

# **Policy on the Splitting of Classes**

## **Introduction**

This policy was devised by the principal and deputy principal in tandem with the Board of Management and in consultation with the staff of Scoil Chaoimhín Naofa, Hollywood in March 2017.

## **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 the 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 single stream classes.
- 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 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 in which children are selected to be placed in mixed or single stream classes:**

1. In consultation with the class teacher, and if necessary with previous teachers of the classes involved, lists of possible groups are drawn up.
2. When dividing a class into groups, to be placed in separate classes, there are certain criteria to be taken into consideration:
  - a. It is considered best to form mixed-ability groups.
  - b. The dynamics of the class must be considered. Physical, emotional, behavioural and social factors which could upset the dynamic of the new class should be taken into consideration when forming new groupings.
  - c. The supports which could be made available to children and teacher in mixed classes.

The Principal, the Class teacher and Learning Support team will consult on how best to organise the Learning Support for the mixed class. In some cases the Learning Support Teacher may work in the classroom with the class teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement. It is possible that 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. Another arrangement for Learning Support which may suit the class is for either the class teacher or the Learning Support teacher to withdraw small groups of children. Occasionally, especially in the case of Sen. Inf/1st, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> it may suit the

classes 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 where SET provision permits. All of these arrangements must be considered on a class by class basis, from year to year. Access to an SNA can also be a consideration.

3. The decision will ultimately lie with the principal, as per circular 16/73 who must consider the needs of every child in the class. A positive and supportive attitude from parents is a key element in achieving a successful outcome in the new groups.
4. The splitting of classes mid-year because of increased enrolment is not recommended, unless additional teacher allocation is made by the DES.

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

The DES allots one teacher to each group of 27 pupils at present. This is known as the *pupil-teacher ratio*. The ideal situation for teacher and pupil would be a single stream class at all class levels with no more than the ratio suggests. However, the current system does not allow for this and 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 the class will be working on appropriate objectives as prescribed in the Revised Curriculum 1999.

Ratified at the BOM meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2017

Signed: Jim Murray

Chairperson