



## **Class Split Policy**

### **Rationale**

Department of Education Circular 19/2021 (Staffing Arrangements in Primary Schools for the 2021/22 school year), identifies that based on our enrolment figures on 30.09.2020 we will lose a mainstream teacher. As a consequence nine classes must now be shared between eight mainstream teachers.

Given the variation in numbers between class levels there will now be mixed groupings and this policy puts a system in place to deal with this eventuality.

### **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 classes
- To outline the supports which may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children in split classes
- To set out the arrangements for books and schemes of work for split classes

### **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.

The splitting of classes causes considerable upset and consternation among parents every year as the Principal attempts to divide classes in a fair and transparent way.

- The arrangement of classes may differ from year to year; in some cases there may be no need to split any class in an academic year. A class split is put in place for one school year, numbers and staffing arrangements will dictate the arrangement in subsequent years. In short, a class may be split once, more than once during their time in primary school or perhaps not at all. These arrangements are made year to year.

- The pupil-teacher ratio is dictated annually by the government budget and schools have no control over this.
- The Covid-19 Response Plan will determine if classes can mix in the school yard for break times.

### **Criteria on which children are selected to be placed in particular class groups**

When dividing a class into groups, to be placed in separate classes, there are certain criteria to be taken into consideration:

#### **Junior Infants**

If the enrolment size of a class in Junior Infants dictates that a split is necessary, then an initial split, based on children's surnames alphabetically, will be made by the Principal

#### **Other Classes**

In selecting a group of children to be placed in a mixed class group the following criteria will influence placement:

- Friendship Groups – a child to be placed with a friend
- Educational Factors
- Gender Balance
- Presence of siblings in classes
- Children with special educational needs

#### **Friendships**

A positive and supportive attitude from parents regarding friendship groups is key to a successful outcome for all children in their new groups. The process of forming new friends and friendship groups is a life skill which is important to develop. Children in split classes will be able to maintain existing friendships as well as make new friends in a new group, increasing both their circle of friends and their ability to form new friendships.

#### **Other Factors**

Children who have a special learning, behavioural or social needs may be exempted from the above processes, as the school will determine the appropriate class for them.

The decision for splitting the class will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class.

## **Supports which could be made available to children and teachers in split classes**

The Principal, the Class Teacher and the Special Education Teacher will consult on how best to organise the Learning Support for the split classes.

- In some cases the Special Education Teacher (SET) may work in the classroom with the class teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement.
- It is possible that the SET 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.
- The SET may withdraw small groups of children from the class.
- Occasionally, especially in the case of Sen. Inf/1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> groupings it may suit the class better if the teaching of mathematics is taken separately by the class teacher for one class and the Special Education teacher for the other class.
- All of these arrangements must be considered on a class by class basis, from year to year.

## **Arrangement for books and schemes of work for split classes**

- The prescribing of books and planning of schemes of work will be differentiated for the core subjects of Numeracy and Literacy thereby each class level will work from textbooks specific to their class level.
- The class teacher will differentiate the remaining curricular subjects using the various methods of differentiation recommended in the Primary School Curriculum (NCCA:1999).
- Due to the nature of varying teaching styles, differing timetables etc progression through the curriculum and the prescription of homework may differ between two groupings (split class). All children will access the full curriculum.
- Where books are to be brought/used by pupils the class teacher will take due regard of the history of the class groupings to date and the materials and schemes previously covered by their incoming class grouping.

## **The allocation of teachers to split/mixed classes**

It is the duty of the Principal as per Circular 16/73 to assign teaching duties.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **18.05.2021**.

Signed: *Francis Conaghan* Chairperson

Signed: *Nicola McCarthy* Principal

