



St. Patrick's Primary School Policy on Splitting Classes

Rationale:

In the interest of providing the best education for all pupils, it may be necessary to divide and combine class groups into mixed classes, which are smaller in size and offer a better pupil-teacher ratio. A large number of children in Irish primary schools are taught in split classes.

Aims and Objectives of this policy:

- To provide a framework for the splitting of classes
- To outline the criteria for placing children in particular mixed-class groupings
- To set out the supports which may be used to ensure the best learning outcomes for all children in mixed classes
- To set out the arrangement for books and schemes of work for split classes

Framework for the splitting of classes

The pupil-teacher ratio is dictated annually by the government budget and schools have no control over this. 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 (based on the staffing circular). He/she will decide how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children.

The arrangement of classes will 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, not at all, or for the duration of their time in primary school. These arrangements are made year to year.

Criteria for placing children in particular class groups

When splitting a class, much work goes into the preparatory stage of the arrangement prior to the summer holidays. There are certain criteria to be taken into consideration:

- Forming well-balanced classes from a social, emotional and academic point of view is the primary consideration in splitting classes.

- This is a collaborative process between teachers, pupils and parents. Pupils and parents will complete a 'Friendship Flower' to guide staff in the process of forming new groups.
- Keeping all nominated friends together is impossible to achieve but your child is guaranteed to be placed with at least one of the friends they have nominated. The process of forming new friendships is a life skill which is important to develop. A positive and supportive attitude from parents is a key element in achieving a successful outcome in the new groups.
- Parents of twins and siblings will be given the option of splitting their children or keeping them in the same group.
- Class lists as approved by the Principal, are final.

Other considerations:

Sometimes pupils move to or from the school during the summer holidays which may have an effect on friend groups. This is outside the control of the Principal.

The Principal, the class teacher and the Special Educational Needs team will consult on how best to organise the learning support for the mixed class. SETs and SNA's will be allocated to the class groupings at the discretion of the Principal, as staffing resources allow.

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 whereby 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
- All children will access the full curriculum.
- Where books are to be used by pupils, the class teacher will take due regard to topics and schemes covered by pupils to date.

The allocation of teachers to split/mixed classes.

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

Ratification & Review

A copy of this policy is readily accessible on the school website. This policy will be reviewed as necessary by the staff and Board of Management of St. Patrick's Primary School.

This policy was ratified on 9th July 2024.

Signed: *Fr. Tony Finn (Chairperson of the Board of Management)*

Signed: *Riona Donoghue (Acting Principal)*

Date: **9/7/2024**

** Please note that the signed copy of this policy is in the school office*