



## Policy on Splitting Classes

### Introduction

This policy was the product of whole-staff collaboration in tandem with the Parents and Board of Management of Ardrahan National School.

### Rationale

In the interest of providing the best education for all pupils, 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 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. 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 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
- Distribution of boys/girls in classes
- 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
- It will seldom be possible to satisfy all demands for groups of friends to be kept together. Parents will be asked to name three of their child's friends so that in forming the new class group the school will endeavour to arrange that each child



has at least one of their nominated friends in their new grouping. 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.

- 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 Department of Education allots one teacher to each group of 23 pupils at present. This is known as the *pupil-teacher ratio*. Their objective is that class size should be as equitable as possible across all class levels. 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 the set of skills from the national curriculum for the correct class.

#### **The supports which could be made available to children and teachers in mixed classes**

The Principal, the Class Teacher and Special Education Teachers will consult on how best to organise the learning support for the mixed class. In some cases, the Special Education 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 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 Special Education Teacher to withdraw small groups of children.

#### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed as needed.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 8/6/2023.

Signed: *Martin Murphy*  
Chairperson

Date: 8/06/2023