Split Class Policy

Introduction

This Policy was the product of whole-staff collaboration with the Parents and Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Mhuire. This Policy was first implemented in 2010 and reviewed in 2016.

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 teacher-pupil ratio.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

♦To provide a framework for the splitting of classes

♦To outline the criteria on which the 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.

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. It will be decided how best to organize classes with a view to providing the best educational opportunities for all children.

Criteria for placing children in split-class groups

We group the children in such a way 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 practice to allocate children to split classes alphabetically by surname.

♦Distribution of boys/girls in classes

♦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. This decision will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class.

♦It would be the intention that once a new class is formed every effort would be made to that class together going forward. However, this may not always be possible and this decision will lie ultimately with the Principal.

This means 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. Sometimes pupils move to or from the school without informing the school in advance. This is outside the control of the Principal.

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. There will also be an opportunity for station teaching at particular class levels and for classes to come together for lessons across the curriculum.

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 20 pupils per class. However, the current system does not allow for this and the Principal has the overall responsibility for grouping or splitting the classes where numbers would otherwise be too big or too small for one class. The objective is that class size should be 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.

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