

Policy on Splitting Classes.

Introduction

This Policy was the product of whole-staff collaboration in tandem with the parents and Board of Management of St. Philomena's N.S. April 2011.

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.

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 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 on which children are selected to be placed in mixed or straight classes

In consultation with the class teacher, and if necessary with previous teachers of the classes involved, lists of possible groups are drawn up. Children who to date have shown an ability to work independently are considered able to cope better in a mixed class, where from time to time the classes are taught separately. Children who have special learning needs, at either end of the learning spectrum are generally deemed to be better left in a straight class, all other things being equal.

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:

- It is considered best to form mixed ability groups.
- 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.
- 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.

- While we are mindful of the benefits to the child of creating new friendships we will also be mindful of existing friendships when drawing up the new class list. Children coming into 3rd class will be placed with friends as per their Friendship Chart from 2nd class.

The supports which could be made available to children and teachers 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 it may suit the classes better, if the teaching of Mathematics is taken separately by the Class Teacher for one class and the Learning Support Teacher for the other class. All of these arrangements must be considered on a class by class basis, from year to year.

Framework for placing children into split classes.

- It is the intention of the school that no pupil will spend her entire time in St. Philomena's in a split class.
- Accordingly the Principal and staff will consider reconstituting split classes into single level classes when pupil-teacher ratios allow for it, while taking the above criteria into consideration.
- This constitution for 3rd class and reconstitution for all other classes will take place in June and the parents and pupils of those classes concerned will be informed before the start of the summer holidays.
- If the classes are to be reconstituted into two straight classes this will be done on a mixed ability basis.
- These split classes will be reviewed annually taking into account our staffing and pupil numbers at the time.

The allocation of teachers to mixed classes

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

Policy ratified by B.O.M. _____

Signature of chairperson of B.O.M. _____

Signature of Principal _____

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2013

This policy as ratified by the B.O.M. on: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson

Signed: _____

Principal.