



Scoil Mhuire Split Class Policy

Introduction

This policy was the product of whole-staff collaboration in consultation with the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Clarinbridge.

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 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. **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 responsibility for implementing the criteria lies ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class.
- The Principal will decide annually how best to organise classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children.
- 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:

To maximise our classroom spaces in line with teacher allocation according to the DES teacher/school roll ratio.

The supports which could 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 the support teaching for the mixed/ split classes as they do for all classes. In some cases, the special education teacher/ additional teacher may work in the classroom with the class teacher, in a team-teaching arrangement. It is possible that the special education teacher may work in the classroom supporting a small group of children, with the class teacher doing the main teaching of the lesson. Another arrangement for an additional teacher which may suit the class is for either the class teacher or the additional teacher to withdraw small groups of children. 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 of management February 2024.

Signed:

Chairperson_____

Principal_____