

SCOIL BHAILE AN TALLÁNAIGH

DÚN DEALGAN, CONDAE LÚ.



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, which are smaller in size and offer a better pupil-teacher ratio.

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 which 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 intake, overall numbers in each year group, the number of teachers available to teach them and will decide how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children and the lowest pupil-teacher ratio possible.

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 class groups

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

- Initial split of the 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.

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- 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 be considered. Emotional, behavioural, and social factors which could upset the dynamic of the new class should be taken into consideration when forming new groupings.
- Forming new groups can be done alphabetically or by age, counting in groups of 2/3.
- 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.
- It will seldom be possible to satisfy all demands for groups of friends to be kept together. This decision will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class.
- Classes will be split in an open and transparent manner with a view to have as even a gender balance as possible.
- Children who have a 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.
- Once the decision about which classes the children will be in is taken, it is final.
- This decision will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class.

The supports which could be made available to children and teachers in mixed classes

The Principal, the Class Teacher and Special Educational Teachers will consult on how best to organise the learning support for the mixed class.

- In some cases, Special Educational Teachers may work in the classroom with the Class Teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement. It is possible that the Special Educational Teachers 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 in English/Maths. The work to be covered will be as a result of consultation and collaboration between all parties including the Principal.
- Another arrangement for Special Educational Teachers which may suit the class is for either the Class Teacher or the Special Educational Teachers to withdraw small groups of children.

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- Occasionally, it may suit the classes better, if the teaching of Mathematics is taken separately by the Class Teacher for one class and the Special Educational Teachers for the other class.

All of these arrangements must be considered on a class-by-class basis, 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. In this case, due regard must be given to the school's enrolment policy, and the terms of Section 29 of the Education Act. However, it should be borne in mind that the recommended maximum number of pupils in mixed classes is 25.

The allocation of teachers to mixed classes

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

RATIFICATION

This school plan was formulated by the principal and staff and approved by the Board of Management on 8th May 2023

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