Confirmation Ceremony itself is not a performance. There have been ceremonies where the focus for the candidate was very much on the performance of a piece of music, a reading or some other form of participation. I am anxious that nothing would distract the candidate from the primary focus of the Celebration – the coming of the Holy Spirit and the celebration of the Sacrament. Indeed, many have commented on how more meaningful were the simpler ceremonies that we have had over the past few years.
5. There may be occasions where it may be more appropriate to have the parents of the candidates or children from other classes in the school read the readings and pray the Prayers of the Faithful. This is not in any way a prohibition but, rather, a plea that nothing would be introduced that would place the candidates for Confirmation under pressure or distract them from the importance of the Sacrament.

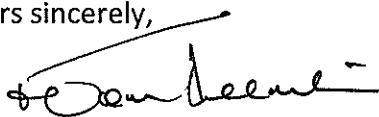
6. When the Candidates for Confirmation undertake the readings and the Prayers of the Faithful, Readings and Responsorial Psalms should not be divided to increase the numbers of readers and no more than three students should read the Prayers of the Faithful.
7. Class performance pieces by the Confirmation Candidates after communion have the potential to change the focus for the students and are not part of the Rite of Confirmation.
8. **Proposed Liturgical readings for the Confirmation ceremony.**  
The readings can be found in Volume III - Confirmation as follows:
 

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|---|--------------------------|
| <b>First Reading – Ezekiel:36:24-28</b>           | <b>Vol III, Page 89</b>  |
| <b>Responsorial Psalm: Ps 103</b>                 | <b>Vol III, Page 92</b>  |
| <b>Second Reading – Acts 2:1-6,14,22-23,32-33</b> | <b>Vol III, Page 93</b>  |
| <b>Gospel – Luke 4:16-22</b>                      | <b>Vol III, Page 104</b> |
9. A list of the hymns should be placed on the altar. Music should be led by a cantor or choir. Recorded music in the liturgy is not appropriate.
10. Hymns should not unduly delay the ceremony. The choir should not continue singing when ceremony is ready to proceed.
11. As the ceremony is taking place outside the celebration of Mass, the Offertory is not part of the rite.
12. Cameras or Video's should not be used in the Church during the ceremony. Churches should not be used as studios for professional photographers to conduct their business. Schools are more appropriate for this activity, where requested.
13. The Class Teacher or Principal shall present the children for Confirmation.
14. Care should be taken by the class teacher and the local priest that the Confirmation name chosen is the name of a Saint and is Christian in character and chosen for that reason. I have already written to the candidates about the Confirmation name and sponsor. It would be a good idea for students to do a project on the chosen saint and for local priests to have a conversation with the candidates in this regard.
15. For the actual anointing, children should kneel on the same level as the celebrant.
16. The sponsor should carry a small card with the Confirmation name being taken by the child printed on it in clear and readable form. There is no need for the Baptism name to be added.

17. The Prayer of the Faithful can be composed by the Confirmation class with the guidance of the teacher and priest. Six to eight prayers should be the norm. Templates for the Prayers of the Faithful are included in the Booklet that accompanies this letter.
18. Those reading the Readings and Praying the Prayers of the Faithful should do so from the Ambo. The Microphones at the Altar and Presidents Chair should not be used other than by the celebrant.
19. The candidates for the sacrament should be encouraged to take the pledge and reminded that it is a serious commitment that they are making. The words should be said clearly by all taking the pledge. Candidates should be encouraged to discuss the Confirmation Pledge with their parents /guardians. It would be helpful if someone led the students in taking the pledge from the ambo.
20. It would be most helpful if a priest would lead the students in taking the Confirmation Pledge.
21. Priests should give every possible support to the teachers preparing the candidates. It would be most helpful if the local priest were to have a discussion with the candidates in the class concerning the Confirmation name and the sponsor.
22. It would be helpful if stewards were present also to keep things moving smoothly and quickly when photographs are being taken afterwards.

I must also express my appreciation to you for your support of the programme and, also, my thanks to the Teachers and Principals whose commitments are very much valued.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Deenihan', with a flourish above the name.

Most Reverend Tom Deenihan.  
Bishop of Meath.