

Policy on Splitting Classes

Rationale

In the interest of providing the best education for all students, it may from time to time be necessary to divide and combine class groups into mixed classes. Research has shown that children do a lot better in smaller classes. Research has shown that children do not lose out academically when they are taught in a room with two class groupings.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

- To provide a framework for the splitting of classes.
- To outline the criteria on which children are selected to be placed in mixed or straight classes.
- To outline the criteria for placing children in particular mixed-class groups.
- To set out the supports that may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children in mixed classes.
- To limit the enrolment of new children into split classes, subject to Section 29 of the Education Act.

Framework for the splitting of classes

At the time of planning the classes for the coming year, the Principal will look at the overall numbers in each year group and the number of teachers available to teach them. She will decide how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children.

In consultation with the class teacher, and if necessary with previous teachers of the classes involved, lists of possible groups are drawn up. As the constitution of individual classes may change over the eight years of Primary school splits may be introduced to classes which have not been split before, as the need arises.

Criteria for placing children in particular mixed classes

- Initial split of the Junior classes will be based on age with the younger members of the senior class and the older members of the junior class forming the split class.
- It is considered best to form **mixed-ability** groups. Therefore there may be some amendment to the age based rule to help maintain a mixed ability class. The ability of the pupil will be determined by teacher observation, and test results.
- The dynamics of the class must also be considered. Emotional, behavioural and social factors which could upset the dynamic of the new class will be taken into consideration when forming new groupings.

- Gender-balance may also be considered but will not be the deciding factor.
- This decision will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class.
- Children who have special learning, behavioural or social needs may be exempted from this process, as the school will determine the appropriate class for them.
- Principal and staff will also consider reconstituting split classes into single level classes when teacher pupil ratios allow for it.
- The school may also take into account a pupil's previous experience of being in a mixed (split) class, with a view to ensuring, where possible, a fair and balanced distribution of such placements over time. However, this will not override the overall aim of creating balanced and effective class groupings that meet the needs of all pupils.

Special Education

The Principal, the Class Teacher and Special Education team will consult on how best to organise support for any mixed classes. The Principal will have the ultimate say in how support is carried out.

Some or all of the following strategies may be used:

- The Special Education Teacher (SET) works in the classroom with the Class Teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement. It is possible that the SET Teacher may work in the classroom supporting one child or a small group of children, with the Class Teacher doing the main teaching of the lesson.
- Station teaching where several teachers work in the class with the Class Teacher for an allocated period of time on English and/or Maths. The work to be covered will be as a result of consultation and collaboration between all parties including the Principal.

These and any additional arrangements will be considered on a class by class basis and from year to year.

Enrolment of new children into split classes

The rationale behind this policy is for the formation of smaller classes within the recommended pupil-teacher ratio. The enrolment of new children into the split class is to be avoided as much as possible.

The allocation of teachers to single and mixed classes

The decision of class allocation lies with the Principal whose duty as per Circular 16/73 is to assign teaching duties.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 27.05.26

Chairperson's Signature: *Fr. Paul Byrne*

Signature of Principal: *Mags Leonard*