



St. Patrick's N.S. School Class Formation Policy

Introduction

This policy was the product of whole-staff collaboration in consultation with the Board of Management of St. Patrick's N.S.

Rationale

In the interest of providing the best education for all students, it may from time to time be necessary to divide and combine 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 year groups/classes
- To outline the criteria on which children are selected to be placed in classes
- To outline the criteria for placing children in particular mixed-class groups
- To limit the enrolment of new pupils into split classes, subject to Section 29 of the Education Act.
- 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. The Principal 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

We group the children in such a way so as to maximise the learning outcomes for each child. When dividing a year group/class, there are certain criteria to be taken into consideration:

- Classes will be primarily split based on date of birth, taking into account mixed ability groups and gender balance.
- 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.
- This decision for splitting the class will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class.

- 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.

Explaining to parents why their child is in a split class.

The DES allots one teacher to each group of 24 pupils at present. This is known as the pupil-teacher ratio. The principal has overall responsibility for grouping or splitting the classes where numbers would otherwise be too big or too small in one class. The pupil-teacher ratio is dictated annually by the government budget and schools have no control over this. However, the teacher will ensure that each pupil in each class will be working on an appropriate set of skills and objectives from the national curriculum for their class.

Why does one half of the class have a different booklist to the other?

Classroom teaching is based on the curricular objectives for each class level. Pupil textbooks are used merely as a guide by the teacher. The primary curriculum (www.curriculumonline.ie) is primarily skills-based rather than content-based. In Mathematics there is a separate set of content and skills for each individual class.

For other subjects the content is menu-based and teachers can choose content suitable to their class. The teacher is trained to tailor the curriculum and differentiate the content and expected outcomes to cater for the needs of each individual pupil. Although the class may be using a textbook as a guide, the teacher is dealing with each child as an individual learner. Teachers choose the books and adapt them to suit the needs of the children in their room.

The support which may be made available to children and teachers in split classes.

The principal, the class teacher and special education team will consult on how best to organise support teaching for each class in the school. The level of support teaching provided to each class will depend on the needs of the pupils in the classroom. In St. Patrick's N.S., we provide a range of support to help the pupils with their learning. These supports may include individual withdrawal, small group instruction as well as in class support. The school has a number of initiatives in place to provide support to all pupils in a split class. These initiatives may include Literacy Power Hour, Talk Boost Language Intervention, Guided Reading and Team Teaching in Maths. All of these arrangements must be considered on a class by class basis, from year to year.

The allocation of teachers to split classes:

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

Ratification and Review:

This policy was ratified by the Board on 09/05/2022 and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Chairperson's Signature

Date:

Principal's Signature

Date:
