



St. Nicholas' Parochial School

Policy on Splitting Classes

March 2022

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 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

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.

Criteria for placing children in particular class groups

Children will be grouped in such a way so as to maximise the learning outcomes for *each child*. Classes will be primarily split based on:

- Date of birth, whilst also considering mixed ability groups and gender balance
- Dynamics of the class will be considered. Emotional, behavioural and social factors which could upset the dynamic of the new class will be taken into consideration
- 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 may also be split in an open and transparent manner such as alphabetically should the need arise

This means it is not always possible to keep friends together but the teachers of each class to be split are consulted on the above issues and much work goes into the preparatory stage of the arrangement prior to the summer holidays. Sometimes pupils move to or from the school without informing the school in advance. This is outside the control of the principal.

Classes that have been split reunite daily to play together on the playground/sports field during breaks so they can maintain existing friendships as well as make new friends in the new group. This increases their circle of friends and their abilities to form new friendships.

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

The principal, the class teacher and the Learning Support team will consult on how best to organise the learning support for the mixed class. The Learning Support Teacher may work in the classroom with the class teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement. The Learning Support 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. These arrangements will 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 the two groupings (split class). All children will access the full curriculum.

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 these classes is to be avoided as much as possible. 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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in June 2023.

Signed: _____

Date: _____